

# Neighborhood interview with City Council candidate Adonica Shaw Porter

By JEAN BARTLETT | THE WEEK OF 9-3-18-9-9-18



(Jean Bartlett photo)

**An early morning interview with Andie Porter at Fog City Java on Crespi.**

Adonica (Andie) Shaw Porter's kickoff campaign for Pacifica City Council was held the last Sunday in August at Pacifica's Frontierland Park. People came to meet the candidate, to enjoy barbeque and to participate in the sweet amenities of the park: horseshoes, a playground and a vast green lawn perfect for serious kid fun no matter one's age.

The park is a favorite of the Porter family and the date of the event had real significance for the candidate. August 26 is Women's Equality Day. The day celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment which granted women the right to vote on August 26, 1920. For Porter, being an advocate for women, being a champion for girls has been a dream and a commitment since childhood – a dream that rallied her to create her own nonprofit at the age of 23. Her foundation was called The S.H.A.W. Foundation and its goals were clearly stated in its acronym: Shaping Healthy Adolescent Women. She learned a lot in the two years she ran her foundation, which included never veering from her goal to encourage young women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (S.T.E.M.) and the arts. It also included understanding that philanthropy is not always enough on its own and that business tactics should be considered in any philanthropy approach.

"It must include an entrepreneurial mindset," Porter said. "Philanthropists have got to think about the long term; think about how to make a more sizeable, strategic impact on the community."

Due to "philanthropy on its own," her foundation did not succeed. But the experience inspired her TEDx Talk, "The Call for Philanthropreneurship:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykWgEyG92Mo>. "Success is not final and failure is not fatal," she said, quoting Winston Churchill. "And I am not one to let the grass grow under my feet."

Born in Pasadena, California, Porter lived in Glendale, Arizona until she was 8.

"When I was 8 we moved to Youngstown, Ohio and we lived there until I was 14. Then we came back to Pasadena because my maternal grandmother was sick."

Porter is the daughter of Regina Jordan and Charles Shaw and one of seven siblings.

"My dad had three children of his own: my oldest brother Chucky, my twin brothers Sean and Jason. I'm the fourth of the siblings. I have a half-brother through my mom and two adopted sisters."

Her dad died when she was 17. He was a Vietnam War veteran and he suffered from severe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). PTSD has been called, "an enormous long-term emotional and human cost of war," and Porter's father's resulting drug and alcohol issues led to several stints in prison and ultimately to his untimely death.

"When you talk to veterans and they tell you what's troubling them, you so often don't know what to do with it. I guess it is not a surprise that I want to work with veterans."

Porter's mom – who worked in administrative support, and still does, also had a silk flower business, and at one point, worked a second job at Kmart to be sure her children could have Christmas – was a 24/7 guiding light for her daughter.

"Every single summer, every single day I had to do assignments. I had to do essays in order to earn minutes outside. She would pull magazines on a range of topics." Porter laughed. "These weren't children's magazines. She would give me a prompt and I would have to write about it and that is how I would earn outside time with my friends or money to go to the mall."

Porter's mom also told her, "Pretty gets no points."

"She has always been a really big proponent of me having strength and substance and having something to talk about."

Porter went for her first job interview on her 16th birthday.

"I woke up and said, 'Today I'm 16 and it's time to get a job.' Then I went to McDonald's, asked to speak to the manager, did a mini interview, filled out my application and was hired. Work began two weeks later."

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Her next high school job was working as a lifeguard at the Rose Bowl's Aquatic Center. Then she headed off to the University of California, Irvine on a Division 1 athlete track and field scholarship in the triple jump. Her plan was to be an English teacher.

"That was based on my strength in writing and my wanting to work with kids."

But unexpected opportunity knocked. One of the student athlete advisors knew NBC4 Southern California reporter Beverly White. She thought Porter should try for an internship.

