

ABOUT BRIAN KENNEDY

Some people bring a special energy...a memorable touch...a unique vision, to everything they do. Anyone who has ever worked with Brian Kennedy recognizes that he is one of those people.

A Minnesota boy, Brian is an Army veteran who came to El Paso in 1975 with U.S. Army intelligence. As Brian tells it, he pulled a snow shovel out of the trunk of his car and when people asked "What's that?" he decided El Paso was the place for him.

While serving as VP of Operations for KHEY, he entertained us during our morning drive as a nationally recognized, top country, radio disc jockey from 1984 to 1990 with the unforgettable "Rio Trio" and provided colorful commentary with Paul Strelzin for high school football, basketball and occasional UTEP football and basketball broadcasts.

A valued voice for decades on boards and committees from Viva to the Historical Landmark Commission, to the Sun Bowl, to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, to the FBI Citizen's Academy... Brian brings his game, his wit, his creativity, his persistence and an ability to see solutions after everyone else has given up and left the room.

Brian Kennedy's tenacious ability to hold and execute a vision spearheaded the unique model for a private public partnership that privatized the Coliseum operations in 2003. From that point forward, salaries at the Coliseum, including Brian's, were paid through Hotel Motel tax generated by out-of-town visitors.

For 23 years.. from 1998 to 2021...as Director, and then CEO, Brian was responsible for the multi-million dollar operations of the historic El Paso Coliseum and the El Paso Sports Commission where his unique ability to negotiate...his skillful business acumen that makes things happen... and his promotional and marketing ability that keeps it happening...brought the Coliseum into the 21st century turning it into one of the most highly booked, record breaking venues of its size in the Southwest.

Brian's tenacity, relationship building, and negotiation skills gave El Paso the United States Bowling Congress Women's Championship in 2011... the USBC Open Championship in 2015 and Conference USA in 2011 and 2014... resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in sports tourism for our community.

His cooperative relationship with the talented and determined Corey Herman, Head Coach of the El Paso Rhinos and the El Paso Hockey Association, gave us a nationally recognized hockey team, helped create the UTEP Club Hockey Team, and a public skating program that enjoys such popularity they regularly run out of skates.

The El Paso Sports Commission also resulted in hundreds of sporting events and made the Coliseum a go to community building for local youth sports organizations from figure skating, flag football, basketball, Youth Circuit Fencing, Junior College Field and Track, hockey, wrestling, boxing, martial arts, bull riding, cycling, triathlons, indoor soccer, slow-pitch softball, cheerleading and more. There is scarcely a kid in sports in El Paso that was not touched by his accommodating dedication to often over-looked youth sports.

Brian was twice asked to lecture at the National Facilities and Event Expos in San Diego and Kansas as a nationally recognized expert in sports events and facility security. Expertise that lead him to serve as a confidential consultant over the last decade to two major national sports leagues and the world's leading sports and event promoters on ingress, egress and safety in the U.S. and abroad.

It seems like Brian's always been around anything to do with sports promotion in El Paso for as long as a lot of us can remember. Which is why, in 2022, he was honored to be named to the El Paso Sports Hall of Fame.

But then, one afternoon in a casual courtyard discussion with his wife about living without regrets, Brian shared that he had always wanted to be a lawyer. Her response? "Well, what are you waiting for?"

So in 2014, at the age of 59, Brian took the LSAT and was accepted into the first class, of the first hybrid law program, approved by the American Bar Association. While fulfilling a demanding day job, he completed law school in the evenings and weekends. Along the way, he managed to find time to progress through regional and national negotiation competitions to represent the U.S. at the International Negotiation Competition competing against 32 teams from 25 countries all over the world. Brian and his partner won first place and received their medal at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway.



And in 2018...Brian Kennedy fulfilled a life-long dream. He became a lawyer... graduating with honors... at the age of 62... from Mitchell Hamline School of Law...with his, then 86 year old, Mother watching. Today, he has a criminal defense law practice and enjoys living his dream every day.

In 2021, Brian was given the unique opportunity to see his legacy continue as Omar Ropele, the beneficiary of Brian's four decades of industry knowledge and management experience, assumed the helm as President of the El Paso Coliseum and El Paso Sports Commission. Brian served as transition counsel regarding sports and entertainment contracts, finance and strategic direction until 2022.

And in January, 2023, Brian took office as City Representative for District 1, proud to be sworn in by the District Judge of the 409th District Court, the Honorable Sam Medrano. He currently serves as Chair of the Financial Oversight and Advisory Committee (FOAC), which is responsible for the review of the financial performance of all City departments; where the Internal auditor reports findings and where determinations are made concerning potential internal ethical issues.

In January of 2024, Brian was unanimously voted in by his fellow city council members as Mayor Pro Tempore.



Brian is married to Dennece Knight. They have made their life together supporting each other's crazy ideas. One of those ideas is that you should leave things a little better than you found them.

Together, they share six children including: a therapist, a chef, a counselor, a Technical Production Manager at Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, a professor and soon-to-be lawyer, and an Emergency Medicine physician in his second-year residency at Northwestern University. Brian and Dennece recently celebrated twenty years of marriage.

Brian KENNEDY For Mayor

THE BIG WHY

"I don't want a ringside seat at a train wreck. I want to make sure the train keeps rolling in the right direction." Brian Kennedy

Why does Brian want to run for Mayor? Because he can't unsee what he's seen.

If you're looking for someone to stick their head in the sand, Brian's probably not your guy. Brian's good at a lot of things...but looking the other way is not one of them.

In his time on City Council, Brian found several things to be true:

1. He found that there is an abundance of serious talent among City employees who take their job seriously, truly care about their community...and with the proper respect and direction...can be very high performing.
2. He found that securing consensus and achieving clear directives is where the real work is done and while it may take an extraordinary amount of time, energy, and focus...it is possible and it is worth it.
3. He found that the benefit of a Council and a Mayor working together, toward common aims, can greatly accelerate timelines to achieve targeted objectives on behalf of an entire community.
4. He found that #s 1, 2 and 3 combined mean that real things can be accomplished.

Unfortunately...he also saw that it can all fall apart in the blink of an eye, devolving into drama, self-interest, and political showmanship.

The roster of contenders for Mayor just didn't satisfy Brian's personal standards for the strength, clarity and integrity that he, himself, wants to see from a Mayor and that he knows is needed to provide a stable, secure environment for 3000 City of El Paso employees, and 850,000 El Pasoans who just want to know the job is being done right.

Brian Kennedy loves being a City Rep for District 1, but he loves making things happen for El Paso even more. He wants to protect what has been accomplished and continue to work on the critical issues that still need to be addressed. He knew he would be miserable sitting on his hands watching weak leadership undo any progress that had been made.