

Celebrating M. Chad McBride

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I AM INCREDIBLY HONORED TO write the provocation for this forum for Dr. M. Chad McBride. Chad was, or is, my doctoral advisee from the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I never know whether to talk about a doctoral advisee in past or present tense. Chad earned his Ph.D. in 2003, so perhaps I should use the term “advisee” in past tense. However, most doctoral advisees remain advisees in some sense, especially those who remain connected with an advisor over the years. That connection is ongoing for Chad and me. Some doctoral advisees also become colleagues, and others become friends. For me, Chad McBride is both. This is one of the reasons writing this essay is so pleasurable. At the same time, there is a measure of melancholy to writing this essay at this point in time as I would have preferred to be writing an essay about Chad’s accomplishments many years down the road. Or perhaps, more likely, normally he might be contributing to a career narrative for me as I am now an older woman. In reality, Chad has returned the favor a number of times already. In fact, just this morning, he contacted me to ask for my biography for a nomination he is working on. I include this example to highlight that, no matter how he is feeling on any given day, this is the kind of generous person Chad McBride is.

The good news is that the time is always right to celebrate a wonderful student, colleague, and friend. Several of Chad’s colleagues from our graduate program, his current department, the associations blessed with his leadership, and scholarly coauthors will be speaking about his work in this forum. In my essay, I will reflect on Chad McBride as a scholar, collaborator, leader, and person.

As a Scholar

Chad grew up in Texas and attended Texas Christian University, earning his Bachelor of Science in 1996 and his Master's degree in 1999. I remember first meeting Chad when he came to visit the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Spring 2000. He struck me as smart and thoughtful, and I believed he would be a very good fit for our close-knit Nebraska academic community. I never underplay the courage it takes to leave home and begin the daunting task of starting doctoral studies in a new state and community. Much to our delight, Chad decided to say "yes" and arrived in Lincoln in August 2000. This was the start of my third year as a faculty member at Nebraska, and I became his doctoral advisor soon after he arrived. He worked hard and was very successful. I have vivid memories of Chad in my seminars and sitting in my office in Oldfather Hall talking research ideas.

I recall Chad hatching his eventual dissertation topic in an early one-on-one meeting. He had the idea to study the interaction that unfolds when a person breaks up with a romantic partner, talks with family members about their heartbreak, and then reconciles with that partner. In pilot work, Chad discovered how the person who broke up and reconciled with their romantic partner must interact and navigate face, engaging Goffman's (1959) Facework Theory based on a dramaturgical metaphor (see also McBride, 2018). As Chad approached the dissertation, his interest in gender and communication was piqued, as most of his interviewees were women. He discovered how they needed to interact and negotiate face for their partner, for the relationship, and for themselves (McBride, 2010; McBride & Toller, 2011). Chad's research was creative, practical, and grounded in understanding discourses of relating. Studying his CV and reading the other reflections in this forum, you will see those threads running throughout Chad's scholarship. He identifies the main focus of his research as understanding how persons interact and co-construct situated identities in personal relationships, families, and the broader culture. Chad has engaged a variety of theoretical frames including Facework, Relational Dialectics Theory, and Communication Privacy Management over several relational contexts.

Chad completed his Ph.D. in December 2003 during his first semester as an assistant professor of communication studies at Creighton University, an excellent Jesuit university in Omaha, Nebraska. Creighton is a perfect fit for Chad, with its rich values and traditions of service and social justice. Chad advanced through the ranks and became a full professor in 2016. I can think of few undergraduate Communication programs in our discipline that have amassed a more productive faculty than has Creighton, and Chad has been an important contributor to that community. He has published two editions of his co-edited book with Dr. Erika Kirby, *Gender Actualized: Cases in the Communicative Construction of Realities* (Kirby & McBride, 2019). To date, he has published 26 articles in scholarly journals in our discipline, such as *Communication Studies*, the *Journal of Family Communication*, *Health Communication*, *Communication Education*, and *Management Communication Quarterly*. He has also published in a variety of interdisciplinary journals, including the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships and Human Relations*. He has published ten chapters and delivered 85 conference presentations. I would be remiss if I did not point out that Chad published the second edition of his book and 19 articles and chapters since he became department chair, while holding two association presidencies, and becoming a husband and father. To top it off, he has a number of projects in progress.

