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# HOME RUN

Jamie Adams: Sandlot, Rock Bottom and Grand Slams

BY GAIL BENNISON

AS SEEN IN

**FortWorth,Texas**  
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It's September 1992, and baseball season in Arlington is nearly over. There are two strikes on Jamie Adams, too. Adams has just finished his last breakfast beer and is about to voluntarily check into the Billy Gregory Pine Street County Detox Center in Fort Worth. "I'd been vomiting blood for some time," Adams said. "I needed harsh, medical-assisted detox for the first week, and it took 21 days to get control ... No regrets, no looking back ... I wanted to live." Fast-forward 16 years. At Adams' impressive Centerfield real estate office suite at The Texas Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, you'll meet a multi-tasking, extremely organized, intense, sensitive, down-to-earth guy. Friends say Adams works harder than anyone they've ever known. That's a major league understatement. He's at third base long before you realize he's hit the ball.

“There’s never success without failure or mistakes,” Adams said. “You just push forward. My mom taught me never to quit.”

Melanie Adams, Jamie’s wife and marketing director for Jamie Adams & Associates/Prudential Texas Properties, said she spends most of her time “burning the midnight oil trying to keep up with him.”

“He runs circles around me,” Melanie said. “He’s always available to clients—way beyond exceeding expectations of investment transactions or the exciting possibilities of their new homes. He goes full-speed ahead in business and at home, and he is always looking forward through any combination of possibilities.”

Glass cases in his executive suite, which are filled with autographed footballs, baseballs, basketballs, celebrity bobble-heads and sports jerseys, tell part of his story. Adams is

“Pudge” Rodriguez Foundation until Rodriguez was traded from the Rangers. Melanie and Jamie spent their honeymoon in Puerto Rico in 1999 as guests of Rodriguez.

“Jamie has been there for me and my family since I was called up,” said the former Texas Rangers catcher. “He’s like family.”

Daryl “Moose” Johnston, who played his entire career as a fullback for the Dallas Cowboys, said of Adams: “Jamie creates trust and confidence in a process that sometimes seems to be lacking in both. He was supportive and flexible throughout the entire process of selling our home, making a potentially stressful time in our lives very manageable.”

Signed guitars from country music legends neatly displayed in all corners of the office tell another story. Adams has assisted in bringing country music acts to charity events, arranged for them to sing the National Anthem at the Ballpark, and traded auction items from sports to country music charitable events. From a personal side, Adams loves country music and knows the lyrics to most country songs.

“You know something, I’m not really sure when I first met Jamie,” said Neal McCoy, a three-time platinum album country music star. “When you meet him, you feel like you grew up with him. I’m still not sure what his real job is ... nobody knows,” McCoy said jokingly.

“He’s got that façade ... you know, that real estate front out there at the ballpark. Whatever he does, he must do pretty darn good at it. The man is just plain connected,” said McCoy, who has now taken over the interview. “He knows everybody. Here’s the deal ... See, somewhere down the line, he’s gonna want something from them or they’re gonna want something

from him. But he’s not about using people. It’s called networking. That’s how he does whatever it is he does.”

Melanie and Jamie are parents to two active boys, Jared, 8, and Jeremy, 5. Their godfather, Enzo DeVincenzo, owns 377 Management in Nashville, and represents some of country music’s hottest stars. “What you see is what you get with Jamie,” DeVincenzo said. “If he tells you he’s going to do something, he’ll follow through. It’s hard nowadays to find somebody like that; Jamie connects the dots. For a guy who’s juggling so many things, he always makes time for his



*LARGER THAN LIFE / At Adams’ impressive Centerfield real estate office suite at the Texas Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, next to the new Dallas Cowboys Stadium, you’ll meet a multi-tasking, extremely organized, intense, sensitive, down-to-earth guy.*

no stranger to professional athletes. In fact, he has worked with them for 23 years. Adams has brokered real estate, relocations, traffic tickets, weddings, divorces, bail bonds, the press, travel, charities and middle-of-the-night requests for Dom Perignon, to name a few, in dealing with his high-profile clientele. A sign that hangs in his office (in good humor) reads: No Autographs Please.