"I met with Beverly and was absolutely impressed with her ability to tell stories that were human-interest driven. I thought, 'That's it. I'm not going to be a teacher.'"

Porter stayed at UCI and changed her major to literary journalism. She also did those television internships, which included stints at CNN Los Angeles, NBC Press & Entertainment and KABC. She did some stringing for the Orange County Register on football. During her third year of college, she also started doing some modeling and acting. In 2007, through the national Miss Black USA Scholarship Pageant she became The Miss Black California USA titleholder. The national competition was held in West Africa, in the Republic of The Gambia, where the pageant winner would subsequently travel to, several times, as a goodwill ambassador. In addition, the Pageant's scholarship award paid for her last two years at UCI. At one point, just a little further down the road in 2009, she served as the executive director of the Miss Black California competition.

"They were having trouble finding someone to manage it and I took over it for a short while. But this was in that space between getting married and doing television work."

## BARTLETT'S BRIEFS

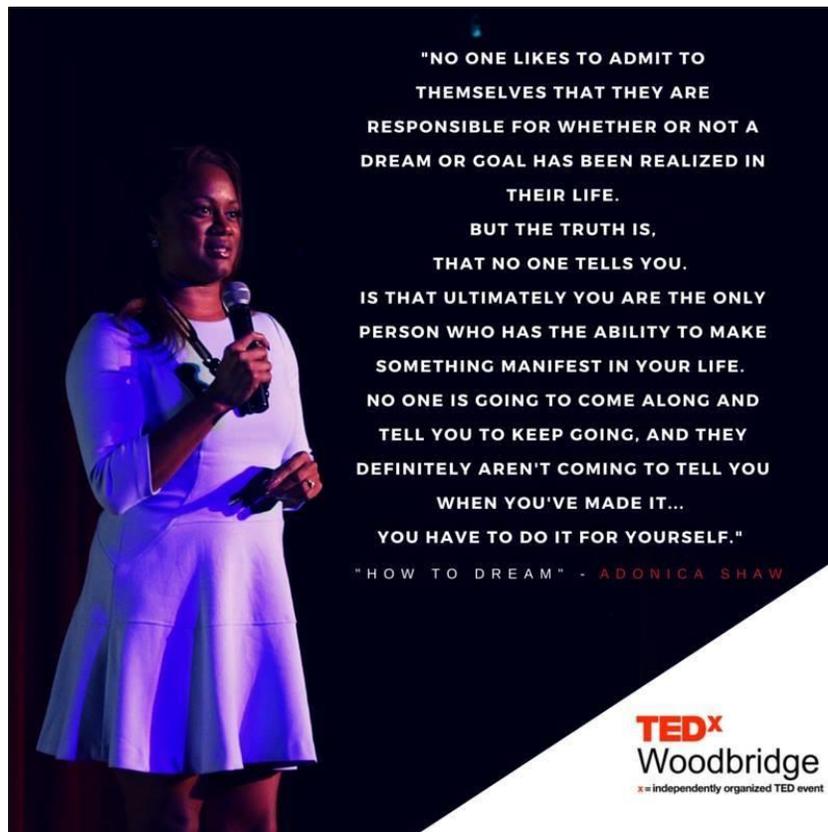
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She met her husband Rafael Porter when both were in their last year of college. He was going to San Jose State. Adonica was in San Jose, for a short period of time, to volunteer with a local soup kitchen. A high school friend invited her to "crash on his couch" while she was in town. That high school friend's roommate was Rafael.

"We got to know each other, long distance, over the next two months. After four months we were engaged and we married a year later. This year we celebrated our 10th anniversary."

Rafael grew up in Pacifica, in Fairmont. His folks, Oscar and Maria Porter, still live here, though now they live in the back of the valley. His two brothers, Daniel and Mateus Porter, are 2006 Terra Nova graduates. Both made headlines playing standout football for the high school, Mateus as a fullback and linebacker and Daniel as a running back. Daniel, still a Pacifica resident, is a running back coach for TN's varsity team. A resident of South City, Mateus owns a private MFT practice.