As a Collaborator

Chad McBride is a collaborator at heart. Not because he could not work solo, but I believe he realized early on the value of drawing smart and accomplished people into his circle, working together, talking about ideas, and providing encouragement and support. For the same reasons, others have sought him out as well. By my count he has published with 36 different co-authors, me included. His most productive collaborators are authors in this forum, and they will talk about their projects.

While at Nebraska, I invited Chad to join my research team on what I labeled “parent teams” in stepfamilies and appointed him our team manager for two projects (Braithwaite et al., 2003; Schrodt et al., 2006). For our family communication theories volume, Leslie Baxter and I invited Chad to take the

lead on identifying, reading, and categorizing *all* of the family communication studies from 1990-2003 by disciplinary authors, looking across 21 different journals (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2006). Chad culled and analyzed theoretical presence and paradigmatic commitments for 289 studies. It was a hefty task, and thankfully, he accepted the challenge. Chad undertook this work without complaint (to me at least) and appreciated this vantage point on the breadth of the family communication field.

While a doctoral student, Chad published with several of his graduate school colleagues and quickly became lifelong friends with them, in particular with Karla Bergen and Shawn Wahl, who stood up with Chad and Allen at their wedding down the road. Later Chad formed very fruitful research partnerships with Nebraska graduates Erika Kirby and Allison Thorson. Perhaps because I am a scholar of personal and family relationships, one of the most pleasurable outcomes of working in a doctoral program has been to witness the formation and growth of close relationships between graduate students. I love nothing more than looking at photos from their days on campus, at conferences, and over the years as they continue to welcome each other onto projects and into their homes and lives. Chad has been one of the important hubs of cherished scholarly and personal relationships.

As a Leader

I would describe Chad McBride as quiet and contemplative, more often shining the spotlight on others rather than on himself. At the same time, he has also become a successful leader as a department chairperson at Creighton since 2013 and as a leader in our discipline. Chad was elected and served as an officer, conference planner, and President (2018-2020) of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG).

Overlapping his service to OSCLG, Chad was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the Central States Communication Association (CSCA). He was then elected an officer and planned a wonderful convention for the 2018 meeting before becoming president in 2019-2020. Chad helped shepherd CSCA through one of the toughest periods in the

organization's history (McBride & Edwards, 2020), leading CSCA through recovering from financial management issues with wisdom and the highest ethical standards.

As a Person

From our first meeting, I have appreciated Chad's extraordinarily thoughtful approach to life and his commitment to the people around him. A number of years ago, Chad came out publicly as a gay man. It took courage and strength to do so, especially knowing his family of origin would not be accepting. Happily, Chad soon met his life partner and husband, Allen Saunders. As they were planning their wedding, the biggest surprise of all came as the opportunity arose for them to adopt a baby who would be born early in 2016. Chad called me one Sunday morning and told me about it. He was amazed, thrilled, scared, and so looking forward to welcoming a baby into their lives. Allen and Chad experienced such joy on Super Bowl Sunday 2016 when Jackson was born. Jackson is an incredibly bright, outgoing, loving—and loved—boy. Chad and Allen had a beautiful wedding celebration in June of that year and held baby Jackson during the ceremony.

I was particularly struck on Chad and Allen's wedding day at the role of communication in co-creating a large voluntary family of the heart (Braithwaite et al., 2010), with all of us loving and supporting them. I feel privileged to count myself among the friends and colleagues who stand with their family today and will of course love and support them in the future.

I could not be prouder of Dr. Chad McBride as a scholar, collaborator, leader, husband, father, and friend. Evident in this forum are shared feelings of great respect and affection.

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by the Western States Communication Association (2014). She received NCA's Brommel Award for Family Communication and the Distinguished Service awards for WSCA and NCA. Dr. Braithwaite is a Past President of WSCA (2000) and NCA (2010). Direct correspondence to dbraithwaite@unl.edu.

