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CHARLIE CRIST

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good guy," said St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker, who met Crist while they attended Florida State University. "People may disagree with him, but it's really hard for people not to like him."

The elder Crist, who used to take his son and his three sisters on house calls, called his son a "people person" not unlike another well-known political figure.

"Take as an example: [Bill] Clinton's policies are not my policies, but you can't help liking the guy," the elder Crist said. "You can tell he likes people and he likes articulating with people."

Crist also has a soft spot for his hometown, where he has resided since moving to Florida at age 4 from Altoona, Pa.

He lives in a rented one-bedroom condominium in downtown's Bayfront Towers. He belongs to the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. He has attended the downtown First United Methodist Church since 1960.

Family Provides A Solid Background

Crist credits his success primarily to his father, his mother, Nancy, and his sisters.

"My father is my best friend," said Crist, who would go on hunting trips with him to Starkey Ranch in Pasco County. "I speak to him daily. His guidance, and my mother's nurturing, have obviously been a tremendous benefit to me and help to me and my sisters as well."

"We're all very, very close. My family and my friends have really been an enormous help to me."

Childhood friends recall Crist as a model student who was always polite and considerate.

"He was always the kid in the neighborhood who your parents would say, 'Why can't you get grades like Charlie?'" said Bruce Boore of Land O'Lakes, who lived across the street from Crist and was his best friend until their early teens.

Early Exposure To Politics

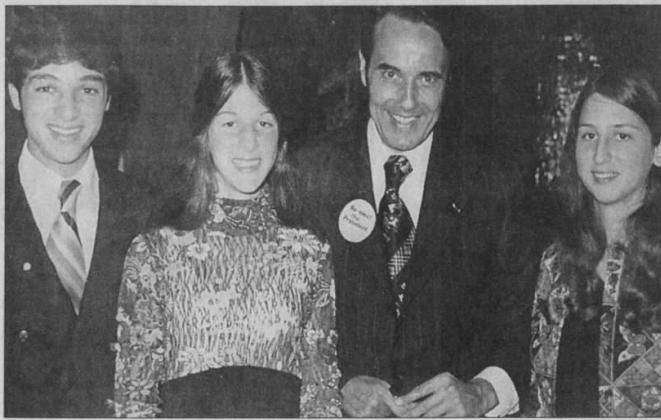
Boore said Crist was well-liked because he was a good listener, and he always wanted to do what he thought was the right thing.

"If there was a fight on the empty sandlot over a call at baseball, Charlie's motivation was, 'C'mon, guys, let's get over it, let's just play the game,'" Boore said. "But if somebody was called out and it wasn't right, Charlie would

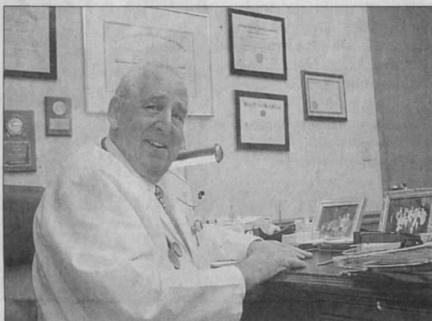


Tribune photo by BRUCE HOSKING

Charlie Crist spent his formative years growing up in this two-story, waterfront house in St. Petersburg.



Crist took an interest in politics as a youth. At a 1972 Republican dinner in Tierra Verde are, from the left, Charlie, 15, Emily Crist, 13, U.S. Sen. Robert Dole, and Mary Ann Crist, 17.



Tribune photo by MARK GUE

Charles J. Crist is the father of the governor elect. The elder Crist had hoped his son would follow in his footsteps as a doctor.

stand up for that person."

Crist's first exposure to politics was as a 9-year-old handing out campaign literature for his father, a member and chairman of the Pinellas County School Board during the late 1960s and 1970s. His dad took him to a fish fry at Lake Maggiore in south St. Petersburg, where Crist grew

up before the family moved to the posh Snell Isle neighborhood in northeast St. Petersburg.

"I just liked it," said Crist, whose political role models are Ronald Reagan and former U.S. Sen. Connie Mack, for whom Crist once worked. "I liked the interaction with people and thought it was a lot of

fun." The elder Crist wanted his son to go into medicine, but "math and I didn't hit it off too well," Crist recalled. Instead, he went into politics; one of his sisters became a doctor.

He won his first election in 1968, when seventh-graders chose him as homeroom representative at what then was Bay Point Junior High School.

After the family moved, he transferred to Riviera Junior High, where he was elected student body president. At St. Petersburg High School, he was active in student government, serving as senior class president.

Crist also was active in sports, playing linebacker and then quarterback.

"He could pass a mile," his father recalled. "In fact, they used to practice punt returns,

"Rick and I served in student government together," Crist recalled. "Our frat houses were right next to each other. He's been a great friend ever since."

Crist went on to Cumberland School of Law in Alabama, but didn't practice much law before entering public service. The former general counsel for minor league baseball has been a state senator, Florida's education commissioner, and attorney general.

Bill Hyland Jr., a Tampa lawyer who met Crist in law school, recalled him as "kind of a natural born politician — very friendly, impeccable manners."

"We always kind of had a sense that Charlie would go into politics," he said.

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St. Pete Mayor On Crist's Hire List

GOVERNOR-ELECT, BAKER COLLEGE PALS

By CARLOS MONCADA
The Tampa Tribune

ST. PETERSBURG — Although Mayor Rick Baker was elected just last year to a second four-year term, don't be surprised if he ends up accepting a higher calling.

Gov.-elect Charlie Crist said he would be interested in speaking to his college friend about a position in his administration, possibly heading either the Department of Education or the Department of Community Affairs.

"We've known each other for quite a long time," said Crist, who attended Florida State University with Baker in the late 1970s. "I have enormous respect for what he's done for my hometown."

Crist said he hasn't had discussions with Baker and doesn't know whether the fellow Republican would be interested in a Cabinet position.

"There are many areas he could help, I think, the entire state with," Crist said. "Among them education, development, things of that nature."

"I know he loves enormously what he's doing, but I'd love to talk to him about it and just kind of see what his thoughts are."

Asked about a job on Crist's team, Baker, who has made improving public schools and economic development cornerstones of his administration, did not rule out the possibility.

"I think I have the best job in the state of Florida right now," he said. "But I care about a lot of things, obviously. Especially schools."



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