

Biography/Background of Mike and Harriet McManus

Mike & Harriet McManus are Co-Chairs of Marriage Savers, a ministry whose goal is to help churches and communities cut their divorce rate and raise their marriage rate. They have helped the clergy of more than 200 cities adopt a Community Marriage Policy, an agreement across denominational lines, to make marriage such a priority in their churches that divorce rates fall.

According to a study by the Institute for Research & Evaluation, divorce rates dropped in the first 114 cities with a Community Marriage Policy saving 30,000 to 50,000 marriages by 2001. With six more years and 100 more CMP cities, perhaps 100,000 divorces have been averted.

Mike McManus, 66, a Duke graduate, was TIME magazine's youngest correspondent in 1963. He worked in Latin America initially and then in Washington. Since 1981, he has written a weekly syndicated column, "**Ethics & Religion.**" He wrote a book, *Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and Family Avoid Divorce*, published in 1995. Its last chapter tells how one city, Modesto, CA, became the first city to adopt a "Community Marriage Policy", as the result of a speech Mike made in 1986 to local pastors, in which he suggested how the city could cut its divorce rate in half. That city's divorce rate has since plunged 50%. Other cities slashing divorce rates in half are Austin, Kansas City, KS, Salem, OR and El Paso.



Harriet McManus married Mike Oct. 16, 1965. She was a homemaker, helping three sons grow into maturity. She was the first editor of *Marriage Savers* and edits every column Mike writes. Together, they began a marriage ministry in their home church, Fourth Presbyterian Church of Bethesda in 1992. They pioneered the training of couples with healthy marriages to be Mentor Couples who prepared 288 couples for marriage from 1992-2001. It was so rigorous that 55 couples decided **not** to marry, a big 19% of the total. But of the 230+ couples who did marry, there have been only 7 divorces. That's a 3% divorce rate over a decade, or a 97% success rate. **That's marriage insurance.**

The Marriage Savers Ministry: In 1996 Harriet began traveling with Mike to help create Community Marriage Policies and to train Mentor Couples and clergy. In 1996, Mike and Harriet McManus co-founded a non-profit corporation called Marriage Savers whose goal is to push down divorce and cohabitation rates and raise marriage rates. The key strategy is for local clergy to adopt a Community Marriage Policy (in 220 cities by 12/07). Marriage Savers then trains clergy and Mentor Couples in participating churches to help other couples achieve the goals outlined above.

Media: Their work has attracted national media coverage, most recently a profile of a Community Marriage Policy in suburban Portland Oregon on **ABC World News** with Charles Gibson on October 22, 2007. The **Coral Ridge Hour** broadcast an 11 minute segment about Marriage Savers on Father's Day, 2005. The **CBS Early Show** broadcast a story June 2004 on Mike and Harriet mentoring their 50th couple. **Focus on the Family** interviewed them May 21, 2004. A **Washington Post Magazine** cover story Feb. 29, 2004 featured Mike and Harriet mentoring a Nigerian couple. They work has been reported on **NBC Nightly News, ABC World News Tonight, and CBS "48 Hours"**. He's appeared on **MS-NBC, Fox, BBC, CBC, Oprah, The O'Reilly Factor. TIME, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today** and hundreds of local papers have reported on their work.

Family: Mike and Harriet have been married 42 years and have three married sons and six grandchildren. Their sons are all achievers. Adam McManus hosts a daily radio talk show 3 hours a day in San Antonio, TX. John McManus is the staff director of the Ways & Means Health Subcommittee which added drug benefits to Medicare; he now runs The McManus Group, providing consulting and lobbying for the American Medical Association, various drug companies and equipment manufacturers. Tim McManus is CEO of a hospital in Gulfport, MS. ■