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Chad McBride: *Cura Personalis* Embodied and Enacted

Paaige K. Turner
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I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE to work with and learn from Dr. M. Chad McBride for over 15 years, starting when he was a doctoral student at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. McBride was then hired at Creighton University while I was a faculty member at a sister Jesuit institution, Saint Louis University. As academic colleagues in communication and faculty at Jesuit institutions, our professional paths were entwined. For that, I am extremely grateful. In Chad, I have a colleague whose intellect I deeply respect, a friend whose heart I seek to emulate, and a confidant with whom to explore the Jesuit mission of social justice. As others have outlined his exceptional record of teaching and scholarship, I would like to take the privilege of revealing what cannot be seen in a list of publications, courses taught, or positions held. Every aspect of Dr. McBride's professional life shows a commitment to a specific form of service.

Service can be a single, isolated action that one does for a student, colleague, discipline, or community. Or service can be a reflection of who a person is and how they wish to live in the world. When an individual displays the latter, they reflect the Jesuit tradition of being a whole person—mind, body, and soul. Dr. McBride's work emanates from his whole self and embodies *cura personalis*, “care for the entire person.”

While the development of new intellectual knowledge is often the primary marker of an academic, Dr. McBride has used his knowledge to expand our discipline *and* serve others. Dr. McBride is a renowned senior scholar in the areas of gender, family communication, and relational communication. He has chosen to use this knowledge to contribute to relevant initiatives both within and outside the academy. Dr. McBride has served on a parental leave task force, as a speaker on work/life challenges and relations, as a committee member and panelist to stop domestic violence, and as a facilitator or chair on university committees too numerous to mention. In each of these situations,

Dr. McBride models the importance of scholarship as a mode for change and care.

Dr. McBride's commitment to serving the entire discipline of gender communication is reflected in his years of increasing responsibilities in the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG). Dr. McBride quickly took on the role of communication director, and during his time, he created a website that brought our organization into the 21st century. This new website not only served OSCLG, but it also allowed individuals who were unaware of the organization and its resources to find the work of our members. During his time as a member on the Executive Board, Dr. McBride served on multiple award committees and codified our review processes. Recognizing the organizational skills and committed heart that Dr. McBride brings to his leadership roles, his peers nominated him to serve over the course of six years as vice president (two years), president (two years), and past-president (two years). I can whole-heartedly say that all of OSCLG, myself included, are stronger because of his leadership. Dr. McBride facilitated the development of a recordkeeping system that allows us to archive and transfer materials to new board members. He initiated conversations about the need for our organization to increase its diversity (numbers) and inclusiveness (practices). Dr. McBride was also instrumental in developing processes to fund and award the OSCLG Color Purple Diversity Award that provides a travel grant to assist students who contribute to OSCLG's goal to enhance racial and ethnic diversity of people and ideas at our conference and in our organization.

Yet, this list still misses how Dr. McBride embodies care. On multiple occasions, I watched him live out *cura personalis* when individuals would discuss an idea. He listened and observed. I heard him identify and honor concerns that came out in subtle or nuanced questions. When those questions suggested a private concern, Dr. McBride arranged a time to speak with the individual away from a crowd so that person was safe, heard, and respected. Even when the path OSCLG pursued was different than the one that was advocated, every member of our community knew that their voice would be heard and considered. OSCLG honored Dr. McBride's years of service in 2020 by inducting him as a member of the Wise Women's

Council, the organization's highest recognition for a lifetime of feminist service, teaching, and research contributions.

Dr. McBride did not set out to be an exemplar of *cura personalis*. He committed to being a researcher whose work would make a difference in the lives of families seeking to redefine traditional roles, to provide space for us to realize our true selves at work and at home, and to make the academy a place of inclusion for all individuals. He committed to serving his university and professional organizations in leadership roles that served the needs of others. He committed to being a loving friend who provided emotional support and honored the unique gifts each of us possesses. He committed to being each and every one of these in each and every moment of his life. He committed his life to caring for the whole person, and in doing so, he has become an exemplar of how *cura personalis* must be part of our lives, our associations, and our institutions.

