



THE ROSS FAMILY BOND

By Kimberly A. Suta :: Photography by David Teran, with personal photos courtesy of the Ross family



Like most families who plan their lives around their kids and family activities, the Ross family makes it a point to prioritize family.

"To me, our family is more important than what we do for a living. That's who we are rather than what we do," said Savanna.

Hugh added, "We feel blessed to have the opportunity to be able to focus on family with the work balance we are fortunate enough to have."

Hugh and Savanna have a big family that includes five children — Noah (21), Kai (18), Henley (14), Calla (10) and Bowie (8). There are also three dogs: Bear, Gus and the newest addition, also the smallest, Carl, who now rules the roost, and three horses, Tye, Kira and Smith, that they love like family.

As for the kids, Noah is studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Miami, and will graduate next year. He's on the Men's Beach Volleyball team and loves outdoor activities including hiking, surfing and a little golf. "The family is so blessed to have Noah as the oldest child. He has been an unbelievable role model who always takes time to spend with each one of the kids," said Hugh, proudly.



The next in line, Kai, will be attending the University of California, Santa Barbara in the fall on a Water Polo scholarship. He has just spent a gap year playing between a professional team in Tenerife, Spain and the U.S., where he was a member of the Youth Junior National Team. Kai has evidently picked up the golf bug and is determined to become a single-digit handicap within the year. According to Hugh, Kai's work ethic and determination have had a hugely positive impact on his brothers and sisters.

Henley will soon be going to high school at Bracken Christian School (BCS) in the fall. She's on the volleyball team but also enjoys softball, golf, surfing and music. Henley recently saw Luke Combs in concert and Noah Kahan in Austin with her older brothers. "Henley has a special gift of always making others feel valued, and has the ability to make everyone feel welcome and included. She has shown extreme resilience after a horrific jet ski accident in 2020 where she nearly lost her leg," shared Savanna.

Calla will be entering 5th grade at BCS in the fall. Calla is crazy about horses and enjoys riding the family horses. She competes in various Western all-around and reining events

across the country and has won two Congress Titles in her first year, among many other wins. "Calla has quiet confidence with amazing determination while being a mindful and loyal friend. Calla always has time for any animal. She dreams of going to Texas A&M on a horse-riding scholarship, which does not make her LSU Dad too happy," said Savanna, jokingly.

And finally, the youngest, Bowie, will be going into 3rd grade at BCS. Bowie loves swimming, golf and baseball, as well as riding his quad and building with Legos. "Bowie is really coming into his own and has done an unbelievable job in keeping up with his older siblings. Bowie always has a smile on his face and has lots of friends. He is the perfect bookend to this crew," said Hugh.

Although the family was traveling to Mexico during the time of this interview, Hugh and Savanna's absolute favorite place to visit is Southern Africa, specifically Botswana for an African safari game drive.

"It's our favorite place in the whole world to visit — seeing the



animals in their natural environment is an experience that's so hard to describe, it's almost surreal," explained Savanna.

"I appreciate the beauty of the country when I go back now, a lot more than I did when I was growing up and took it for granted — everything from the ocean to the bush and the unique culture," added Hugh.

"There are so many moments that we love about going into the bush ... everything from seeing a tiny chameleon on a leaf to a leopard mother killing an impala and dragging it back to the tree to feed her three cubs. It's all about being present, disconnecting from the world around you and reconnecting with family and nature," noted Savanna.

Truth be told, when the family isn't off traveling for either leisure or one of the kids' sports activities, they love nothing more than sitting around the table playing games. Although a lighthearted, fun bunch, when it comes to games, they can get "ultra" competitive.

"We're massive Uno players and Spot It, as well as Texas Hold 'Em, Gin and Monopoly. It gets intense — people crowding



around the table, but that's what's important to our family. It's the time we spend together," acknowledged Savanna.

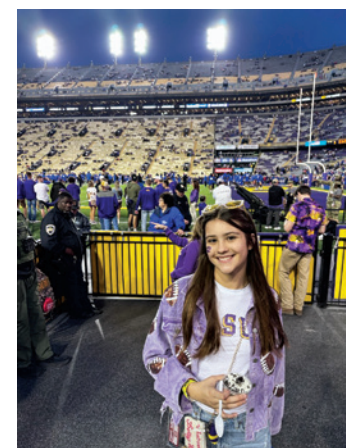
So, what does this intriguing couple do when they're not focused on family? Hugh and Savanna actually met while both working in Commodities Trading with Glencore Ltd. Hugh worked in the California office, while Savanna worked in the Houston office, her hometown. Interestingly, Hugh actually grew up in Durban, South Africa, where he first developed a love for the ocean and water sports.

Savanna recalls that they became really good friends first. "We talked each other through some hard times and then realized we obviously had a really neat connection you don't often find, so why are we wasting anymore time. Life's too short," remembered Savanna.

It wasn't long after that they got married on September 27, 2008 in Houston and danced to the tunes of a Beatles cover band. Savanna initially moved to California before the family moved to Westport, Connecticut, but it would be many years before she would successfully entice Hugh to Texas. Although they have had a house on Lake LBJ since 2018, they didn't move to Cordillera Ranch until 2022.

"We love spending time on the lake fishing, tubing and wake surfing. Lake LBJ really was the catalyst for the move to Texas," shared Hugh.

After retiring from oil trading, the couple started a company together called Dirt Road Development Group, a real estate



group that develops commercial and residential properties on and around Lake LBJ. Additionally, Savanna has worked as an interior and residential designer for over 16 years and owns a company called Sugarbean Interiors.

Like her daughter, Savanna is also passionate about horses and rides with Calla at Reid Thomas Performance Horses in Boerne. One day they hope to keep a horse at Cordillera Ranch. The whole family enjoys taking advantage of the amenities at

the Clubhouse, including swimming, pickleball and golf.

"All the kids are taking golf classes right now," said Hugh. "We also enjoy the restaurants and the gym and going for walks on the trails."

"We haven't done the water activities yet but we're excited to go kayaking on the Guadalupe," added Savanna. "We've made some good friends and we love the staff, although we haven't had a chance to fully immerse ourselves in all that is Cordillera."

According to Savanna, you'll know which house is theirs because it probably has the loudest Karaoke music playing in the neighborhood. Hugh concurs; she may not respond to texts right away but she's got a ton of music on her phone cued up and ready to go.

Hopefully, you'll have the pleasure of meeting the Ross family, and if you ever want to visit Africa, Savanna promises that Hugh will be happy to advise you on your trip. 🌍