The couple first lived in Walnut Creek and Andie took some classes at San Francisco's Academy of Art University and through the Academy did some work in front of a green screen. Aaron Pero, KRON4 News Director, saw her on a commercial and contacted the school. She was invited to do a screen test for weather reporting, did some local weather reporting and with Pero's encouragement, got television work in Monterey and Santa Barbara. The couple moved to Soledad and loved it. Things were humming along. Their daughter Natalia, now 9, was born a year after they married. Porter remained with the news until her appendix burst and she had to rethink the immediate demands of her job. You can follow her job experience online, but it includes being the founder of Impressive Digital Media Management and Consulting, which she did for 5 years. The couple's son, Preston, now 6, was born during this time.



"Professionally, our stars were aligning," Porter laughed. "But we had kids and no support system. We went through so many different babysitters in search of individuals who were willing to commit and keep commitments. My mother-in-law had been working on me for years to come to the Bay Area, 'You will have free babysitting,' she told us. We thought we could do it all. We didn't want to start all over professionally. But we needed help and now I can't imagine not having them around the corner. It's wonderful. Our children get to see their grandparents every day. My mother-in-law, who is from Bahia, Brazil, is always sending me home with some delicious dish she's prepared so our family can just sit and enjoy."

Porter is the Associate Marketing Director for the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). California's Stem Cell Agency was created in 2004 via California Proposition 71: the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The initiative in turn created CIRM "to fund stem cell research in the state and to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs." Through funding clinical trials on diseases such as ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), Sickle Cell Disease, Huntington's Disease, HIV/AIDS, age-related macular degeneration, and many others, CIRM works hard to achieve its goal: "To transform medicine, lives and the future." Visit their website at <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/>.

Along with managing CIRM's social media, writing articles for science journals and blogging about things going on in the world of science, Porter also gets in front of the camera to host virtual roundtables in support of CIRM's work. For instance, just two days after her Pacifica City Council kickoff campaign, Porter hosted "Ask The Stem Cell Team" on Facebook Live. Her panelists were: a patient advocate for Sickle Cell Disease, a doctor from the Blood & Marrow Transplantation Program of UCSF's Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland, and a professor and MD with the Pediatrics UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center. The team answered questions about stem cell therapies for Sickle Cell Disease. Porter's job also sends her to legislative hearings in Sacramento where she works with a number of individuals, including: Assembly Speaker pro Tem Kevin Mullin, who chairs the Select Committee on Biotechnology, and CA State Senator Art Torres (Ret.) J.D., and Former SF District 8 Supervisor Jeff Sheehy, who both serve on CIRM's Governing Board. Gavin Newsom, Lieutenant Governor of California, has also been a staunch supporter of CIRM since the agency's beginning days.

"There can be a number of senators or legislators in the office at any time and we are all part of team to find those diseases and those cures. It's a very rewarding job though there is a heavier part to it too. While we are fighting to find those cures, we are talking to individuals struggling with a disease or illness and sometimes you lose people in the fight."

Since the Porter family arrived in Pacifica, four years ago, they've added another son. Aiden is now 1.



Adonica and Rafael, and their children Natalia, Preston and Aiden at Frontierland Park.

"My husband works for WiLine Networks, Inc., a startup company based in San Mateo that does telecommunications: Internet, TV, telephone service for businesses. He is also a coach for the Pacifica United Soccer Club here in town. In Brazil, when you are born, they give you a soccer ball or pierce your ears." Porter laughed. "My daughter got both. We are a big soccer family and on any number of Saturdays, we are up at 4 a.m., sitting in restaurant in San Francisco at the crack of dawn so we can watch a game in Europe."