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M. Chad McBride: Colleague, Collaborator, and Friend

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I AM INCREDIBLY PLEASED TO WRITE this essay and to join in honoring the life and accomplishments of my friend and colleague, M. Chad McBride. Chad is a relational scholar who has studied and taught interpersonal and family communication; however, his life embodies the best of what he studies and teaches. He is genuine, caring, insightful and—most of all—“is there” for colleagues, professional associates, and friends alike. My response essay will share in a personal way what I know best about Chad: that he has been my valued colleague, collaborator, and friend extraordinaire for more than 20 years.

I first met Chad in 2000 when we were assigned to be officemates our first semester in graduate school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). I was a little wary, as Chad was a new PhD student, half my age, and I was just starting my Master’s program. I soon learned that I needn’t worry, as Chad was down-to-earth, friendly, and easy to talk to. We quickly hit it off.

One of our first experiences working together was in our interpersonal communication seminar with our advisor, Dr. Dawn Braithwaite. We were assigned to read a case study together aloud in class. Even though we did a read-through in our office, I was intimidated to stand in front of a room full of *doctoral* students and Chad, yet he still managed to bring me comfort in that experience.

Later on, I recall yet another memorable event that set the course for our future collaboration. One week, Dr. Sandra Petronio gave a guest lecture to our UNL Personal Relationships seminar. In her work on private disclosures, she had written about the “reluctant confidant” (Petronio, 2000, pp. 117-118). Chad and I were intrigued with this relational phenomenon and collaborated on a class project to understand more about them. Several years later, this first collaborative project found its way into the *Texas Journal of Speech* (McBride & Bergen, 2008).

In the meantime, we had worked on an experimental design study for another course. That experience confirmed that we preferred qualitative research, as we both loved collecting interview data and listening to participants' stories. We discovered that we complemented each other's strengths in writing. Our early research/writing collaborations led to an invitation to write about our working relationship for NCA's graduate student handbook (Bergen & McBride, 2008).

As Chad finished his PhD work and took a faculty position at Creighton University, we were focused on our own full plates. Still, Chad would regularly call, as he was committed to doing "relational maintenance," as he called it. During these calls, we would catch up on school, our families, and all sorts of random topics, including gender issues for which we both had developed a genuine interest. Chad had taken a class in the Women's Studies Department at UNL and encouraged me to do the same, which led to frequent discussion of gender-related issues. We realized we both identified as feminists, and it was Chad who introduced me to the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG) and a whole crew of like-minded individuals.

As I finished my dissertation, Chad and I brainstormed additional projects, but an unexpected opportunity arose to write a paper on caregiving in commuter marriages (my dissertation topic) for the *Journal of Family Communication*. Overwhelmed by the thought, I ran it by Chad who offered to collaborate. We brought on Dr. Erika Kirby to lend her expertise on work-life issues, and the result was another successful collaborative project (Bergen et al., 2007). This publication would have never happened without Chad's help and encouragement.

As we continued discussing future research ideas, Chad was obsessed with the idea of studying "work spouses"—co-worker dyads who developed a special close working relationship. In the early 2000s, George W. Bush and his advisor Condoleeza Rice had been labeled "work spouses." There was buzz in the popular press but no academic research. We decided to collaborate and started collecting open-ended survey data. While struggling to recruit participants, we noticed an online article about work spouses with a comment section. We posted our call for participants as a comment and within days had

hundreds of responses from several countries. We collected and analyzed data the old-fashioned way on Chad's dining room table, and that work resulted in the first academic study of work-spouse relationships focused on defining the relationship (McBride & Bergen, 2015). Long story short, this started an ongoing, collaborative research trajectory, later joined by Dr. Allison Thorson, examining communication in the work-spouse relationship (e.g., McBride et al., 2020a, 2020b). Chad has become the go-to academic expert on the topic and has been interviewed and cited by dozens of journalists.

Although Chad has been my primary collaborator on articles, chapters, and conference presentations, as Dawn noted in her provocation essay, he has worked with an astonishing number of co-authors (Braithwaite, 2021). His record of working so widely with other scholars speaks volumes about his ability to connect and form collegial, collaborative relationships with others.

