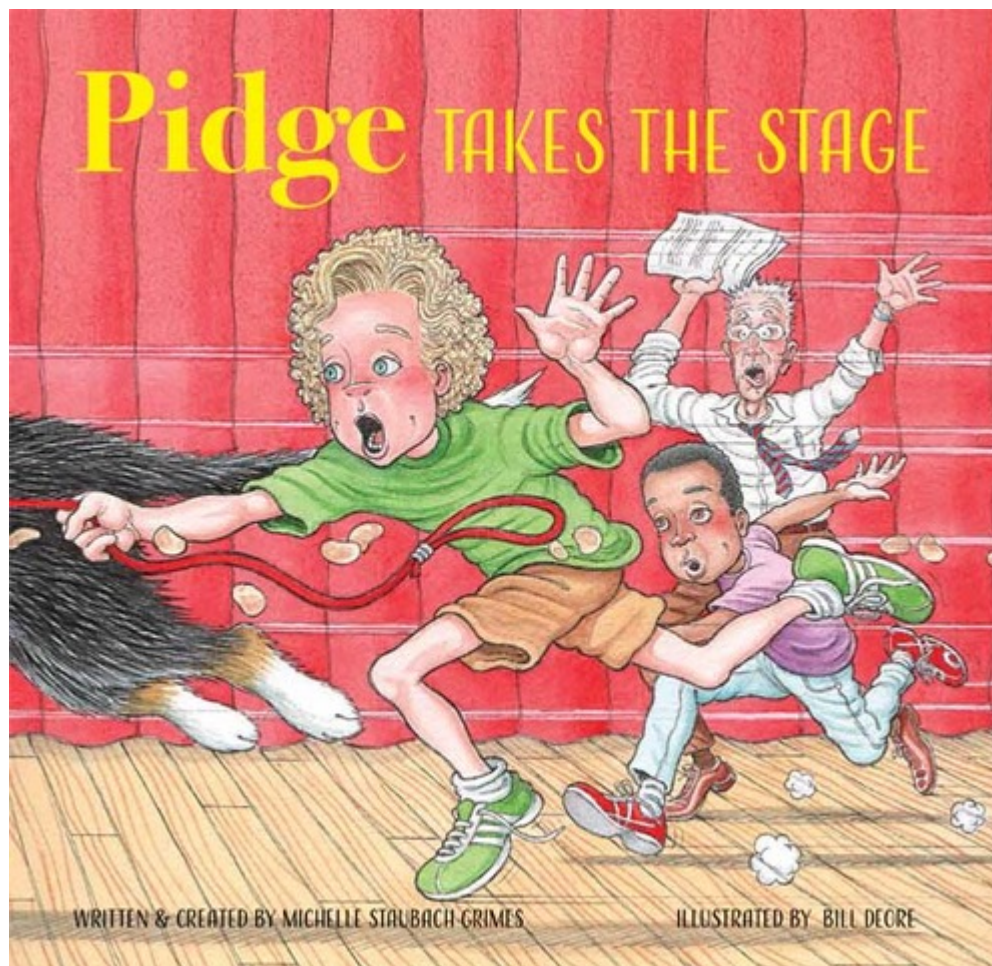


Daughter of NFL Hall-of-Famer Pens Children's Book On The Pursuit Of Stardom & Meaning Of Friendship



Michelle Staubach Grimes grew up in a household where she saw firsthand how hard work and sacrifice needs to be made to achieve success -- or even stardom. Her dad is a legendary Heisman Trophy winner, a two-time Super Bowl champion, and a member of the National Football League Hall of Fame, Roger Staubach.

In Michelle's newest book, *Pidge Takes the Stage*, the second in a children's book series, our young female hero decides to audition for the school musical along with her canine buddy, Maverick. Not everyone thinks Pidge can learn to sing or that Maverick can be trained, but Pidge believes. Through their theatrical escapades, Pidge discovers that singing requires hard work, and that Maverick might not be ready for his stage debut after all. By the end, Pidge understands that being a star is all a matter of perspective, and that unconditional love matters more than fame.

Michelle, who wrote and created the series, joined forces with illustrator Bill DeOre. He enjoyed a 34-year career as a nationally syndicated editorial and sports cartoonist for the *Dallas Morning News*.

“The first book is a story about love, family, and validation – and is a reminder to tell people how important they are,” shares Michelle. “The new book is about friendship, perseverance, and hard work – and how one must remain determined in order to reach higher goals.”

She says she learned all about commitment to hard work from her dad who would tirelessly practice basic fundamentals, even many years into an illustrious career.

“It takes talent to succeed, but you also need a real drive and a willingness to work at things,” she says.

Michelle is available to discuss:

- What it really takes to succeed in life.
- How to raise healthy kids.
- Why it’s okay to fail while pursuing a dream.
- Just because you may doubt your child’s ability, you should never give up cheering them on.

Michelle also shares a lasting message about literacy.

She chaired a major literacy event just a few years ago for Barbara Bush Foundation For Family Literacy.

The first book in the series, *Where is Pidge?*, tells the story of Pidge, the middle child in a large family. The often curious, helpful and fun-loving girl sometimes gets lost in the shuffle. One day, Pidge grows tired of not feeling special and decides to run away! But her plan goes awry and she finds herself in a very odd place – the laundry chute. Her adventure brings her back happily into the arms of her loving family where she is reminded that a day without Pidge in the Hoobler home is a disaster – and that the middle is actually a great place to be.

Michelle knows well the challenges of growing up the middle child, and of feeling lost in a big family. She was raised like a middle child of five. In addition, she grew up in the shadow of her dad.

“Sometimes a child can feel like he or she isn’t getting enough attention, or simply doesn’t realize his or her value to the family,” says Michelle. “Pidge discovers what she means to everyone when her dad tells her: ‘Being in the middle means there are people on all sides to love you!’”

Michelle is available to discuss:

- The challenges of growing up a middle child.
- How parents can make each of their children feel loved and special.
- Why some kids feel the urge to act on an impulse to run away from home – and how this can be prevented.
- How we can give our kids a balance between letting them make decisions freely and having them observe a parent’s wishes.
- How siblings can help make each other feel special.

The late Pat Conroy, a best-selling author who wrote several acclaimed novels that were turned into Oscar-nominated films, *The Prince of Tides* and *The Great Santini*, said this of Michelle’s book:

“*Where is Pidge?* is a book for the ages. I know of no American writer who didn’t fall in love with language by hearing children’s books read to us by our parents. Michelle’s book is charming, funny and delightful. It is so full of family love that you’ll want to buy it for every child you know. It has the look, feel, and smell of a classic about it.”

Though this tale is fiction, it’s loosely based on Michelle’s childhood. The main character’s name is inspired by her mother, whose childhood nickname was “Pidge.” Her mom’s maiden name is Hoobler. Michelle once discovered a friend of her daughter’s stuck in her laundry chute one surprising day! And in both books there’s a lovable dog by Pidge’s side -- Maverick. Michelle’s family actually enjoys the playfulness of a Bernese Mountain Dog.

“Many lessons come out of these two tales,” concludes Michelle. “I don’t believe there has ever been a character quite like Pidge in the book world. She’s a tomboy, and tough, but also very sensitive.” Indeed, thousands of school children have enjoyed hearing about the adventures of Pidge during Michelle’s visits to elementary schools.

“Michelle is a hero in her own right. A champion for literacy,…”

--***Dallas Child magazine***

“A funny story, a reassuring message, and a clever, creative design; highly recommended.”

--***Kirkus Indie Book Review***

“What I love about *Where Is Pidge?* is there’s not an iota of cynicism or clever-cute, irony in it. It’s just an old-fashioned children’s story: innocence lost, innocence regained. It’s healthy. It’s honest. It’s loving.”

--***Bernie Scheim, educator and author of If Holden Caulfield were in Your Classroom and Famous All Over Town***

“Author Michelle Staubach Grimes to promote ‘Pidge’ to military families in Fort Worth.”

--***Ft. Worth Star-Telegram***

“Author shares children’s book with 600 kids before Winter Read-A-Thon starts.”

--***Dallas Morning News***

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About The Author Michelle Staubach Grimes



Michelle Staubach Grimes began journaling years ago and enrolled in the Southern Methodist University Creative Writing Continuing Ed Program in 2012 to hone her writing skills. After falling in love with creative writing and studying “story” through the SMU program, Michelle launched her first children’s book, *Where is Pidge?* in the spring of 2015 and *Pidge Takes the Stage* in 2018.

After graduating from Ursuline Academy in 1986, she moved to Washington, D.C. and received her B.A. in History (1990) from Catholic University of America, and J.D. (1994) from Columbus School of Law.

She also worked at The White House as a staff assistant in the Office of Presidential Messages.

She returned to Dallas in 1994, practiced law for a couple of years, and worked for a year in sports marketing.

Michelle married John Grimes in 1997 and became a stay-at-home mom with the birth of her first child, Jeffrey, in 1999. Two daughters followed, Gracie and Emma.

Michelle is very active in her community. She served the past six years as a committee member for Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy Dallas Chapter and served as the event chair for 2015’s Celebration of Reading, an event promoting literacy. She also was a spokesperson for Change a Child’s Story, a campaign for literacy with United Way of Dallas. She chaired the 2011 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation’s Stair Climb, and is the incoming president elect of the 2018-2019 Genesis Board Alliance at the Genesis Shelter, an organization that helps women and children of domestic violence. Michelle also has volunteered teaching writing and story development to 7th and 8th graders at St. Mary of Carmel Elementary School.

She was born in Pensacola, Florida but raised in Dallas, Texas, where she resides with her family today. For more information, please consult: www.wherispidge.com.

About The Illustrator Bill DeOre



Bill De Ore's career spanned thirty four years as artist, art director, and most notably, as a nationally syndicated editorial and sports cartoonist for *The Dallas Morning News*.

Bill is an old-school illustrator; he uses pen, pencil and watercolor, and avoids the computer. Bill was raised in Dallas, Texas, attended Jesuit High School and received his Bachelors of Advertising Art and Design from Texas Tech.

A past member of the American Association of Editorial Cartoonists, Bill's awards include the Fischetti Award for outstanding cartoon on a national level, ten Katie Awards for outstanding cartoon in a five state region, Texas School Bell Award, and the national Small Business award.

Today, Bill works as a freelance artist in Dallas and has two grown sons. Bill's incredible talent is evident as the Hoobler clan comes alive on the pages of the Pidge series.

Michelle Staubach Grimes

Q&A

Pidge Takes the Stage

Where is Pidge?

