

# [***Interview with Casey DeSantis, FL First Lady and Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL), Presidential Candidate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B2C-5JW1-JCS1-62PB-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News LIVE EVENT 11:00 AM EST

January 8, 2024 Monday

Copyright 2024 Fox News Network LLC All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; International

**Length:** 1559 words

**Byline:** Harris Faulkner

**Guests:** Casey DeSantis, FL First Lady, Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL), Presidential Candidate

**Body**

HARRIS FAULKNER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: I want to take a look back now at my special series "Democracy 24: Families in Focus," because we're just a week out now from the big primary season kicking off in full in Iowa, candid interviews taking you behind the scenes and bringing you personal stories from those closest to the men and women looking to lead our nation.

I traveled to Tallahassee, Florida, the historic people's house of Florida. The state's first lady, Casey DeSantis, and her family were home from the campaign trail, and we got to chat a while.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CASEY DESANTIS, FLORIDA FIRST LADY: You move into the governor's mansion, it's pretty neat.

FAULKNER: Yes?

(CROSSTALK)

C. DESANTIS: And it's an honor and it's a privilege too to be able to be in a -- obviously, this is history.

FAULKNER (voice-over): Born in the Midwest, Casey DeSantis tells me it's been a blessed journey to get here.

C. DESANTIS: I grew up in Troy, Ohio, USA, so in Southwestern Ohio, about 45 minutes north of Dayton. I was there just about until high school.

And then, after that, I had the opportunity to go down to Charleston, South Carolina. I went to the College of Charleston. My sister was an Air Force pilot, so she was stationed there in North Charleston. My dad at one point in time was working in Charleston at the Medical University of South Carolina. He was an optometrist.

So we had the whole family in Charleston, South Carolina, for a while in the Lowcountry.

FAULKNER (on camera): So, when you were a kid, what were some of the things that you dreamed of doing?

(LAUGHTER)

C. DESANTIS: Well, I mean, I was big into horses when I was little, so I always thought that I was going to be riding horses the rest of my life.

I was a very, very shy kid. I'm really glad that my parents pushed me to do athletics, because not only was it good to get out there and make friendships, but also the competition, and not only winning and the victory, but also learning how to lose. That's one of the hardest things that you have to go through, and then pick yourself up, become resilient.

FAULKNER: I know I was surprised to find out that you were NCAA Division I.

C. DESANTIS: I was runner-up, which still burns a little bit, because I didn't come out on top.

FAULKNER: So, equestrian. And when you say you came in second, you mean nationally?

C. DESANTIS: Nationally, yes, runner-up, NCAA runner-up champion. So...

FAULKNER: That's amazing.

C. DESANTIS: It was great, but it was still one of those things where you're so close to winning.

FAULKNER: Yes.

C. DESANTIS: But it's all right.

FAULKNER (voice-over): Casey and Governor Ron DeSantis were both college athletes. Sports is a big topic in their home.

(on camera): There's a huge push to protect young girls and women's sports, to keep it with us...

C. DESANTIS: Yes.

FAULKNER: ... and not competing with biological males.

C. DESANTIS: As it should be. I mean, I think that's what we should be doing. And we should have a united voice. And I think that we do. I think there are a lot of Republicans, independents and Democrats who do not believe that biological men should be taking opportunities from women.

(CHEERING AND APPLAUSE)

GOV. RON DESANTIS (R-FL), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Ooh. Home run. Wow. That's a good one.

FAULKNER: How did you meet your husband?

C. DESANTIS: I was working in television, and he was in the Navy. He was stationed at Mayport. He's a JAG officer.

And we were -- happened to be at the same driving range facility. I knew I needed a little bit of help with my golf swing, to be honest with you.

(LAUGHTER)

C. DESANTIS: And he had a better swing than I did. He ended up driving to go find a place for us to go meet.

FAULKNER: How long did you date before you knew, yes, this is the one?

C. DESANTIS: Well, I knew very quickly after meeting him that he was the one. I mean, you can tell. He's funny. He's a great guy to be around. He's very, very, very smart. He has a good moral compass.

R. DESANTIS: I think her being from Ohio, my mom being from Ohio, my dad being from Western Pennsylvania, there's just a lot of similarities, because we were raised by, I think, parents that had similar frame of mind.

C. DESANTIS: He has great parents. His mom was a nurse. His dad was somebody who was installing the Nielsen rating boxes on the back of TVs.