As valuable as our associations as colleagues and collaborators have been, our relationship has always included a deep bond of friendship and a sense of being chosen family. We've always felt comfortable sharing personal and family experiences. We've prefaced many a conversation with, "This may be too much information, but when has that ever stopped us?" With many common interests, we've shared countless country music concerts, plays, and musicals, hours browsing bookstores and thrift shops, family birthday parties, baby and wedding showers, and other celebrations. We've double-dated with our spouses, and I was privileged to stand up with Chad when he and Allen took their vows. Later, I rejoiced with them when Jackson joined their family. We've also leaned on each other during some really hard times, including family crises and illnesses. And this is not just my story—it is a story similar to those told over and over by those who know and love him—living, breathing evidence of the kind of friend and colleague Chad is. And now, in spite of a diagnosis that is hard to write on the page, I see all that love and support Chad has given others come back to Chad's family every day in many ways. Chad's life and relationships serve as a case study that can teach us everything we need to know about healthy and supportive interpersonal and family relationships. I feel privileged to be his *de facto* student as well as his colleague, collaborator, and friend.

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“Courageous and Authentic”: In Honor of M. Chad McBride

Paige Toller

University of Nebraska at Omaha

LIKE THE OTHER FORUM CONTRIBUTORS, I am also grateful and honored to write a response to the thoughtful provocation written by Dr. Dawn Braithwaite for this forum on Dr. M. Chad McBride. I first met Chad in August of 2002, when I began the doctoral program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. As an overwhelmed first-year doctoral student, I will never forget Chad's kindness and support. That Chad treated me (and the other first-year students) this way is no surprise to anyone who has spent time with him both personally and professionally. He epitomizes these wonderful characteristics and so much more.

As a Scholar and Collaborator

Chad is a prolific scholar, as discussed in Dawn's provocation essay (Braithwaite, 2021). Chad's record of scholarship is particularly noteworthy given that he consistently published while serving as department chair at Creighton University and president of two academic associations (the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender and the Central States Communication Association). Anyone who has served in an administrative position knows the massive amount of energy and work that these roles require. His research productivity throughout these times is truly remarkable.

Chad's research (McBride, 2010, 2018) examining how individuals communicatively negotiate the face needs of themselves, their partners, and their relationship following relationship reconciliation has substantially contributed to the areas of interpersonal and family communication. Not only is his scholarship theoretically rigorous and sound, but he is committed to producing research that enhances not only the academic community but also the everyday lives of individuals. Because of his applied focus, strong theoretical orientation, and skill as a qualitative researcher, I knew Chad would be an outstanding

research partner, so I approached him about collaborating. He graciously agreed, and we published two articles that focused on various aspects of grief communication (McBride & Toller, 2011; Toller & McBride, 2013).

Our first coauthored article examined communication between bereaved parents and their social networks. In my earlier research, I primarily used Relational Dialectics Theory (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Baxter, 2011) to analyze the communication of bereaved parents (Toller, 2005). Based on my interviews with bereaved parents, I could see that talking about grief and loss often resulted in socially awkward situations not only for them but also for their well-intentioned, but sometimes hurtful, friends and family members. I was not well versed in theories examining embarrassment and other face-threatening situations, but I knew of Chad's strength in this area. Thanks to his expertise and thoughtful data analysis, we identified several communicative strategies bereaved parents engaged in to protect their identity and face needs, as well as the identity and face needs of their family and friends (McBride & Toller, 2011).

A few years later, I collected another data set examining grief communication, this time looking at how parents talked with their children about death. The editor of the *Journal of Family Communication* had recently sent out a call for manuscripts that used Communication Privacy Management (CPM) (Petronio, 2002) as their theoretical focus. Based on my preliminary analysis, I could see issues of privacy management threaded throughout the new data set. Having witnessed Chad's analysis skills already, I knew I wanted to work with Chad again and approached him about coauthoring a manuscript to submit. As expected, Chad enthusiastically agreed, and our manuscript was accepted for the special issue. Using CPM, we examined the delicate balance parents walked between talking with their children about the reality of death while being careful not to overwhelm or confuse them (Toller & McBride, 2013).

Not only was I appreciative of Chad's willingness to share his expertise with me, but I was equally impressed at his willingness to engage in research where the topic and context were unfamiliar to him. I know that if someone asked me to work on research outside of my own area, I would likely have some trepidation. If Chad had any, he certainly did not show it.

It appears he is adept at managing his face needs as well as the face needs of his coauthor!

As a Leader

My most significant experience of Chad as a leader was when I was a first-year Ph.D. student and he was the associate director of the basic course I taught. Chad was in his third year of the program and was preparing for comprehensive exams and his dissertation. As a new Ph.D. student, I didn't fully realize how stressful this process could be. Despite the many stresses he had going on, Chad was always a responsive and encouraging mentor during our basic course meetings. He handled any issue or problem with grace and confidence and offered us reassurance that we were indeed more than capable of managing teaching responsibilities and taking doctoral level classes.

Dawn describes Chad as a quiet and contemplative leader (Braithwaite, 2021), and I could not agree more. Chad does not take on leadership roles to boost his ego or gain political or social capital. He takes on leadership roles because he has a servant's heart and wants to contribute in meaningful ways to the discipline and to his colleagues and friends.

As a Person

To put it succinctly, Chad is a good human being. Oftentimes when we hear someone described as good, we may think of them as a moral or virtuous person. While Chad is certainly those things, I use the word in a much more expansive way. He is courageous and authentic. He chooses to live the fullest life possible with his son and his husband. The lack of support and acceptance from his family of origin has not stopped Chad from being his true self. I know that his journey of self-acceptance and self-understanding has not been easy. Perhaps that is why his wedding was one of the most beautiful and meaningful ceremonies I have ever attended. The large number of friends and colleagues who attended the wedding is a testament to the type of person Chad is. I know that I was not the only one who felt privileged to witness such love and respect between two people promising to commit their lives to each other.

In closing, one of my favorite literary friendships is depicted in E. B. White's (1952) classic book, *Charlotte's Web*. Charlotte, the big-hearted, innovative spider has saved the life of Wilbur, that most radiant, humble pig. Reflecting on all that has occurred since meeting Charlotte, Wilbur says to her, "Why did you do all this for me?" [...] 'I don't deserve it. I've never done anything for you.' 'You have been my friend,' replied Charlotte. 'That in itself is a tremendous thing'" (p. 164). Charlotte, wise as always, is correct. Friendship is a tremendous thing, and my life is all the richer because of Chad and the friendship he has provided me.

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Embodiment of Selflessness

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I AM INCREDIBLY HONORED TO write this response essay to Dawn O. Braithwaite's (2021) provocation honoring M. Chad McBride. Dawn's essay not only conveys the admiration that so many colleagues and friends have for Chad, but it also highlights how Chad's research and service to multiple international, national, and regional organizations—including OSCLG—has been foundational to promoting issues of gender, communication, and language. Thus, I write this response not only to convey my professional regard for Chad, but to speak to the impact that he and his friendship have had on me personally.

Chad and I first met because we were what some may call “academic cousins.” Although we both graduated from the doctoral program in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), we had different advisors, were part of different cohorts ('03 vs. '09), and never overlapped. Yet throughout my years as a graduate student, different individuals regularly talked about Chad as a *great person* that I *needed* to meet, as he was smart, thoughtful, and similar to me in terms of our research interests. Thus, like many young scholars, I remember being nervous to meet Chad. When I was finally introduced to him when attending a 2013 Central States Communication Association convention in Kansas City, I finally learned what all the “buzz” around him was about. Chad's reputation did not disappoint, as he was intelligent, interesting, genuine, and open. After learning everything I could about his research on co-parenting, commuter marriages, bereavement, reluctant confidants, and family communication following reconciliation with romantic partners, I finally mustered up the courage to say “we should collaborate.” To my delight, he obliged, and we spent time later that conference charting out multiple studies. Although we had a plan—a blueprint which has now been posted on my office filing cabinet for over eight years—other projects and life seemed to always pull us away from these studies. That was until 2017 when Chad emailed me, inviting me to assist him and Dr. Karla Bergen on a work-

spouse relationship study that they were tackling. Little did I know that my response to this email would not only lead to the most rewarding collaborative work I have done in my career to date, but it would spark one of the most important personal relationships I have in my life.

