



JUNE 2024

# STROLL

Paradise Valley

MEET YOUR  
NEIGHBORS

**INSPIRING  
STORY OF  
NFL LEGEND**

**NICK  
LOWERY**

PHOTO BY MATT YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHY



**TRAVEL TIPS**

June Outside the Great State 48

**RESIDENT RECIPES**

Salsa Verde with Salmon

**STYLED BY**

**ROBYN BIEN-WILLNER**

Father's Day Gift Guide

DELIVERING NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

INSIDE THE  
INSPIRING STORY OF

**NFL  
LEGEND**

**NICK  
LOWERY**

LOWERY





**N**ick Lowery is more than just a great football player. Yes, he had a fantastic 13-year NFL career, enduring 11 rejections to become the Kansas City Chiefs' all-time leading scorer. He was inducted into the Chiefs Hall of Fame in 2009. When he retired, Nick had the most field goals in NFL history, the most 50-yarders, and ranked first in field goal completion percentage in NFL history from 1980-1993. He still owns the record for the longest field goal in NFL history in the first quarter, 58 yards, first set 40 years ago! Nick's list of football accomplishments as one of the greatest kickers of all time is endless. Yet he is most proud of what he's done off the field.

Lowery received the Byron Whizzer White Award, the NFL Players Association's most prestigious humanitarian award. In addition, he was the Chiefs' and NY Jets' NFL Man of the Year five times. Lowery credits his parents for his dedication to service. His father had a long career in the CIA as an expert on Russia, and only after he died did Nick learn that Sidney Lowery, at the height of the Cold War, was Chief of Station in London. His mother, Hazel, was an officer in England's Women's Royal Navy, the "Wrens." Speaking perhaps the best German in England as an Honors Student in Hoch Deutsche in the first full class of women at Oxford before the War, Hazel played a role in gathering intelligence at the legendary Bletchley Park decoding Center during WWII. She was sent to Berlin to question Hitler's record keepers after the war. 10 years after her passing, Nick learned from a close family friend a dark secret from her children: that at the end of the war, she was sent to document the Nazi death camps at Dachau and presented about them for more than a year after the war. Such is a mother's love.

Nick's early years were spent both in the DC area and Europe in England and Germany. In England, Nick honed his kicking skills on the soccer fields of St. Paul's School in Kensington, London, imagining himself one of England's World Cup Champions the year England hosted and won the World Cup in 1966. Eventually, after two years in Bonn, Germany, the Lowery family moved back to the United States, where Nick attended the prestigious Potomac and St. Albans Schools in the Washington DC area. As a St. Albans Bulldog, Nick kicked his first high school field goal to beat Sidwell Friends (where Chelsea Clinton and the Obama girls attended), as he excelled both in the classroom and on the sports field. A harbinger of the future came in the final game of Nick's high school career when Nick kicked a 43-yard field goal despite the mud and rain to beat arch-rival Landon School 9-7 in the last 2 seconds.

Nick's academic and athletic prowess took him to Dartmouth College, where he also pitched on the baseball team and was All-Ivy Football and All-New England twice. He studied Government and Drama and interned with Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island, working on new energy alternatives. He then pursued a career in the NFL. While getting cut by eight teams, he worked as a legislative aide for Chafee again, which at the time looked like a permanent job on the Senate Commerce Science and Transportation Committee staff. But he knew he needed to try one last time. The twelfth time was the answer, giving up a job working for Oregon Senator Bob Packwood on Aviation Safety. Nick's persistence led to a home with the Kansas City Chiefs.

"Never, Never, Never Give Up!" Nick listened to his inner voice, out-competing head-to-head legendary kicker Jan Stenerud, a future NFL Hall of Famer, and proceeded to break all Stenerud's



team and NFL records. His very first field goals set club and NFL records with the first game with two 50-yarders. But using that intense, spotlight stage as a high-achieving athlete to help others lit another fire. Beginning with "Kick with Nick" for Cerebral Palsy to honor his Aunt Margaret, who triumphed over her own CP to become a gifted professional writer and the University of Utah Librarian. "Kick with Nick" lit a spiritual fire inside him that continues to burn today. "Kick with Nick" raised \$1 Million for UCP and helped educate people about the rights of people with disabilities. "Kick with Nick" won the National UCP award in Washington, DC, in 1989, and

soon after, President H. W. Bush helped pass The Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 to recognize the fundamental rights of people with disabilities.

