

Lisa McCaffrey, Ashley Adamson's 'Your Mom' podcast champions moms of superstar athletes



By [Christopher Kamrani](#)
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It was during the annual early December pageantry of the Heisman Trophy experience that Ashley Adamson saw [Christian McCaffrey](#) as a kid, not as the polished [Stanford](#) do-it-all star running back. In New York City to follow McCaffrey, one of the three 2015 finalists, the

Pac-12 Network host noticed Lisa McCaffrey quarterbacking photo-ops. Christian, alongside his brothers, slouched a bit, so Lisa let him know what to do.

“She told him to stand up straight, and I think she might’ve pinched him,” Adamson recalled. “A kid whose mom was giving him s— about taking a picture atop a building in New York City. It stuck with me. Like, ‘Man, moms, in particular, hold the keys to humanizing everybody — but especially superstars.’”

This was before Adamson was a mom of two, but even then she thought of putting microphones in front of mothers of well-known athletes to glean how they shaped their children and placed them on paths that would lead to stardom.

Then?

“It’s an idea that just sits in your brain for almost six years and you never do anything about it,” Adamson said.

When the COVID-19 pandemic encompassed the globe in the spring of 2020 and everything came to a halt, the brainstorming commenced. Adamson received advice from peers to search out a passion project that would help creativity bloom a bit. The podcast remained in the back of her mind, but it took another year for her to type out a meticulous pitch. And she knew who she wanted as her co-host.

On a random day in late summer 2021, Adamson said she “finally got the guts” to call Lisa McCaffrey.

“This is serendipitous timing,” McCaffrey said.



Lisa McCaffrey (left) helped spark an idea in Ashley Adamson years before it came to fruition.
(Courtesy of Ashley Adamson)

It was. She was on one of her hour-long drives north from the Denver area to Greeley, Colo., where her husband, Ed, was the head coach of Northern Colorado University. Adamson didn't get beyond her third bullet point before McCaffrey interrupted her: "I was all in. Let's go."

Finally, all these years on, the podcast was going to take off.

They called it "Your Mom."

In the weeks after Adamson and McCaffrey joined forces to expound on mothers of famous athletes and people, a line in the second season of the hit Apple TV+ series "Ted Lasso" summed up the depths of motherhood

the pair wanted to dig for. The title character said of meeting someone's mother on the show: "I love meeting people's moms. It's like reading an instruction manual as to why they're nuts."

Adamson laughed when reciting that line because it's that good of a line read, but it also encapsulates the impact moms have on their children. In exploring how mothers raised their kids, Adamson and McCaffrey have maneuvered through conversations of triumphs and tragedies, shared pain-inducing laughs over hilarious stories and also shed tears in front of their microphones when learning how some moms have come to grips with immeasurable loss.

Since launching on [the Bleav podcast network](#) in July 2022, they've spoken to the mothers of [Sam Darnold](#), Jake Plummer, Kyle Shanahan, Stephen Curry, Megan Rapinoe, Ryan Leaf and Nick and [Joey Bosa](#) as part of their 27 episodes thus far. They've unearthed some hilarious stories along the way — like how [Nick Bosa](#), the [49ers](#) defensive end who is now a teammate of Christian's, called sacks "squishies" as a reference from Pixar's "Finding Nemo." They also discussed how the Bosas drug-tested their kids to ensure they didn't get into trouble when they were young.

They haven't shied away from the taxing realities of motherhood either, discussing how, for some, it can be overwhelming.

"Motherhood can be lonely. It's weird that it can be lonely because it feels like the opposite. You're never by yourself," Adamson said.

"Sometimes all you want to be is by yourself when you're a mom. The actual going through it ... it's hard to describe."

They've spoken to some mothers who have dealt with heartbreak. They [spoke to Martha Thomas](#) — the mother of NFL defensive lineman

Solomon Thomas — whose daughter, Ella, died by suicide in 2018. They heard how it would take Marcia Leaf, mother of Ryan, days [to feel normal again](#) after visiting her son in prison.

They talked to Sonya Curry about nearly having an [abortion while pregnant](#) with Steph. Denise Rapinoe, the mother of U.S. women's national team star Megan, said she feared for her daughter's life after Megan chose to kneel during the national anthem in 2016 to condemn White supremacy and police brutality. She also spoke about guiding her son, Brian, through addiction issues.

“We're shedding light on (the realities of motherhood), that's for sure,” McCaffrey said. “And the trials and tribulations of what you go through.”

Lately, when Lisa McCaffrey isn't hyping up the 49ers fan base by [excitedly dropping F-bombs](#) in interviews on TV — “Sometimes I have loose lips,” she said — she reminds herself she's still a mom.

Every morning she wakes up and accounts for her four sons. Her oldest, Max, was a wide receiver at [Duke](#) who has entered coaching. Then came Christian, noted in her podcast bio as her only college dropout. Dylan quarterbacked Northern Colorado. And the youngest, Luke, is a wide receiver at [Rice](#). She goes as far as checking the weather where each boy is. Moms remember everything, and the podcast has become a regularly scheduled nostalgia trip.

“It has made me miss and reminisce about those times when my kids were little — the good, and bad, too,” McCaffrey said.

McCaffrey wanted to make one thing clear: She never bugs Christian for help — except when she absolutely has to. A staple of “Your Mom” episodes features sharing a video or text message from the child of the mother. So when the red-hot 49ers were preparing for the playoffs, Nick Bosa still hadn’t sent his video for Cheryl.

Lisa didn’t want to, but she knew she had to text Christian to approach Nick in the locker room and remind him.

“It’s an important part of the show,” Lisa said. “It’s a treat for their mom to hear how they feel about them. I did ask him to ask Nick for a video, of course, on the most stressful week ever.”

(There is a plan to have Cheryl Bosa back for another episode sometime soon, when she’ll get to watch the video of Nick that arrived a little too late.)

The pair surprised a teary-eyed Peggy Shanahan when they aired a [heartfelt thanks](#) from her son Kyle, the 49ers coach, in late October. [Megan Rapinoe’s message](#) to Denise was that her mom “laid the groundwork” for who she’d become.

“You think your mom, or both of your parents, or the people you love, know how you feel about them, but when was the last time you actually just paused and took a minute and told them why?” Adamson said. “We save all of our best stuff to talk about people when they’re not here anymore. Don’t save it for their eulogy. Tell them when they’re here so they enjoy it.

“And that’s probably the most gratifying part of this is seeing the reactions of these moms when their kid pauses to tell them why they’re amazing.”

(Photos of Jen and Kate McBride, mothers of NFL tight end Trey McBride, and Lisa McCaffrey and Ashley Adamson courtesy of “Your Mom” podcast; Illustration: John Bradford / The Athletic)



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