



Johnson County Is Home

Johnson County has been my home for nearly 40 years. It is where I grew up, where I built my career, and where Victor and I have raised our family and built our businesses. It is also where I hope our grandchildren will someday grow up.

I am a proud graduate of Buffalo High School. Growing up here meant staying busy. I played in the marching band, swam, played volleyball and basketball, and found my forever love for the beautiful game of soccer. I attended Girls State as a junior and worked as a lifeguard, opening the YMCA pool more early mornings than I can remember.

But my childhood wasn't spent entirely in Buffalo.

My parents divorced when I was very young, so as soon as school was out each year, my sister and I headed to Montana to spend the summer with our dad on his ranch. Having your parents in different places isn't always easy for a kid, but I have always tried to find the silver lining. Looking back, I often say I really did get the best of both worlds.

Summers in Montana revolved around ranch life—laying irrigation pipe, picking rocks out of the cornfield, working on 4-H projects and traveling the show circuit. We hauled steers from show to show and tackled just about every kind of 4-H project imaginable, from baking to livestock—with the notable exception of chickens. I also learned early that animals don't particularly care if you would rather sleep in or how hot it is outside.

Going to town was something we looked forward to. Open gym basketball, a day at the outdoor pool, youth rodeos and the occasional street dance were highlights of the summer.

Looking back, I had a wonderfully full and active childhood. I grew up with one foot in town and one foot in agriculture, surrounded by sports, livestock, family and community. All of those experiences helped shape who I am today.

Finding My Own Path

After graduating from Buffalo High School, I attended the University of Mary on a scholarship to play soccer. At the time, I was determined to become a nurse and eventually a physician assistant.

It didn't take me long to discover two things: I was far too soft-hearted to be a nurse, and North Dakota winters weren't for me.

So, I changed course.

I eventually graduated from Montana State University-Billings with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Accounting. That decision set me on a professional path that has taken me

through public accounting, nonprofit leadership, healthcare finance, municipal government and county government.

The jobs have been very different, but that has turned out to be one of the greatest strengths of my career. Each experience taught me something new about accounting, leadership, problem-solving, public service and, most importantly, working with people.

Building a Career in Accounting and Public Service

I began my professional accounting career working with CPA firms in the Buffalo area. My work included financial statements, state reports, income tax preparation, and governmental and nonprofit audits. I later operated my own accounting business, working with clients of different sizes and needs on bookkeeping, payroll, budgeting, financial statements, audit preparation, tax preparation and business planning.

Those years exposed me to many kinds of businesses and organizations—and taught me that there is rarely only one way to solve a problem.

My career then took an unexpected but exciting turn when I became Executive Director of the Wyoming Soccer Association.

Soccer had been a huge part of my life since childhood, so in many ways, it was a dream job. But it was also a serious leadership position. I was responsible for the operations, programs, finances and staff of a statewide organization serving more than 20 clubs and thousands of Wyoming players.

I prepared budgets, oversaw financial reporting, worked with boards and committees, managed compliance requirements, supported member clubs and helped coordinate statewide programs and events. During my time there, we hosted Wyoming's first Regional ODP event and College Showcase and expanded the organization beyond youth soccer to include adult programs.

It gave me the opportunity to combine financial management with something else I care deeply about: building strong organizations and strong teams—both on the pitch and off.

I also spent time on the finance team at Sheridan Memorial Hospital, working with cash transactions, reconciliations across multiple accounts and entities, journal entries, financial schedules and reporting.

Later, Victor and I were presented with an opportunity to buy into my father's agricultural operation. We had both grown up in agriculture and missed that way of life, so it was an exciting opportunity—even though it required us to move to North Dakota for what we thought would be a couple of years.

While there, I served as City Auditor for a small municipal government near the ranch. In a small town, job titles rarely tell the whole story. My responsibilities ranged from budgets, financial records and expenditure review to public information requests, meeting agendas and minutes, ordinances, resolutions, licenses, permits and election procedures.

It was truly hands-on local government and gave me an appreciation for how many moving pieces—and how many dedicated people—it takes to keep even a small community functioning.

Our two-year adventure ultimately took four years to wrap up, but eventually we made our way back home to Wyoming.

Today, Victor and I have a modest ranch in southern Johnson County, just a few miles from his dad's place. It isn't large enough for both of us to work on full time, so after returning to Wyoming, I accepted a position as Accounting Manager in the Campbell County Treasurer's Office.

That office was busy. It never stopped—and I loved that.

My work included county fiscal policies and financial statements, accounting assistance for county departments and appointed boards, software implementation, monthly and annual closing entries, and reviewing fund activity for discrepancies. I handled monthly apportionments, revenue reconciliations, receipts and disbursements on rotation with the Chief Deputies, worked on the tax abstract and unclaimed property, reviewed bonding requirements, and reconciled more than 20 checking accounts and 15 investment accounts.

It was one of the busiest jobs I have ever had, but also one of the most valuable.

For the first time, the different pieces of my career came together—accounting, public finance, government operations, problem-solving and public service.

It reinforced my belief that managing public money is a tremendous responsibility and deserves knowledgeable, experienced and accountable leadership.

Education Doesn't End With a Degree

I have always believed education should continue long after the diploma is framed and hung on the wall.

Throughout my career, I have continued investing in professional education through organizations including the Association of Public Treasurers, Government Finance Officers Association and National Association of Counties.