"My daughter plays soccer, my son plays soccer and my 1-year-old can dribble the soccer ball and shoot a goal, because my husband is so serious about coaching them." Porter pauses to laugh heartily. "Seriously, after dinner, my husband goes downstairs with all three of them and they are doing drills around the garage. But they all love it. We definitely have three soccer players, though my daughter also plays volleyball. I played volleyball growing up and I loved it. I'm all about the soccer but we have to have some parental balance in our interests. But she loves it too and she's quite tall." The Porter family members also includes pals Sophie, a Siberian Husky, and Cat, who understands that he is additionally the proud owner of several names chosen by Natalia and Preston.

With all that she already has on her plate, why is she running for City Council?

"I have a lot of energy," she said. "And it's important to me to be involved with community. This is where we are raising our children. This is where their friends and many of their teachers live. This is where we are living and renting and this is a city, I believe, that is ready for both change as well as stronger commitments to what we already have."

"I think a problem Pacifica faces frequently is in regards to development. There is often a war, if you will, between environmentalists and pro development. I think our natural resources are beautiful, definitely attract visitors and cannot be displaced. But at the same time, we cannot stand still if you want to keep people here. Families who are renters, which includes my husband and me, are keenly aware if they have to spend between 4 and 8 thousand a month on rent, they should get some perks. Now we have some wonderful restaurants and shops, but we need more and we need more marketing to get Pacifica's name out there, not just to people who live outside of Pacifica but to people who live in Pacifica. Where is the old rickety beach shop where there is a woman in the back reading Tarot cards and selling jewels? Where is our drum circle? Where are those extra, fun quirky things that support living in a beach community? We need to bring in guest chefs which will bring in the people who are aware of those folks. Foodies bring in income. We need to make it easier for our businesses to be here, to start here, and to stay in business here and that means evaluating what they are getting for the fees they pay to do business here. Are those fees too high? Should they have easier opportunities to get the word out on who they are?"

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"We need big love between environment, history, the people who live here, our businesses and our arts. These are all things that can bring in income. We need people who know how to leverage social media to share Pacifica's story. We need a calendar designed on all things Pacifica and posted online. We need someone to create a scavenger hunt that will send people around to our businesses, our

historic sites and our incredible trails and vistas. We need interns, college students, who know how to do all of this social media. It's good for their résumé, it's good for us."

Porter would also like to build extra support for women and girls in Pacifica.

"We need a Women's Commission here. Women and girls need opportunities for mentorship. We need something that focuses on the issues that women and girls face daily, in school, in the work force."

She would also like Pacifica to be a place with Innovation Labs: labs where kids and adults can learn about science, technology and math, or labs where kids could give their own TEDx Talks, historians could give talks and seniors could give talks.

"I would love to see our Community Center given a Pacifican's name. That in itself inspires others."

"Over the last couple of years, I began to have political ambitions. I knew at some point I would run. I have seen so many women mobilize this year alone. 2018 has become the year of the woman. We are kind of feeding off of one another's energy to stand up for our rights, for our children, for our families and our communities. Initially I felt it was so far away from me. 'That was just what was happening on the other side of the country.' 'Oh, those people don't look like me.' 'Oh,

those people don't share the same ideology as me.' But as time went on, I started seeing more women like myself, under 40, that are very capable – some with families, some without, some married, some not, some with partners, some not – all being firm and standing in their own truth, to impact and affect good change.

"I believe we each have the responsibility to engage in government and allow our perspective to shape policy. When we are silent we lose opportunities to build stronger communities.

"I believe everyone has a voice and deserves representation at the table.

"I believe in Pacifica."

To learn more about Candidate Porter, visit her City of Pacifica Candidate Statement, in pdf format, at: <http://www.cityofpacifica.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=54995.59&BlobID=14482>. Information is also available on Facebook, LinkedIn and through her website: [www.electadonica.com](http://www.electadonica.com).



### **A Bartlett's Biographies Headliner**

Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Contra Costa County Times, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco.