

BY MARIO OCHOA

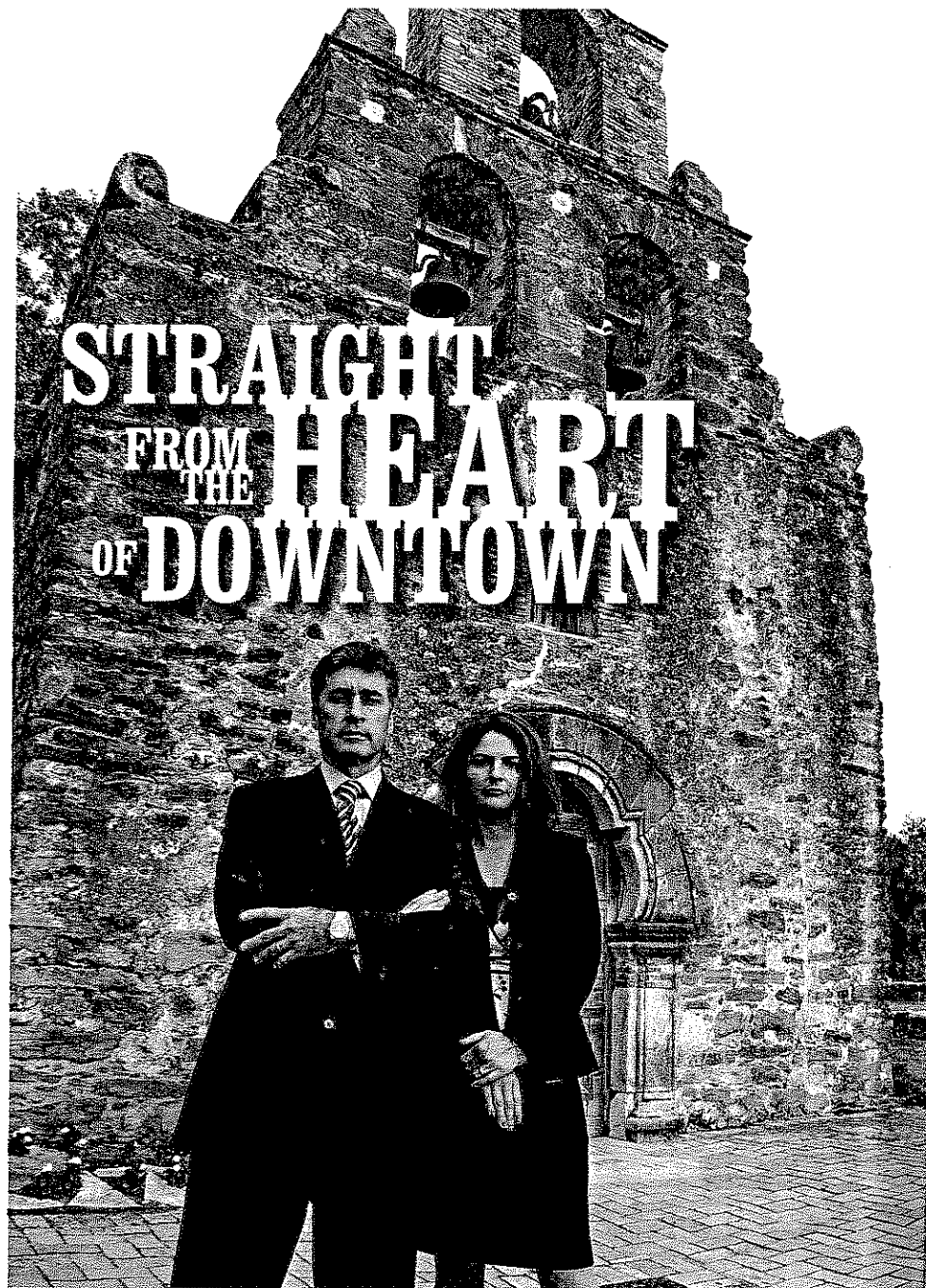
It is around 10:30 AM on a muggy late-summer morning in San Antonio, and the city is alive with people excited about the Summer Olympics, planning for a new school year and preparing for a major election in November. Tucked away in the heart of downtown is a legal firm that works passionately and diligently to ensure the people it represents have the right to freely make their own plans and preparations for the future.

Headed by one of the city's foremost criminal defense attorneys, The Law Offices of Kevin Collins, P.C. is a shining example of what people mean when they use words like "determined" and "passionate."

Kevin Collins, as principal of the firm, faces the daily challenges of maintaining his business, representing his clients, preparing for a marathon and helping his wife raise their two young boys. Still, he takes it all in stride and discusses the obstacles he faces with candor not usually found in legal professionals.