On a professional level, joining Chad and Karla's research team has been the most fulfilling and proficient research collaboration of my academic career. What started as working on a single project quickly turned into a line of research, as we rapidly produced, accepted awards for, and published manuscripts on how core and catalyst privacy rule decision criteria unfolded within the work-spouse relationship (McBride et al., 2020b), examined individually performed and (co)managed facework among work spouses (McBride et al., 2020a), and explored indicators of developing a work-spouse relationship and their connection to affective organizational commitment (Thorson & McBride, 2020). As well, we currently have a work in progress which analyzes the adoption, adaptations, and intergroup concerns for labeling a coworker as a work spouse. Combined, we found in these studies that communication and identity matter tremendously to work spouses, as disclosures and perceived obligations for honesty are among the qualities that make the work-spouse relationship distinct.

Unexpectedly, as Chad, Karla, and I started to uncover how work-spouse relationships were communicatively unique, these same attributes started to emerge organically as our personal relationships developed. In particular, early in our collaboration, my oldest son started to display emotional regulation deficiencies and non-normative developmental tendencies which later resulted in his Autism (ASD) diagnosis—a diagnosis I disclosed to Chad before many others. It was during this time that Chad became not just another coauthor but a selfless friend, trusted confidant, and source of much-needed emotional support. Tragically, in tandem with my son's diagnosis, Chad started to experience muscle control difficulties. As his neurological issues began to intensify and progress—resulting in his official ALS diagnosis in January 2020—I was able to reciprocate the love and support that Chad had offered me. Hence, although our relationship was not dependent on these life-changing diagnoses, the identity disclosures and obligations for honesty

that once informed our research accelerated the progression of our friendship and solidified the deep connection that I felt the moment I met Chad. These qualities have fostered the invaluable relationship that I have with Chad today.

In a previous essay (McBride & Edwards, 2020), Chad acknowledged how Martin Buber's (1985) writings on dialogue serve as his "personal ethic of interacting with people in the world," shaping his views on teaching and writing about relationships and issues of gender and language (McBride & Edwards, 2020, p. 718). He further explained how John Stewart's (2012) writings encouraged him to maximize "the presence of the personal and ... be vulnerable" when communicating with others, to open himself as an individual, and to "appreciate and learn from others' unique personhood and experiences" (McBride & Edwards, 2020, p. 718). Although our coauthored publications serve as a formal public record of our partnership, Chad's embodiment of Buber and Stewart's principles, unwavering support, unconditional love, and selflessness form the foundation of the life-long bond I will forever have with him.

Chad is humble. He is empathetic. He truly listens and finds pleasure in helping others. He says "we" instead of "I." He seeks to celebrate others' successes and does not want them to face failure alone. He embodies the type of friend and colleague that so many of us aspire to be. Chad savors every moment of being Jackson's dad and is forever grateful for getting to laugh, love, and build a life with his doting husband, Allen. He is a genuine human who makes this world a better place. I am thankful to call him my dear friend and to honor him through this most deserving essay in celebration of his life and accomplishments.

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Measure in Love: In Honor of M. Chad McBride

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REAL TALK: THE PAST YEAR has been hard, and this response is hard to write. Chad McBride is one of my favorite people on this planet and getting the news about this time last year that he has ALS was shocking. This devastation was magnified by feeling that I, we, have been cheated out of time with him because of the pandemic. And if you know Chad, you understand the struggle. He is such a thoughtful, selfless, caring, loyal, devoted human (I could go on), and writing a tribute to him when he is only 44 years old pains my heart.

