

Fruitland Park mayor's wife earns high honor from Sumter Chamber

By **Larry D. Croom** - January 18, 2019

Meredith Cheshire lights up when she picks up a photograph of her late grandfather – the man her son is named after.



Meredith Cheshire, who is married to Fruitland Park Mayor Chris Cheshire, is the president of their highly successful medical practice that's located in The Villages in Lake Sumter Landing. She was named the 2019 Sumter County Chamber of Commerce's 2019 Business Woman of the Year on Friday night.

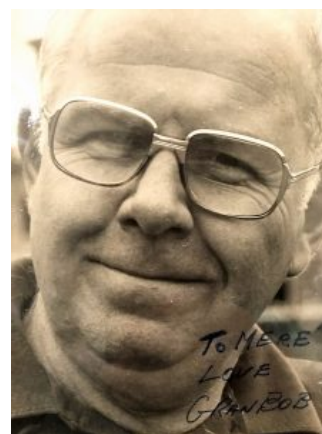
She fondly recalls her days in Manhattan with this bigger-than-life man who served in the Army and then helped start new divisions in two companies – General Electric and Sony – that have proven to be giants in the world of business. And she smiles as she drifts back to the days of her youth – a time when she was a sponge, learning as much as she possibly could about the world of business from him and loving every second of their time together.

That man, "GranBob" Robert J. Cullen Jr., clearly was on Cheshire's mind Friday night as she accepted the Sumter County Chamber of Commerce's 2019 Business Woman of the Year award. The wife of Fruitland Park Mayor Chris Cheshire and the mother of 12-year-old Cullen and 8-year-old Maeve, Meredith is the president of their highly successful businesses, Mulberry Integrative Medicine and Faeve Plant Therapies, located at 910 Old Camp Road in Lake Sumter Landing.

The acupuncture practice, which first started in 2005 in the Mulberry Grove area, mixes Western and Eastern medicine under one roof. And Faeve Plant Therapies specializes in all-natural, all-organic beauty and health products, pain creams, etc.

As the person who oversees the business side of their integrative and alternative medical livelihood, Meredith is quick to give her grandfather credit where credit is due.

"I went to the school of the Greatest Generation," she said. "I picked up everything I possibly could. Those things aren't printed in books and they're not taught in schools. But they're inherently handed



Meredith Cheshire credits her late grandfather, Robert J. Cullen Jr., for teaching her how to be successful in the world of business.

Fruitland Park mayor's wife earns high honor from Sumter Chamber - Villages-News: News, events, classifieds in The Villages, FL
 down, like the Native Americans hand down medicine. It's just a way of thinking that I think is the reason we've been so successful."



Meredith Cheshire, shown with husband Chris, after winning the Sumter County Chamber of Commerce's 2019 Business Woman of the Year award on Friday night.

Meredith also fondly recalls the two rules her grandfather preached for being successful in the business world.

"One is if you're not successful at home, you're never going to be successful outside of the home," she said. "You need that peace and that tranquility and that understanding, whatever your situation is, that you're not bringing in the door with you. Because the minute you bring your personal life into the door of your business, you're already taking a hit from somebody else who has full concentration on their business."

The second one, Meredith said, is equally important – know what you don't know.

"It's OK not to know everything," she said. "Once you know what you don't know, you figure out those gaps and you fill those gaps. That's how you also grow in business."

Meredith said she certainly doesn't know everything there is to know about the medical business and acupuncture and cosmetic manufacturing. But she said she understands where she's lacking and knows what to do about it.

"I know where to find the people to fill in the gaps, which makes me a better business person," she said.

Meredith also flashes a huge smile when she thinks back on the days when she and Chris decided to pull up their roots in Long Island, N.Y. and relocate to Fruitland Park to start their practice in The

Fruitland Park mayor's wife earns high honor from Sumter Chamber - Villages-News: News, events, classifieds in The Villages, FL Villages. It happened after a 2005 visit to Meredith's mother, the late Christine D. Murdock, who lived in Florida's Friendliest Hometown at the time.

