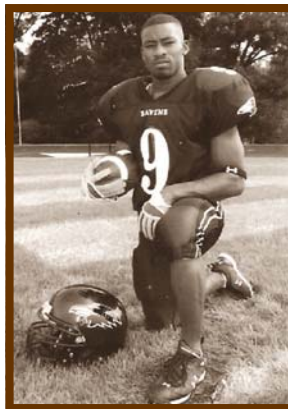


The three faces of Reid Park Zoo GM Jason Stover: football, business and family

Jason's favorite quote . . .

The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.

Mitch Album



As a child, the serious-minded Jason Stover dreamed of becoming a business man . . . or a football player. His favorite toys as a child were the desk in his room . . . and a football. Jason used his determination and his ability to focus to achieve both goals.

He started playing football at a young age, and the practice paid off. In high school, Jason earned the Gold Helmet award at Mullen, a private Catholic school. This prestigious award is given to an athlete who best exemplifies the tenets of school. As a senior, Jason was named to the Class 5A Centennial Conference All-league Team. He received a football scholarship to play at Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado. (KM/SSA Senior Vice President Tim Brantley also attended this college on a football scholarship.) As a freshman, he was selected by his peers to be a captain of the team. He later transferred to Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas (KM/SSA President & CEO Kevin McNicholas' alma mater) and continued his education and football career. Again, his team mates selected him as a captain.

Jason also got an early start on his career with K-M & SSA. He started working at the Denver Zoo when he was a freshman in high school. He used his salary to help pay his tuition to Mullen. While working throughout high school and college, he honed his management skills in such a way that he started as a dishwasher at the Denver Zoo, and today he's now the food and beverage General Manager at the Reid Park Zoo in Tucson.

At 5'8" tall, Jason isn't particularly a big man, but he is solidly built. He may not look like a football player, but he's strong for his size. In high school, he held the Colorado record in combination weightlifting and also competed nationally in powerlifting. In his free time, Jason continues to lift weights as well as practices boxing.

While in high school, Jason met his wife, Sherri. He said the smartest thing he has ever done was to marry his wife. They have a son and a daughter, five-year-old Julian and three-month old Johnnie Hope. His favorite entertainer is his oldest son, who loves to sing and dance. Sherri is currently attending college to finish her degree in sociology. When she graduates, Jason plans to return to school and earn his business management degree.

Even though Jason was born in Indianapolis and lived in Mississippi for several years, he calls Denver home. But he isn't a Denver Broncos fan. His team is the Pittsburgh Steelers. He became a fan when University of Colorado quarterback Kordell Stewart played for the team. Stewart got his chance to start at quarterback in 1997. In his first season as a starting quarterback in the NFL, he led the Steelers to an 11-5 record and the AFC Championship Game. No wonder Jason admires this athlete.

It's not a surprise that Jason wants to attend a Super Bowl game before he dies. A desire to attend a professional boxing fight runs a close second. He reads *ESPN The Magazine*, and his favorite sport to watch is football. His favorite television program is *Monday Night Football* and boxing events.

Jason said if he wasn't working with SSA, he would be coaching football and training athletes. While playing in college, he was older than his teammates, so he assumed the role of big brother and used his training knowledge to work with them in the weight room.

He continues to combine his knack for business with his passion for football. Jason currently coaches football; the players are just 11 - 12 years old. Jason said this age group is a fun age to coach because they're not quite kids, but not quite adults. "They're naive but full of passion," he added.

However, there's more to Jason than just a football fanatic. For example:

- ◆ He usually wears cowboy boots and a hat.
- ◆ His favorite food is his mother's fried chicken.
- ◆ His most valued possession is not a football, but a St. Michael pendant given to him by his high school principal to help strengthen his beliefs.
- ◆ His heroes aren't football stars, but Barack Obama, his Grandfather Johnny and Kevin McNicholas.
- ◆ His favorite music is rhythm and blues.
- ◆ He enjoys playing chess. He used to play with chess with his grandfather every Sunday afternoon while listening to Motown music. As a prize for the first time that Jason beat him, his grandfather made him a custom chess set that he still has today.