*Tuesday. What might be the most uninspiring day of the week now has importance. Because Tuesdays are *MY* day to hang out with Chad. I can help on Tuesdays.*

Chad as a collaborator. Through writing and editing two editions of our book together, we have logged goodness-knows-how-many hours in collaboration. *Gender Actualized: Cases in the Communicative Construction of Realities* is one of my (and I dare say our) proudest professional accomplishments (Kirby & McBride, 2019). Transforming our scholarly passion for gender/ed issues into cases with 50 feminist collaborators to help students and instructors has been a shared blessing. Chad and I spent so many days hanging out, working on cases, and checking in from across the room at my house, his house, the office, or the retreat center. I will treasure that time co-conceptualizing, coauthoring, and coediting forever. And the gift Chad has given by sharing his experiences within his own cases are everlasting. If you have not read the coauthored case with his husband Allen about their family, you definitely should. Beyond the textbook, I have invited him to write with me (e.g., Kirby et al., 2013), and he has

invited me to write with him (e.g., McBride et al., 2016). Chad is definitely a co-laborer/collaborator.

Yesterday, I got this text from Chad: “I know it sounds stupid, but I really miss academic writing. I have a few paper ideas I would still like to get out before I can’t do them anymore.” I responded, “It does not sound stupid. At. All...The world needs as many of your smart ideas as we can get ♥.”

Chad as a scholar. I am proud to have been the search chair who brought this awesome researcher to Creighton University. I am so thankful he chose us—even if he did think I was trying to illegally test him on religion by showing him the inside of St. John’s Church (!). Chad could easily be employed at a research-intensive university, but we are overjoyed that he is a part of our little jewel of a scholarly community in Communication Studies. Dawn summarized Chad’s scholarly record well (Braithwaite, 2021); my addition is how he regularly shares his scholarly sensibilities with others. Chad and I belong to a writing accountability group in our department, where he consistently doles out sound scholarly advice. When Chad gets into Buber-mode or shares some other smashing idea, I feel so lucky that I get to hang with such an inspiring scholar. And I smile every time I read one of his career-defining work-spouse manuscripts or interviews, and I can still hear our former student saying, “Chad is totally your work husband!” Let us hope we get to experience even more of Chad’s smart thinking.

Two days ago, Chad had Allen take a picture of a chocolate protein shake and texted, “My OT recommended this as a snack. I was wondering if it might be a good breakfast option for you.” Why on earth is he still thinking about my needs? How is this man so GOOD?

Chad as a leader. Chad has this magical capacity to think about everyone’s needs, which is why he is a respected leader. Dawn detailed his many accomplishments (Braithwaite, 2021), and I will speak to two. Last fall, he was the first man inducted to

the Wise Women's Council of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG), where he has served through the entire presidential leadership rotation in addition to serving many years as Communication Director. This is OSCLG's highest honor, and in addition to a normal induction, Chad received a quilt symbolizing his leadership¹ as he was "thank[ed] for the love [he has] shown everyone in this organization." This speaks volumes to his impact.

I get to experience this firsthand not only in OSCLG but also as a member of the Department of Communication Studies at Creighton since Chad is our Chair. His leadership style allows both faculty and students to flourish, while being tailored to what we individually need. His mission is to help me say "no"; this advice was just repeated to me three days ago. I hope to benefit from Chad's leadership and advice for many more years.

My project for tomorrow is to get Chad's diplomas and family pictures from his office to take them to his house. It will be hard to walk in knowing I may never see him sitting in there again, but the 20+ hearts that adorn his door with messages from students about how effing awesome he is help absorb some of the pain.

Chad as a person. And my eyes are once again filled with tears. Until 2003, Chad and I were acquaintances from University of Nebraska-Lincoln parties, but we didn't really know each other. Now our lives are enmeshed like siblings. Indeed, when my sister would not let me come over for New Year's Eve during COVID, Chad and Allen did. This weekend when Allen asked about my dating life, Chad responded that I was "dating a Benetton ad" (so don't worry that his sense of humor is gone!). But in all seriousness, Chad may be the most thoughtful and considerate person I have ever met. If you tell him something, he remembers. And he checks back in. And he makes sure you are okay, or at least will be okay. I strive to be the friend to him that he is to me, and I am certain I will never succeed.

I could not escape this song across my days of writing:

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes

Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes

How do you measure? Measure a year?

...

How about love?

(Larson, 1996)

Measure in love. I love you, Chad.

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Note

¹Readers can view the quilt and presentation to Chad at <https://vimeo.com/464389990>.

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