

Neil Bush's Divorce In Spotlight

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The Bush family has made headlines for decades; the political dynasty has produced two presidents and a governor. Now, they are making headlines of a different kind.

The president's brother Neil has recently divorced his wife of 22 years and for the first time, she's speaking out. **KHOU reporter Anna Werner** sat down with Sharon Bush last week for an exclusive interview.

Sharon Bush unsuccessfully went back to court last week, seeking to reopen her divorce case on the basis the settlement was unfair. She asked that the judge reconsider the amount she is due. He declined to do so.

With tears in her eyes, Sharon Bush, 51, says she never imagined she would be getting a divorce. "It was totally out of the blue," she says.

The divorce not only separated her from her husband, whom she called "the most exciting, wonderful man I've ever met," but also alienated her but from her extended family, the rest of the Bushes.

She is left with memories - good ones like Christmases at the White House and summers at the family compound in Maine and painful ones like the collapse of the Silverado Savings and Loan in the '80s for which some people blamed Neil Bush.

Sharon Bush recalls, "I heard it on the news, oh, "Neil Bush is being sued for \$50 million." And I heard it in my car and I thought, 'My God, that's my husband.'"

The lawsuit was eventually settled, but by then Sharon's marriage was on the rocks. She said she received an email from her husband saying, he wasn't sure they should remain married.

"And I, after 22 years was stunned," she says. "I said, 'You're firing me?' I said, 'What do you mean, you're firing me?' He said, 'No, I just don't love you.'"

Neil Bush admitted there was another woman, a former volunteer in Barbara Bush's office, and love notes to the other woman on Neil Bush's stationery figured in the divorce proceedings.

Neil Bush declined to be interviewed by Werner, but in a court deposition, he said: "Our marriage has been broken. It's loveless. And there's nothing left to it. And there hasn't been for a long, long time."

In the deposition videotape, he says, "I had had sexual intercourse with perhaps three or four, I don't remember the exact number, women, at different times."

Sharon Bush says, "I was stunned. I'm still stunned."

Then she says came another shock in divorce court, her settlement. Although she agreed to it, she now claims she was pressured into signing it.

It requires her and her children to move out of their longtime home so it can be sold. Of what's left after lawyers and bills are paid, Sharon gets 75 percent. She also is getting alimony, about \$30,000 a year, but that ends after four years when all her children are 18.

Sharon says that what she really wanted for her children was a little more time. In a letter,

she says, she appealed to George Sr., whom she affectionately called "Gampy," for help, asking him to help her stay in the house with the children for just another four years.

"It would give me the opportunity to raise my children in the house that they have grown accustomed to and lived in for the last 10 years," she says.

George Sr. declined to comment to the CBS affiliate. But Sharon says in an email back to her, the former president said that he couldn't go against Neil's wishes, and the court had already ordered that the house be sold to pay the couple's debts.

He wrote, "I do believe the kids would happily adjust to a new house, even if it is not as grand as the one you are now living in." He also told her to "forget the past with Neil...find a job, and look to the future not the past."

He is helping provide her another house, but only to stay in while her children are still living with her. In five years, she'll have to pay the bills herself or move.

So this stay-at-home mom is preparing to look for a job. The former teacher says, "Not in my wildest dreams would I have imagined it, or I would have prepared myself more."

Neil Bush again would not comment to the CBS affiliate, but in e-mails last year to his wife, he expressed concern for her welfare, saying, "My goal continues to be to work with you to get you settled."

His attorney describes that settlement as both "fair and generous." But Sharon Bush's attorneys say bills and legal fees may consume much of her savings. All in all, she says, it's not what she expected out of a life lived with the Bush family.

She says, "I thought for sure, I mean, I believed the family values, and I lived the family values."

Some lawyers told **CBS News** that some of the terms of the agreement are more favorable than required by Texas law, including the child support being paid by Neil Bush: \$1,500 a month for the two minor children until they turn 18.

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