My training has included becoming a Certified Public Funds Investment Manager and completing advanced public investment training. I regularly complete GASB updates to stay current on governmental accounting standards and seek out training in fraud prevention, internal controls, technology and emerging issues in public finance.

I have also completed Wyoming Department of Audit Public Officer Training, NACo's High Performance Leadership Academy and Leading with a Purpose program, along with additional leadership and board training.

For me, continuing education isn't about collecting certificates. It is about continuing to learn, asking questions and being better prepared for the responsibilities entrusted to you.

A Family Built Around Hard Work and Giving Back

My commitment to Johnson County didn't begin with a campaign. I grew up surrounded by people who believed that if you are part of a community, you should be willing to contribute to it.

My father, Leo McDonnell, built his career in agriculture. He served on the American Angus Association Board of Directors and helped found both R-CALF USA and the U.S. Cattlemen's Association. From him, I learned about agriculture and entrepreneurship, but I also learned the importance of standing up for what you believe in and being willing to do the work.

My mother, Marcia Gaines, dedicated more than 30 years to JCSD. She didn't simply teach. She coached youth sports, created opportunities for students, took students to Costa Rica, promoted OREO classes and served on the Johnson County Library Board. She showed me that serving your community happens in dozens of different ways—and much of it happens quietly.

My sister, Kelsey McDonnell, has built her own life around creativity and community. As an established artist and store manager at the Jim Gatchell Museum, she has shared her talents through art classes, camps, youth activities and community projects.

And then there is Victor.

My husband, Victor Goni, has owned Powder River Fencing for nearly 30 years. Like so many small-business owners in Johnson County, he has spent decades working long days, building a business, nurturing relationships and helping people throughout the community. He has also volunteered countless hours through youth wrestling, the Bighorn Basque Club and NABO Festivals.

He is truly one of a kind.

Together, Victor and I have tried to teach our children that being part of a community also means contributing to it. Over the years, our family has donated time, equipment, labor, beef and lamb to local organizations, benefits and community events.

Sometimes service means sitting on a board or coaching a team. Other times, it simply means showing up with a trailer, a piece of equipment or an extra set of hands when somebody needs help.

That is one of the things we love most about Johnson County. You may not see your friends and neighbors as often as you would like, but when you truly need them, they are there.

Raising Our Family Here

Victor and I raised our two children, Dallas and Gavin, in Johnson County, and both graduated from Buffalo High School.

Like so many families here, much of our life revolved around our kids and their activities. We spent countless hours at sporting events, rodeos, 4-H and FFA activities, school functions and community events.

Those years weren't only about watching our own children grow up. They connected us with parents, teachers, coaches, volunteers, business owners, ranch families and people from across the county.

Those relationships are a big part of what makes this place home.

Today, Victor and I continue our connection to agriculture with our Angus cattle and Targhee sheep in southern Johnson County.

There are good days and bad days—and sometimes bad seasons. This year's relentless drought has certainly been a reminder of that. Ranching has a way of teaching you that you can't control everything that comes your way. You take the good with the bad, adapt, keep working and move forward.

I believe how we handle adversity says a great deal about who we are.

And even after a difficult day, there aren't many sights more beautiful than watching the sun sink behind the Bighorns from the porch of our ranch house.

It is pretty magical.

Giving Back Along the Way

Throughout my adult life, I have tried to stay involved in the organizations and activities that make our community stronger.

I have coached and refereed youth sports and served in leadership and volunteer roles with the Johnson County Soccer Association, Wyoming Soccer Association, Johnson County CattleWomen, Town & Country Garden Club, Buffalo Community Garden, Big Horn Basque Club and NABO Festival.

At the Johnson County Soccer Association, I served as President and Treasurer in addition to coaching and refereeing. At the state level, I served as Treasurer for Wyoming Youth Soccer before eventually becoming the organization's Executive Director. I have also helped organize NABO Festivals and continued to volunteer wherever my experience—or simply my willingness to work—could be useful.

I don't believe giving back has to be complicated.

It starts with caring enough to participate.

Why I'm Running for Johnson County Treasurer

When I look back over my life and career, running for Johnson County Treasurer feels less like a sudden decision and more like the place where many different paths have come together.

I grew up here and graduated from Buffalo High School.

I earned a degree in business and accounting and built a career around financial management.

I spent years in public accounting, where I learned the importance of accurate financial statements, strong internal controls and good audit practices.

I have managed people, programs, organizations and budgets.

I have served in municipal government and seen firsthand how decisions made at the local level affect people's everyday lives.

And I have worked inside a Wyoming County Treasurer's Office, gaining direct, practical experience with county financial operations and the responsibility that comes with managing public money.

Along the way, I found the combination of two things I genuinely enjoy: finance and public service.

But this decision is about more than my résumé.

It is about the community that raised me, the place Victor and I chose to raise our children, and the county we have chosen to call home.

I believe public service is a profession, and I believe qualifications matter.

The Johnson County Treasurer's Office handles responsibilities that touch every taxpayer in our county. It requires sound financial management, attention to detail, strong internal controls, knowledgeable staff, good customer service and leadership that understands the responsibility of safeguarding public funds.

I believe my combination of education, accounting experience, government experience, leadership experience and direct County Treasurer's Office experience has prepared me to serve Johnson County well.

This isn't simply where I live.

Johnson County is home.

It has been home for nearly 40 years. It is where Victor and I built our life, where we raised Dallas and Gavin, and where I hope someday to watch another generation of our family grow up.

I would be honored to give back to the community that has given my family so much and to put my education, experience and leadership to work as your Johnson County Treasurer.