Before Nick's last season in 1996, Nick came to Phoenix to watch the Super Bowl, stayed at the Hyatt at Gainey Ranch, fell in love with Arizona, and bought a house at Gainey Ranch that very week. It was in Arizona that he began his work with Native youth. After retiring from the NFL, Nick moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 2000 for two years and earned a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. He won a Fellowship from the Kellogg Foundation to develop an experiential leadership

program for Native Americans that honored Native History and role models, "NENY" or Nation Building for Native Youth. Nick had already founded Native Vision in 1996 with Johns Hopkins, recruiting the NFL Players Association. It was recognized on *Oprah* as the best new program for Native Youth.

Nick's passion for helping Native youth discover their unique power was recognized first in a nomination by President Clinton and, subsequently, President W. Bush, both nominating him as a Founding Director of the National Fund for American Indian Education. Nick became Chairman in 2004. He testified twice before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs before Chairman Ben Nighthorse Campbell and

before Arizona's own Senator John McCain on problems facing Native youth, and later on improving Native Education.

Lowery sold his house in Kansas City in 2006, becoming a full-time Arizona resident. Nick resists the word "Retire," preferring the term *Remind*. "Remind means to 'Refresh the Mind.' Retire to me sounds more like 'repetitive' and 'tired.' I will never retire."

Nick is a part-owner and ambassador for award-winning El Bandido Yankoe Tequila with his former NFL teammates Jim Bob Morris and Chris Chelios of NHL fame. If you go to his house and mention you like tequila, you might end up sampling it with him! He is also a senior Advisor and Brand Ambassador for two fascinating A.L. companies, one called Massive Blue, dedicated to catching fentanyl and human traffickers, and the other is called Alzheimer's Treatment

Centers of America. Both companies are re-writing paradigms, one of aging with the dignity of cognitive clarity, the other helping identify Fentanyl and human traffickers, empowering law enforcement during what has been a challenging time.

However, Nick's creative energy is still spent on his non-profit endeavors. He won the Arizona Interfaith Movement's Lifetime Achievement Award, which was given in early 2020, and today, it focuses on helping the homeless. For 17 years and 66 events, Champions for the Homeless has partnered with St. Vincent de Paul to put a human face on the homeless. "For every person we help move out of homelessness, two are entering homelessness...and we are dedicated to treating the homeless as individuals with dignity, each with their own unique journey and story."

Nick uses his connections and star power to bring out local celebrities and musicians to help hand out meals, thousands of T-shirts, underwear, socks, and clothing, along with gift cards, chiropractic care, haircuts, and uplifting music from the Champions Orchestra to people in need in the Valley. "Our goal is so much more than material gifts; it is that miraculously, all 300+ Champions Volunteers look every single one of our 1,000 homeless brothers and sisters in the eye and say in word and deed, that 'We hear you, we see you, and we truly love you!'"

Champions are held every Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and Easter, and twice during the often-scorching hot Phoenix summer. Nick and Champions made Phoenix the very first city in the country to provide free Covid testing for the homeless. "When we help one person, it literally changes our brain chemistry, transforming a mental dirt path into a superhighway of purpose; we all have the ability to make a unique difference," Lowery goes on. "When you see people feeling safe and loved, understood and respected, you witness hardened layers of pain burned into them over the years on the street fall away in minutes."

When asked how and why he gets involved with so much for the community, Nick shared his own paradigm: "It's not the brightness of the spotlight. It's the intensity of the light within you. I truly am just as proud of my career after football as I am of having my name on the wall at Arrowhead Stadium for the reigning Super Bowl Champion Kansas City Chiefs. We can always be about winning the even bigger Super Bowl of Life."

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