"You know, I have seen both sides of the coin," Collins said. "I have worked as both a prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney. I have helped punish people who were guilty, as a young assistant district attorney here in Bexar County. I have since dedicated my practice to freeing and exonerating people who are innocent of their alleged crimes." In fact, his extensive experience with criminal law, spanning nearly 25 years, has taught him that the "coin also has edges, not just two sides." Often those "edges," or nuances, are the deciding factors in a successful defense.

Collins' unique perspective on the legal process is a welcome attribute to the people he represents. His skills allow him



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to successfully defend his clients because he understands how the prosecution works; its tactics and strategies. He also understands how to defend accused citizens by humanizing them and their problems. Because of his considerable talents in the court room, he has been named one of San Antonio's Best Criminal Defense Attorneys two years in a row (2007 and 2008) by Scene in S.A. magazine. He also holds the highest rating awarded to lawyers from prestigious Martindale Hubbell, an AV rating, and is Board Certified in Criminal and Juvenile Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.

Of course, success wasn't handed to Collins, it came through dedication to his craft and the assistance of some talented people.

Directly across the hall from Collins' office is another visionary legal professional, Associate Counsel Stephanie Wilke, who, as Collins explained, brings a dynamic component to the firm because of her work with children. "I've known Stephanie for several years, and her enthusiasm and professionalism are great assets for the firm. She brings a unique element to us because she practices family law, something that blends well, yet also adds

a dimension to the firm's established criminal and juvenile practice."

Wilke explained the need for family law and her compassion towards those struggling through a hard divorce or young children hurt by those who are supposed to care for them.

"With things like divorce, I believe that my job is to help people through a difficult time with as little pain as possible. When I deal with cps (Child Protective Services), I know that they need qualified attorneys that can do a good job. That is the reason that I continue to do this job, even though I don't have to—I want to make a difference."

As the mother of a 4-year-old, Wilke has a deep understanding of what it means to care for those who cannot care for themselves. Her emotion is palpable as she talks about her daughter and what she has meant to her. "My main focus is my beautiful daughter, Tabitha. Once I had a child of my own, it changed my perspective on some of my cases, it made me see them with a lot more clarity."

Both Collins and Wilke serve their clients with a vigor displayed by only the best legal counsel in the Alamo City. For Collins, though, the journey to Texas and his place in San Antonio was a long and rewarding one.

As a product of the Show Me State, Collins completed his legal studies in Missouri before setting a course to Texas. "In my career I have made stops in Kansas City and Dallas, but San Antonio is a unique town, with such great people and culture. It is such a wonderful community." His home since 1992, the Alamo City is more than just a place of business for Collins, it is where he has laid his roots and made a family. It is home.

His Midwestern upbringing and southwestern settlement have afforded Collins an easy-going, instantly likable nature. His demeanor makes visitors to his office feel welcome and at home. It's part of the reason Collins is embraced within the community; it's part of the reason he embraces the community.

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His wife, Heather, is also a member of the legal community, serving as the official court reporter for Judge Laura Parker of the 386th District Court. But beyond the walls of the Bexar County Courthouse, he and Heather enjoy traveling the world whenever possible with their children, Colman, 4, and Liam, 6, who traveled to Hawaii with them this summer. They also recently (without the children) ventured to Pamplona for the running of the bulls and made a stop to view a mountain stage of the famed Tour de France. Closer to home, Collins has a surprising interest in the time honored tradition of collecting comic books. With a collection of comics dating back to the 1950's, Collins' hobby reflects his good-spirited personality and thirst for adventure. "It's something a lot of people don't know about me; my favorite comics are Marvels from the Silver Age like early Spiderman and Fantastic Four."

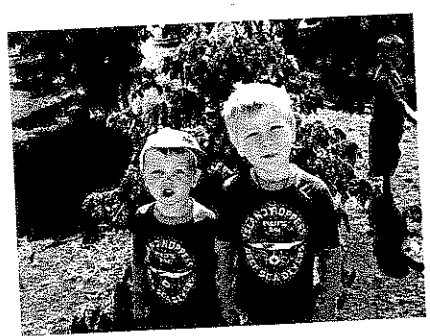
He and his wife are also involved in raising awareness and funds for pediatric congenital heart defects, including an illness called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, which affects their youngest son, Colman. "The disease is something that very few people know about," said Collins. "It is something my wife and I are passionate about and deal with every day with our son's condition." Many people, including local music legend Flaco Jimenez, have also helped the Collins' in raising funds and awareness for this important cause.

Collins looks at his son's condition as a source of inspiration, using it to spur

himself into new endeavors. "I have been working on training for the upcoming Rock 'n' Roll Marathon here in San Antonio," he said. "It's something that I've been wanting to do and my son inspires me to do it. He is motivating me to run."

Even after the race is over, Collins assures everyone that the best is yet to come. With a legal practice that sets the standard for firms across the city, a dedication to the needs of his family, and a sincere desire to protect his clients, Collins is keeping the beat of a proud city alive.

Straight from the heart of downtown. SA



Colman, 4, and Liam, 6, sons



Heather, wife