Adams spent a great deal of time with a young Ivan “Pudge” Rodriguez, traveling with him for real estate transactions across the United States. Adams managed the Ivan

boys. The time he spends with Melanie and the kids means a lot to him.”

On this early morning, Adams’ voice, focus and demeanor shift as he multi-tasks. An admitted neat freak, his executive desk is free of clutter. Three magazines, nestled in the middle of dozens of framed family photos, are aligned on a shelf behind his desk. While fielding endless telephone calls, shuffling papers with one hand, and dealing with a flurry of people walking in and out of the office, Adams calmly handles his calls and visitors, meticulously straightening the magazines four times before he sits down for an interview. It may not appear that he pays much attention as he takes yet another call in mid-sentence. But, in fact, he’s paying close attention.

When asked about the impressive glass cases and sports memorabilia, Adams glanced at them briefly, smiled, and explained that the items represented the opportunities afforded him through his career by those who he says have blessed his life with their loyalties and friendships.

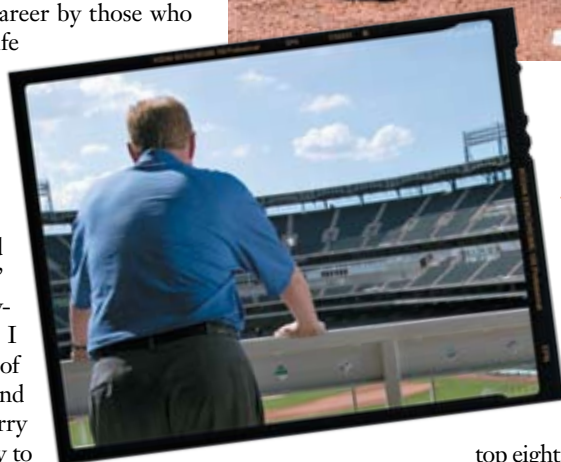
Randy Galloway, a friend for 20 years and longtime sports writer and radio broadcaster, said Adams’ name is “emblazoned in North Texas real estate.”

“I call Jamie ‘The Mayor,’” Galloway said. “But I don’t think the mayors of Fort Worth, Arlington and Aledo have anything to worry about because he’s too busy to run for office. People come to town and the word is out there: See Jamie Adams. He’s a one-man chamber of commerce. When your reputation in anything, but particularly something as volatile as real estate, is carried on for two decades with the Dallas Cowboys, the Texas Rangers, the Dallas Mavericks ... Well, that says all you need to know about Jamie Adams, the person. He’s all about relationships.”

Adams credits relationships and referrals for sustained business growth during the past two decades. Much of his business is based upon ‘bread and butter’ real estate transactions, he said.



IN GOOD COMPANY / (left to right) *Jamie Adams, Melanie Adams and David Williams, office manager and real estate professional for Jamie Adams & Associates.*



“The glamour associated with our sports relationships is only a percentage,” Adams continued. “The relationships we’ve formed throughout the years are the core of our business and the best reward of all.”

Situated in one of the country’s top eight real estate markets, Jamie Adams & Associates/Prudential Texas Properties is recognized as the #1 GCI (Gross Commissionable Income) Agent in Texas and is in the top 3 percent in Prudential nationwide. Adams is the founder of MVP Agents, Inc., a national network of real estate professionals. Through this venue, agents assist in sports relocations and provide every imaginable service involved with the abrupt and hectic changes in the lives of sports professionals and their families.