1. **Michelle, what inspired you to create a children’s book series?** Writing this series evolved for me from years of journaling. Years ago, I began attending the Barbara Bush Foundation Celebration of Reading Event in Dallas, which focuses on the importance of literacy, and I always left inspired to write. That led me to enroll in the SMU Creative Writing Continuing Education Program and I fell in love with creative writing. However, the program was not directed at writing books for children. After drafting a novel, I began writing the story of Pidge at my kitchen table in a spiral notebook and couldn’t stop. To my surprise, my voice flowed naturally on the pages and I realized it was my core story. And there began my entry into the world of writing for children. I loved writing the first Pidge story and sharing the story with children, so it was natural for me to write a second book and create a series. I am currently writing the third Pidge book and hope to write many more.
2. **In the newest book, *Pidge Takes the Stage*, what happens to our young heroine?** Pidge decides to try out for the school musical, along with her canine buddy Maverick. However, she must learn to sing and to train Maverick. She learns that singing is not easy, and well, Maverick is not a good listener. In the end, Pidge learns to sing after hard work. But Maverick is a different story. Maverick is a complete disaster at the audition. Pidge realizes that her hard work paid off for her singing, but she must accept and love Maverick for who he is, and that he’s not destined for fame in the theater.
3. **As Pidge discovers being a star requires a lot of hard work, what message do you hope to convey to others?** When I share the story with children at schools or book events, I always address the hard work Pidge dedicated to her singing lessons. And I tell the kids – her hard work paid off. She was ultimately granted a role in the school musical. I talk to the kids about hard work and how I know going to school everyday is tough. But that is how we power through life. We have to work hard whether it be at school, in our job, exercising to stay healthy, in our sport, with our musical instrument, etc. – and in the long run the effort will pay off.
4. **The story is also about conquering your fears, reaching for your dreams, trying something new, believing in yourself, not giving up, and being perseverant. How can parents inculcate such values into their children?** First and foremost by example. We can preach to our kids all day, but they must witness us following our dreams, trying new things, and persevering in tough times. For example, if our child comes to us and wants to give up – that is the perfect time to talk to him or her about the ramifications of giving up, and then give him or her true-life examples of not giving up. We, as parents, have to live a fulfilling life if we expect our kids to live a fulfilling life. And that also means that we have to let our children fail. Maybe after the long talk about not giving up, the child gives up the next day and quits their team. We may not agree with our child,

but we also have to let them make their own decisions at the appropriate age and suffer the consequences.

5. **How do we show others love for who they are?** We show love for others for who they are by telling them how important they are to us. Simple compliments throughout the day let those we love know we care. We have to be careful about critiquing or implying we want them to do something different – because then we are not accepting them for who they are.
6. **Your first book, *Where is Pidge?*, is about the middle child of seven who feels forgotten and decides to run away. Were you a middle child?** While I'm not technically a middle child, I was raised as a middle child. I have a sister two years older and a sister one year younger. The three of us were born in a four-year period and I'm in the middle. Six years later my parents had my brother and then another sister.
7. **How can parents or siblings let everyone in the family know they are loved and important?** It's as simple as showing gratitude to each of your family members - a simple thank you is sometimes all you need to say. And an "I love you" before bedtime each night. And again, by example, little acts of kindness – siblings can help each other out in the course of the day.
8. **You teamed up with a nationally syndicated editorial and sports cartoonist Bill De Ore, who worked for the *Dallas Morning News* for 34 years. What was it like to collaborate with him?** It was fabulous. Since we collaborated, I was able to express to Bill my visions of Pidge, the dog, and certain family members. Then I let him go to work. He would show me his sketches throughout the process and ask my opinion. However, rarely did I suggest any changes. He's been drawing his entire life and his work is spectacular. I'm blessed that he brought my characters to life just as I imagined.
9. **In *Pidge Takes the Stage*, the teacher says to her young, eager student: "But it takes a lot of unspectacular preparation to get spectacular results." That's actually a quote from your dad, the legendary Hall of Fame NFL quarterback Roger Staubach. Tell us what he meant by that.** I asked my dad one day to describe to me what it was like, in the summer, at training camp for the Dallas Cowboys -- and that is the quote he gave me. It really describes life for all of us. The day-to-day grind for almost anyone is unspectacular – whether you are an athlete, writer, lawyer, painter, etc. There is a lot of repetition in any type of work. But that repetition can create spectacular results if you work hard. And for my dad the day in day out of training camp was lifting weights, running, learning plays, and throwing the ball over and over. These were all unspectacular activities. But the spectacular results came on game day when he threw a beautiful touchdown pass or when he became the MVP of a Super Bowl. It's a great talking point with kids. I often talk to kids about how I know school can be tough and maybe they are struggling with learning to read or write, but with practice, which is unspectacular, they will then get spectacular results.
10. **Did you feel forgotten in a family of five, growing up in a household dominated by a local icon and national hero?** I believe growing up in a large family and as the "middle" child of the three oldest, I did struggle with finding my place in my family and felt alone at times, or maybe lost in the shuffle. And at times I did tire of all the attention my dad received in public. There were times I just wanted him to be my dad. But being a middle child is not a bad thing. And I believe there are many great things about being in the middle that build character. And while I wouldn't say I'm the most flexible person, I do believe with time, I've become very open to listening to different opinions and become better about not jumping to conclusions right away. And while my sibling and I all have strong personalities, we are very close. I'd go into a foxhole any day with any of my siblings and can't imagine life without them.