"Chris said, 'It's a retirement community. What are we going to do, play shuffleboard,'" Meredith recalled with a chuckle. "We went out on a golf cart and we went to Spanish Springs and partied and we had a great time. By the end of the weekend, we had secured commercial medical space up at Mulberry."



Meredith Cheshire, left, poses with her late mother, Christine D. Murdock, who lived in The Villages.

Meredith said she left her job as project accountant in the construction industry and Chris left behind a successful medical practice. They loaded up two cars with all of their belongings, two dogs and "200 to 300 pounds of Chinese herbs" and headed for a new life in the Sunshine State.

Along the way, Meredith said they have faced both good and tough times.

"When Chris first rolled into town, it was, 'He's a quack. Acupuncture is weird,'" she said. "But now we have a steady stream of patients who come through our doors. They're living The Villages lifestyle and they need to be active and healthy."



Meredith Cheshire poses with a very special Chinese money tree on the back porch of her Fruitland Park home.

Meredith said they also brought a tiny Chinese money tree with them that was given to Chris by one of his herb providers. She said she and Chris believe that tree, which is in a large pot on their back porch, symbolizes their success.

"I've taken care of it, and today it's a monster," she said, looking up at its branches above her head.

As for the award she received Friday night, Meredith said it's wonderful to be recognized by her peers and those she has become friends with in the local area over the years. And she added that both she and Chris take their responsibilities as medical providers quite seriously and are honored to help those who call on them in their times of need.

"It's nice to be that resource and that's something that we've built over the years," said Meredith, who also is a certified herbalist and registered aroma therapist. "So I think out of this whole award, that's probably what I'm most proud of is being able to work so hard and to have proven ourselves to be a resource to give back to the community."



Meredith Cheshire and her husband, Chris, who is the mayor of Fruitland Park, relocated to Central Florida in 2005 to open a medical practice in The Villages.

Meredith, a past board member and treasurer with the chamber, said she and Chris both truly appreciate the relationships they've established with area residents over the years, including those who come from long lines of families that call Sumter County home.

"They have been super-kind to us," she said. "They've given us the law of the land, helped us with running our business and shared different intricacies that we wouldn't know because we have a New York background. So that's been very helpful."



Meredith Cheshire, right, with husband Chris, 12-year-old son Cullen and 8-year-old daughter Maeve.

Meredith said she'd also like thank all of their patients and clients for their continued support and friendships.

"They've given us a lot of wisdom and a lot of faith over the years," she said. "Sometimes they've believed in us more than we believed in ourselves. And some of them have become really good friends and even pseudo- grandparents to my children. This is a really wonderful community to be in because it's like a family. It's something that I don't think you're going to find anywhere else in the world."



Meredith and Chris Cheshire were married at the old Church on the Square and are enjoying raising their two children, Villages Charter School students Cullen and Maeve, in Fruitland Park, where Chris serves as the city's mayor.

Chris agreed, saying that Meredith does a wonderful job running their business, adding with a laugh that her toughest job might be putting up with him. But on a more serious note, he said there's another reason he's so proud of the woman he married at Church on the Square in The Villages in October 2006.

"I think the greatest thing Meredith has done is become a role model, not only for our daughter, but for all young women she comes in contact with," he said. "Her accomplishments encourage the next generation of female business leaders and I think that's pretty amazing and special."

**PROSTATE
EVALUATION
CENTER**

Dr. James W. Young is pleased to offer Rezum® for the treatment of BPH

Problems urinating? It may not have to be that way! Rezum is a revolutionary new minimally-invasive procedure that uses natural thermal energy stored in water vapor to destroy excess prostate tissue, and it is performed in the office under local anesthesia...

★★★★★ (235)

Popular In the Community



Sponsored

PERSEVERANCE BRASS

VILLAGER ARRESTED ON

LEESBURG TO CONSID