Being at the right place at the right time, or as they say in real estate, “location, location, location,” Jamie Adams & Associates plans for continued growth in the North Texas real estate market. Their offices are located in the heart of



\$2 billion in improvements for the vicinity, including sports, roads, retail and entertainment encompassing the Dallas Cowboys Stadium, Texas Rangers Baseball Club and future plans currently on hold for Glory Park. “We are in the hub of quite possibly one of the area’s most awaited events in the history of Dallas/Fort Worth—Super Bowl 2011,” Adams said.

Office manager and real estate professional David Williams began at Jamie Adams & Associates as an intern while attending Texas A&M University.

“Jamie and I are similar in that we do what’s right,” Williams said. “It’s not about making a quick buck. Jamie is my mentor, and he taught me from the beginning that if you go by the rules, you won’t get hurt. He lives and dies by his word. That’s good enough for anybody. If I screw up, he lets me know. And if he gives compliments, which are few and far between, you know they came from the heart.”

David and Jamie manage the Ballpark office, and Melanie works from their home in Aledo, which they purchased three years ago. “We love this place we call ‘Bear Camp,’” Melanie said. “Our boys enjoy being outdoors,

*HE’S NO ROOKIE / Adams, of Jamie Adams & Associates/ Prudential Texas Properties, is no stranger to professional athletes; in fact, he has been working with them for 23 years.*

I was 10, and George Jones was always singing on that old kitchen radio. Faith and country music are important influences in my life.”

The smell of dust and dirt blowing across treeless plains takes him back. Sandlot baseball, no bases, just lines in the dirt field, provided many a home run, Adams said. He had front row seats to the world of West Texas tornadoes and hellacious thunderstorms. It was an old-timers haven of

full-service everything, including Grandpa’s gas station. And the memory of Grandpa chasing five boys around the cotton fields, kicking the truth out of them all the way back home so he could hold them up by their shirt collars and face them square in the eye will forever be with him.

Adams, the oldest of his four brothers, their single mother, and his grandparents lived in a small, half-bricked, three-bedroom home, which suffered from bare sheetrock and untapped electrical wiring, built by his grandfather. The door was always open, and laughter and the smell of Grandma’s fried chicken filled the home, Adams recalled.

“Society would say we were poor I guess, but we always had what we needed and more,” he said. “Grandpa was one

**“I met Jesus at Calvary Baptist Church with Grandma when I was 10, and George Jones was always singing on that old kitchen radio,” Adams said.**

and we have just enough space and land, with hills as far as the eye can see.”

Adams said that you can measure a guy’s success if he married over his head.

“I definitely did,” he said. “She’s my soul mate. Melanie makes sure our ads are done properly and that we don’t drop the ball on anything. She also takes care of our boys and juggles numerous charity events.”

### SANDLOT

Adams’ formative relationships began in Plainview, Texas, where he was born in 1959.

“As a boy, I remember Jesus and George Jones,” he said. “I met Jesus at Calvary Baptist Church with Grandma when

of the greatest influences in my young life. He was one of those guys who didn’t talk much. He basically looked at you, and if that didn’t work, he’d grab you by the back of your head and plant his boot in your butt. He taught me work ethic at a young age and the understanding that you’ve got to respect others and give back. ‘Grandma’ created the groundwork of faith and family.”

His father, he said, was “mostly absent.”

“I didn’t respect my dad,” he continued. “All my memories of him were of his drinking and the ugly that it provided. He developed liver cirrhosis, which required a double amputation of his legs. I watched him die in a VA Hospital.”

At 12, Adams worked as a bus boy at the Nu Griddle Café. He cleared the tables for his mother, Pat Adams, who

worked there as a waitress and still lives in Plainview. His office computer's screensaver features a photo of the Café. "It reminds me daily where I came from," Adams said.

He held many jobs throughout his teen years, including 15-hour shifts on a pump jack in the oil fields. "Definitely the hardest job I've ever had," Adams said. As relief from pump jacking, he began rodeo clowning for fun and extra cash in the Plainview/Lubbock area.

## GRAND SLAMS

Most young boys are wild at heart, but this one felt a calling beyond the plains, where adventure and opportunity lay in cities with bright lights and sports stadiums larger than life itself.