11. **Do you think we each have a little bit of Pidge in us?** Definitely! Pidge is a young child trying to find her place in her family and ultimately make the world better. Aren't we all on this journey - trying to find our place in the world and make it more meaningful?
12. **How can we, as parents, help validate children's feelings and emotions?** We as parents must talk to our children and reaffirm our love for them. As parents we may not agree or understand their emotions, but to our child it's their "truth." We must listen to our children and not judge. Just because we validate their feelings, doesn't mean we agree, but it's very important to the child to know they are loved and their voice matters. And siblings need to care for one another. Siblings must tell their siblings they love them or remember to thank a sibling for help on homework, or whatever it may be.
13. **In both books we fall in love with Maverick, a wonderful Bernese Mountain Dog. Why do so many children's books feature a loving pet, especially a dog?** I think it's simple – dogs and animals love unconditionally and they are playful.
14. **Your books also contribute to building literacy. I understand you worked with Barbara Bush's organization to promote literacy. What did you learn from her?** Where do I start? She was an amazing woman on a mission to increase literacy, and she cared deeply for those who didn't have access to education. First, she started these fabulous literacy events called the "Celebration of Reading" to raise money for literacy and to educate those who attended the events about the literacy crisis. I began attending the events many years ago in Dallas, and I must admit, I was surprised to learn how many people were illiterate. After the first event, I was a changed person and began working more closely with the Barbara Bush Foundation to increase literacy rates. It's very important to me to continue to work closely with literacy organizations. Secondly, after attending the "Celebration of Reading" events, I was inspired to follow my dream, to write, which led me to enroll in the SMU Continuing Education Program for Creative Writing.
15. **You teach the power of gratitude in your books. Why is it such an important value that we need to be reminded of it?** Gratitude makes the world a better place. There is so much negativity in the world, and we need to create more positive energy. It's so easy to go about our day with our heads down and not even notice those around us, especially those that have made our life better. We need to keep our heads high and thank those who have made a difference in our lives. And by reminding ourselves daily about all the great things in our life, we in turn are ultimately more at peace, I believe.

Lessons from *Pidge Takes the Stage*

The story of *Pidge Takes the Stage* is about conquering your fears, reaching for your dreams, trying something new, believing in yourself, working hard, friendship, not giving up, loving others for who they are, and accepting that being in the middle is okay.

Believe In Yourself

Pidge decides she and Maverick are going to try out for the school musical. Pidge doesn't know how to sing, and Maverick doesn't always behave. However, Pidge is willing to go out of the box and try something new. She believes in herself, and Maverick.

Practice Hard

Pidge learns right away that singing is hard, but she doesn't give up. She persists and practices every day. Pidge sings in the audition for the school musical after faithfully practicing singing daily. She believes in herself and works very hard.

Don't Give Up On Others

Pidge's best friend Billy is loyal and does everything to help her train Maverick. Despite Maverick's inability to be trained. Pidge doesn't give up on him.

Be A Friend

Pidge's love for Maverick is tested at the school audition. Maverick misbehaves and creates a chaotic scene at the audition. Billy, her true friend comes to the rescue and takes Maverick away so Pidge can audition.

Unconditional Love

Maverick is not considered for the school play based on his chaotic audition. Pidge realizes she must love and accept Maverick for who he is – she can't make him be someone else.

Try Your Best, Even If You Fall Shy Of A Goal

Pidge doesn't get the lead in the school musical, and is disappointed to learn she will be the middle child in the school play. Billy assures her every role is important, and Pidge exclaims that maybe she will get the lead the next time. She refuses to give up.