FAULKNER: Oh, yes.

C. DESANTIS: They were in Dunedin. But he really worked hard in school and had the opportunity to be able to work his way through Yale and Harvard.

And, after that, what he decided to do was volunteer to go into the Navy. He wanted to give back to the country that had given him so much. And he saw 9/11 happening.

FAULKNER (voice-over): In 2009, Jill Casey Black became Mrs. Ron DeSantis, and their lives together took off. Her TV career included a stint at The Golf Channel with the show "PGA Tour Today."

Her newlywed husband, fresh off an illustrious military career, was going into ***politics***.

R. DESANTIS: When I first ran for Congress in 2012, she'd be knocking on doors, these Republican voters' doors. And just think about it. Like, you're on TV. When people see you in person, it's kind of a big deal if they know you from TV.

So, literally, someone that they see in the morning show shows up at their doorstep.

(LAUGHTER)

R. DESANTIS: And they're like, wait a minute, I know you.

C. DESANTIS: To all of those people across the state, our first responders, I want to say thank you.

FAULKNER: These days, Casey DeSantis is still famous in Florida, as first lady, with super fame at home for being mom; 6-year-old Madison just started first grade, 5-year-old Mason in kindergarten, and 3-year-old Mamie just began pre-K.

C. DESANTIS: Where you going? Come back. Do a circle and come back.

They're the first young family to live in the governor's mansion in about 60 years. Mamie is the first baby born in the governor's mansion in about 50 years. And so they have a unique perspective on life. They have always had the security detail around them. They think that that's just normal part of life.

But they're having fun, and they get a lot of neat opportunities. And, also, this is an opportunity for us to be able to teach our kids about what exactly we are fighting for.

R. DESANTIS: I do want to bring up my better half, the first lady of Florida, to say a few words.

(CHEERING AND APPLAUSE)

FAULKNER (on camera): Who are you as first lady? What defines you?

C. DESANTIS: What defines me as first lady? I think one who looks at the role with a lot of humility, right? It isn't about me. It is about being in a position to be able to do good on behalf of the people of this state and hopefully of this country.

FAULKNER: Tell me about some of the women that you have helped with Hope Florida.

C. DESANTIS: We have been able to transition off either partly or entirely more than 8,100 people from government assistance, because they're on a pathway to economic self-sufficiency. They're now in homes, on their own.

They're cooking for their children literally in tears because this is the first time that they have a roof over their home -- over their house that they have been able to get on their own.

FAULKNER (voice-over): Casey told me helping others also comes from getting a second chance at life. In October, 2021, her husband announced Casey DeSantis had breast cancer.

C. DESANTIS: The day that I ultimately found out, it was Ron who was the one that told me, because I couldn't listen to the doctors. I didn't want to hear any of the opining. I didn't know if I was going to see my kids graduate from kindergarten, let alone going off into high school or watching them walk down the aisle.

So I had him every step of the way there as a shoulder to cry on.

FAULKNER (on camera): How does it make you feel when she talks about survival because of you?

R. DESANTIS: I did my role as what a good husband should do, but she really fought hard.

And I will tell you, once we went public with it, the amount of prayers that we got from Florida and around the country really, really boosted her spirit and my spirit.

C. DESANTIS: But what he did for me in my cancer battle is what he did for the people of this state during COVID, because he went through and he analyzed the data. Just like he fought for me, he fought for the people of this state.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

C. DESANTIS: Told that we must trust the science.

DR. ANTHONY FAUCI, FORMER CHIEF MEDICAL ADVISER TO PRESIDENT BIDEN: Indoor and outdoor venues should be closed.

C. DESANTIS: We have been told that we must deny truth, back down and look the other way. Enough is enough. When you come after our kids, we fight back.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

FAULKNER (voice-over): That's Casey's voice in that campaign ad about fighting for America's children. And she wrote it. She says it's all hands on deck to get all five of the DeSantis family to the White House.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

FAULKNER: And we will have more "Families in Focus" later this week.

I got to spend time with a couple of others, former Ambassador Nikki Haley and her children in their home state of South Carolina, and a wonderful day in New Hampshire on the campaign trail with Dr. Apoorva Ramaswamy. She told me what inspired her husband, Vivek, to run for president. And I got to hold a baby.

I have loved the series, loved meeting the DeSantis family. It's really, really been fun. And now it all kicks off with primary season one week from today in Iowa.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2024

**End of Document**