

Q+A

Celebrity Connection: Justice Mellencamp

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JUSTICE MELLENCAMP IS AN ISLAND GIRL. SHE LOVES THE BEACH AND HER LOWCOUNTRY LIFE AS A WIFE, MOTHER, SISTER AND A DAUGHTER OF ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME JOHN MELLENCAMP. FOR THIS INDIANA-BORN PROFESSIONAL HAIR STYLIST, IT'S FAMILY FIRST.

The stunning 32-year-old moved to the island when she was 4 and grew up in Sea Pines with her mom (Victoria Granucci) and a sister (Teddi Jo) after her parents divorced. She attended Hilton Head Preparatory School for 12 years where she met her future husband, Michael Moore. Her father had bought other homes in Sea Pines and Palmetto Dunes, and then built a home on Daufuskie Island about a decade ago. Justice and her family recently moved to Bluffton. LOCAL Life sat down with Justice to find more about this island girl:

LOCAL Life: When did you first visit Hilton Head?

Justice Mellencamp: I was too young to even remember the first time we came to Hilton Head. There are pictures of our family at our beach house in Sea Pines, and I'm maybe a year old. My mom and dad bought a house right next to the Beach Club - which was a little shack then with a slushy machine - and it's still there. I grew up in that house. They bought the house in the late '70s.

LL: Why was your dad intrigued with Hilton Head?

JM: He used to go on long motorcycle trips with his buddies from Indiana, and they used to go to Myrtle Beach... and I think going to Myrtle Beach got tiresome after so many years. Myrtle Beach is not Hilton Head. He had heard about this island; it's private and it's quiet... So that's why they decided to buy a second home here.

LL: Why do you live here?

JM: My husband and I grew up on Hilton Head together; he grew up in Sea Pines as well, so we have been friends since we were 4 years old. We dated in high school, when our parents let us, and then left for college... We were always together... The island is beautiful and has such a sense of home for both of us.

LL: How did your dad make your wedding special in 2014?

JM: We had a small, intimate wedding with about 40 guests at my dad's house on Daufuskie. He opened up his home to our closest friends, which was a huge gift. Then we went over to the Melrose Beach Club for dinner. Then we took the Vagabond ferry into Harbour Town where we met 40 more guests; so we had 80 or 85 people at the Quarterdeck. We did a cocktail reception there... We're sitting there and my dad's violinist stands up and gets her





violin, and then my dad stands up and says, "Because we never talked about a father/daughter dance, I'll have Miriam (Sturm, a longtime band member) play a special song for you." It was so beautiful and I don't even remember what it was. And we had our father/daughter dance right there. Totally unplanned. That was sweet.

LL: Your father became a grandfather when he was 37. What's he like as a grandfather in his mid-60s?

JM: Way more laid back. He has gotten to be a lot more mellow with his age. We were all at his house this weekend (in Indiana for the wedding of her oldest sister), all the little kids running around, the noise doesn't seem to bother him. He's a very handsome grandpa. All of our children call him Peepaw... And I think he has noticed, as I have myself, how quickly things have gone by.

LL: When did you first realize your dad was famous?

JM: It probably wasn't until middle school. When I was very young, I thought he was a professional painter because he did these big portraits... When I was 12 or 13, I started to realize this is pretty cool to get to go to this place or that place. I had all these stamps in my passport. That's pretty cool. He tried to take as many of his kids as he could to go with him. He felt that seeing the world was a very important side of life.

LL: How are you and you dad similar and different?

JM: We both have a touch of OCD (obsessive-compulsive dis-



DADDY'S GIRL Justice Mellencamp still chokes up a bit when she watches her father perform.

order), but his is worse than mine. We're both pretty headstrong. But we're also homebodies. We would much rather sit at home with our families than out doing things... I have much more patience, which came from my mom... He had very high standards for his family. He's very different than what I think a lot of people think... and he has a great sense of humor.

LL: What is your favorite song of your dad's?

JM: "Ain't Even Done with the Night." I just have always loved that song. That might be the only song of his I have on my phone... And, of course "Jack and Diane," and all the ones that have been around forever. I have to admit, every time I see him in concert, I choke up a bit." (She last saw him perform in St. Augustine, Fla., in June.)

LL: Your dad is a musician and an artist. Do you have a special creative talent?

JM: Before I had my children, I painted quite a bit, oils and acrylics. Now that I have children, I still sketch. When we were kids, we were not allowed to watch TV during the daytime when we were with our dad. So he set me up in his art studio with an easel, and he said, "Here's all my paints; here's all my brushes; there's a million art books over there; pick one and copy it." So I did a Picasso and it's hanging here today (in her house)... Looking back, it was such a great lesson to teach your kids.