Adams moved to Dallas in 1982, where he worked for Dallas Western Wear on the weekdays and as a rodeo clown on the weekends at Fort Worth nightclub Billy Bob's Texas. By 1983, he had a full-time job selling boots and Western apparel at Don Morgan Boots in Arlington.

"I didn't like living in Dallas. Thirty miles makes a huge difference," Adams said. He moved to Fort Worth into a small house with four friends and slept on the floor. "We called it 'the orphanage.'"

Timing was everything. Former Texas Rangers infielder Bill Stein needed a pair of boots. "Bill told me one day, 'Jamie, you don't need to be selling boots. You need to be selling real estate,'" Adams recalled, noting that he knew absolutely nothing about real estate at the time. Stein set up a meeting with Gloria Van Zandt, who only hired full-time, seasoned agents at her successful Arlington boutique office, Van Zandt Realtors. Adams went to the interview wearing his best Wranglers, but told Stein that he didn't think she would call him back. Stein called Van Zandt back and expressed that the Rangers would be buying houses from Adams in the near future. The rest is history. Adams



*TIMING IS EVERYTHING / An encounter with former Texas Rangers infielder Bill Stein at Don Morgan Boots in Arlington, where Adams worked in 1983, introduced him to the real estate world.*

left Don Morgan's to work several part-time jobs—he was a night dj at City Limits, sold boots at Cavender's Boot City, worked at Van Zandt's, studied and became a licensed real estate agent in 1985.

"I knew Jamie could do anything he wanted because people trusted him," Van Zandt said. "He delivers more than he promises. He meets people ... they love him and make him a part of their lives."

One athlete after the other referred Adams. Before long, he was at the Rangers spring training camp every year, assisting

rookies needing one-bedroom apartment rentals. Many of these players signed contracts and soon were buying multi-million dollar homes.

"I got his foot in the door, but he's the one who made it," Stein said. "Jamie goes above and beyond the real estate part. That's what makes him so successful."

Adams said the three men he respects the most in his life are his Grandpa, Hall of Fame ballplayer Nolan Ryan, and his mentor, Mike Reilly, of Reilly Brothers Property Company in Aledo.

Nolan Ryan, new president of the Texas Rangers Baseball Club, was among Adams' first high-profile clients. Ryan and his wife, Ruth, have known Adams since 1989, when he first signed with the Rangers.

"He has always been available to assist us with our real estate needs ... little did we know that he would become so much more than just our real estate agent," Ryan said. "Whether we were leasing or buying a house, or needing a ride from the airport, Jamie exemplified the qualities of a true professional. When Ruth's father was ill with cancer last year, Jamie would send him care packages of books and snacks. He is a caring and hard-working individual who values his relationships and is inval-



able to this community.”

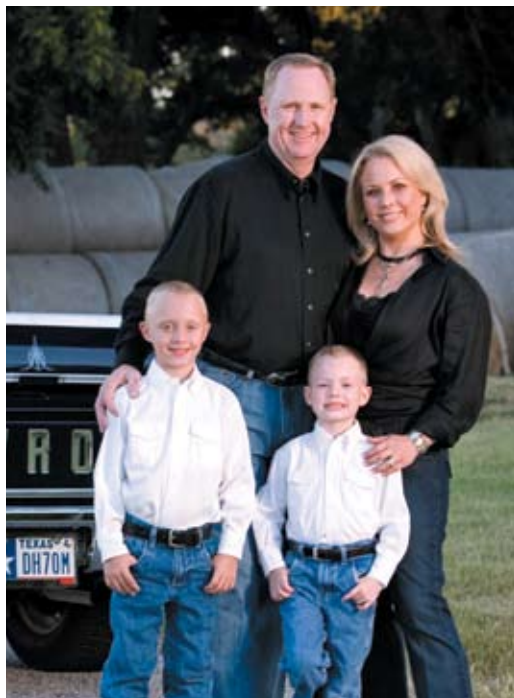
Reilly describes Adams as one of the most loyal human beings on the planet.

