

# Stay-at-home dads don't get their due

Wow, that Sarah Palin is really something. She's governor of the largest state in America. She fought corruption within her own party and won. She stands 270 electoral votes and one heartbeat away from the presidency of the United States. To top it all off, she's a mother of five.

None of her present fame, of course, would be possible without the brave, risky but confident decision of a noble and honorable man, a maverick who stands against the tide and goes with his gut instinct when he believes it's the right thing to do. I'm referring, of course, to her husband.

Quick, what's his name? How long is it taking you to remember the name of Tim Palin?

Actually, it's Todd. Gotcha.

The media's portrayal of Sarah Palin as a woman who does it all is hopelessly stuck in the '70s.

Remember the perfume ad for the woman who can "Bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan, and never let you forget you're a man?" Today's senior political reporters grew up during that time; the image of the feminist icon who can do everything still affects how they think.

Newsweek talked about Palin's "raising a child with Down syndrome." Hello? Isn't her husband helping just a teensy, weensy bit?

The New York Times did a major piece on how Palin combines politics and motherhood. Out of 1,800 words, a whopping 20 were devoted to her husband. Not that he's any big deal. He's just the man who made her combining of politics and motherhood possible.

Some of this is probably spin control by the Republicans. While they're not often in agreement with the liberal media, they want Palin seen as a Supermom, too. Palin was picked to mollify the party's social conservative base. They want to be darn sure that she isn't completely handing over her maternal duties to hubby.

That's why Mommy Palin is going to be seen holding her baby every chance she gets. By contrast, I predict we will never, ever see a picture of Dad holding the baby, unless Mom is in shot too. The image would simply be too jarring to social conservatives.

When Todd Palin's wife got the Repub-



OPINION

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lican VP nomination, I thought of the only full-time dad I know. Tim Born is a retired tough-as-nails Marine, married to an Air Force general in a position of national visibility. I have to mention his toughness because that's part of the media guidelines for describing full-time dads. Did I mention Todd Palin is a champion snowmobile racer?

The Borns have two daughters in elementary school. As Tim puts it, "It's easier to put 200 Marines in the field than it is to get two girls

on a school bus."

For Tim, the decision to stay home was a "no brainer." The trade-off was pretty simple: More money with a second income, or a better life for the kids. Does this sound at all familiar? Feminists would doubtless applaud Tim's decision to stay home, since he's supporting his wife in a prominent leadership position. Just like Alaska's First Dude.

But if supporting your wife's career is so laudable in men, why are feminists so critical of the decision to stay home when the genders are reversed? Realistically, as long as it's an honest decision reached by consenting adults, what difference does it make? The hypocrisy is mind-boggling.

Those of us who live actual lives with actual jobs raising actual families know that reality is very different from the stereotypes of the media or the agenda of any ideologically motivated group. No one person has it all. No one person does it all. Regardless of where the spotlight is, marriage and family are a team effort.

So Todd, Tim, and every other house husband with a well-known wife, you guys totally rock. Maybe someday you'll get the credit you deserve. Maybe someday we'll get to a world where we can see past the stereotypes, through the agendas, and just see people trying to make the best decisions for the ones they love. Maybe you and others like you will help us to start wondering whether the Family That Has Everything ever made sense to begin with. No family can have everything.

Just everything that's important.

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