“I have observed Jamie being a faithful and loving husband, a devoted and very present dad, a special friend and a confidante to his high-level list of clients,” he said. “More importantly, I have witnessed Jamie reaching out and being a friend and guardian angel to the sick and oppressed, especially children he does not even know. Jamie Adams is a good man.”

Fort Worth’s First Lady, Rosie Moncrief, a friend and client, describes Adams as a person who “embodies all of the admirable characteristics of a loyal friend and trusted businessman.”

“As a younger man, Jamie was mentored by a personal hero of mine, Mike Reilly,” Moncrief said. “Mike has quietly and without fanfare changed the course of more people than anyone I know. Jamie is an absolute delight to be around in either a personal or business setting because he’s always fun, professional and appropriate.”

Adams said he has been lucky in the real estate business. “Somehow things always resurface and come together. We



*FAMILY VALUES / Most important to Jamie and Melanie is teaching their two boys, Jared, 8, and Jeremy, 5, to appreciate dedication to others.*

benefiting the DFW March of Dimes, an event that will be hosted at Billy Bob’s Texas on Sept. 1.

Diabetes has also been a challenge in both Jamie and Melanie’s families. For seven years, Adams has served on the auction committee for Randy Galloway’s Stars of Texas ... Racing Against the Odds, benefiting the American Diabetes Association. Galloway and wife, Jeanine, are honorary chairpersons.

Although Jamie and Melanie help with numerous charities, Jamie reminds us that his deep-seeded desires of giving to others is a result of his mother’s sacrifices to him and his brothers.

To Jamie and Melanie, who are involved in various other charities in addition to Racing Against the Odds and March of Dimes, teaching their children to find a way to give back to others is an important lesson to learn. “I want our boys to grow to understand and appreciate dedication to others,” Jamie said.

“Jamie wants his kids to look up to him and realize he’s fair to everybody,” said Rick Murdock, president of RM Communications in Southlake. Murdock speaks highly of

**“He delivers more than he promises. He meets people ... they love him and make him a part of their lives.”** - Gloria Van Zandt

had the best year we’ve ever had in 2007, and are on target for an even better 2008,” he said. “The things we have in the pipeline are tremendous. We try to be thankful for what we have.”

Adams’ youngest brother, Michael, died from brain cancer just after Jamie moved to the Metroplex, and Melanie’s dad died of cancer when she was 18. Needless to say, cancer research always strikes a cord with them. They served as Silver Spurs Gala co-chairpersons benefiting the Cancer Research Foundation of North Texas in 2001. Their son, Jared, was born two months premature when Melanie endured HELLP syndrome. Their younger son, Jeremy, arrived three weeks early.

“We have overwhelming gratitude for the March of Dimes,” Melanie said. Jamie and Melanie are co-chairpersons for the 2008 Third Annual Pickin’ for Premies,

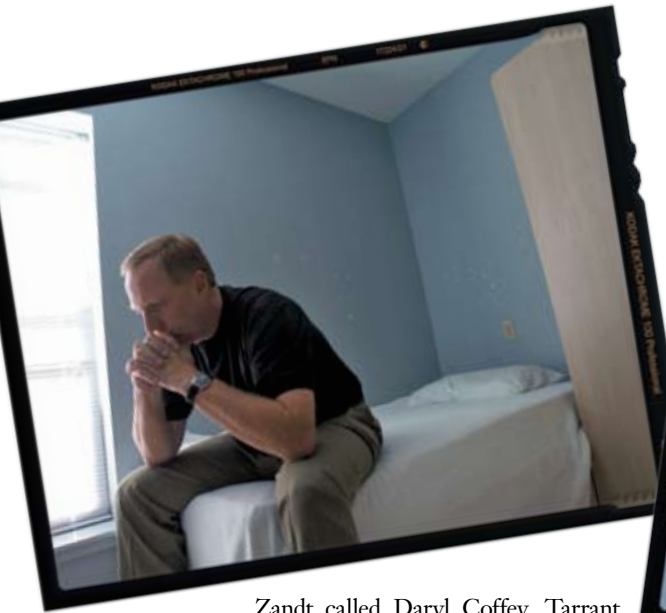
his friendship and professional relationship with Adams. “Jamie wants his boys to feel just as comfortable with the underprivileged as they would be with the President of the United States,” he added.

### ROCK BOTTOM

By 1992, Adams was growing a strong business and was provided a break into professional sports. But just when the perception of success set in, he was faced with the ultimate choice of losing it all: Two boxes or Billy Gregory Pine Street County Detox Center in Fort Worth ...

Adams’ casual drinking days in his youth had progressed during the days of being a rodeo clown and selling boots, and silently continued into his early years of real estate. “I was turning into my dad,” Adams said.

Knowing that he and Jamie were friends, Gloria Van



A SOBERING PAST / Adams checked into the Billy Gregory Pine Street Detox Center (pictured) 16 years ago.

Zandt called Daryl Coffey, Tarrant County Criminal Court Judge, and asked him to have everything in place for Adams to go to Pine Street. Coffey made the arrangements, while Van Zandt and her former office manager, Elaine Agel, sat down with Adams. They put two empty boxes on the floor and were very direct with tough love, Adams recalled. "I had two choices: Take the boxes and pack up my things or check into Pine Street and get sober."

"Even in the lowest days of his life, he never did anything socially or professionally unacceptable," Van Zandt said. "He was taking good care of his clients. Most people around him didn't realize how ill he was becoming. He hid it well, or so he thought, but not from those closest to him."

Pine Street kept Adams for 21 days before he lost his first bed due to county regulations. "They wanted to keep me another 30 days," Adams said. While out on leave awaiting a new bed, Adams begged Van Zandt to give him a second chance because disappearing another month would destroy his business. She had covered for him the first 21 days. "I told Gloria and Elaine that I would not disappoint them and expressed sincerity in never looking back," Adams recalled. They agreed to allow his return to work after he told them he would pack his own things and leave if they ever found out that he had another drink. He never did.

"People sometimes have to hit bottom before they decide to turn around," Coffey said. "It was pretty hard on Jamie, but it worked. Pine Street is the last stop for a lot of people. I think Jamie realized that there were a lot of people out there worse than he was, and that he needed to straighten his act up."

"I've never said a word about those days before now," Van Zandt said. "I told Jamie at that meeting that it was his choice. He had a future. The groundwork was laid, and all he had to do was have faith in himself and follow through. He did it beautifully. He's more proud of that accomplishment than any million-dollar real estate transaction." In 2002, on the 10th anniversary of his sobriety, Adams sent roses to Van Zandt with a card that read: "I made it 10 years!"

Adams re-visited Pine Street this week. He graciously agreed to be photographed there for this story. "It looked the same, same gray walls and same smell," he said. What he found there 16 years ago, he

said was peace, humility and life. "Peace is accepting the past, learning and making a new life. Peace is the idea that somehow, someone down the line might be inspired by my experience."

Adams said if there was one message he would like to share from his experience at rock bottom, it would be: "We're all in this life together for a purpose unique to ourselves—to make a difference in this world by selflessly considering others. When you continue poisoning yourself by a substance of choice, you act selfishly and have nothing to offer to even those who love you most."

He also expressed sincere concern for reaching out to others who may battle the severe health effects of alcohol, knowing how even the strongest of men often suffer in social and personal silence. "There is no shame in helping others with disease," he said.

There is much to celebrate in this life, he says. He still raises a full glass in celebration with friends, and remains the designated driver.

"We are all given opportunities in this life," Adams said. "What counts is what we do with them." ■

