

# COMMUNITY★TABLE American Profile

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## MAKING MOM PROUD

COUNTRY STAR  
**SCOTTY  
McCREERY'S**  
MOTHER'S DAY  
TRIBUTE TO THE  
WOMAN HE CREDITS  
FOR HIS SUCCESS

+ Scotty's favorite  
breakfast recipe!  
page 14



GIFTS FOR  
**GARDENING  
MOMS**

**SKINNY**  
SOUTHWEST  
CHICKEN

ROAD TRIP  
**COST  
CUTTERS**

STOP YOUR  
SPOUSE FROM  
**SNORING**



# His MOTHER'S SON

DESPITE HIS  
STAR-POWER  
AND SUCCESS,  
AMERICAN  
IDOL ALUM  
SCOTTY  
MCCREERY  
SAYS FAMILY  
COMES FIRST

By Heather Donahoe

He's the type of son any mother would love to take credit for raising—polite, hardworking, successful, deeply loyal. And when asked, 22-year-old country music artist and *American Idol* winner Scotty McCreery says his upbringing and small-town roots keep him grounded at the same time his star continues to rise.

"I love being able to go out and play and see the fans, but man, there is just nothing like getting back home to my family and friends," McCreery says of his Garner, N.C., home (outside Raleigh), where he sang his first solo as a preschooler at church.

Since winning *Idol*'s Season 10 title in 2011, McCreery has sold nearly 2.5 million albums, toured alongside top-tier performers like Brad Paisley and Rascal Flatts, attended college at North Carolina State University and written a book, *Go Big or Go Home: The Journey Toward the Dream* (Zondervan), due out this week. He calls the story a celebration of the people who have contributed to his achievements.

At the top of that list is family—parents Michael and Judy McCreery and older sister Ashley. Of his mother,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



*"My mom definitely has my back. Sometimes I have to calm her down because she is the mother bear when it comes to watching out for me."*



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

McCreery says, “She put me in a position to achieve success early on. Whether it was school or church or baseball or music, she has always been there to encourage me through any goals I’ve had.”

Indeed, when McCreery sailed through the *American Idol* auditions as a wide-eyed 16-year-old, Judy halted her real estate career in North Carolina to move to Los Angeles for five months to help her son navigate the showbiz world. And long before that, Judy was quietly helping McCreery understand his strengths and cultivate his talent.

“She’s the one who pushed me musically,” McCreery says. “I don’t think I’d be here today if she hadn’t been the one to take me to children’s choir practice on Wednesday nights and make sure I was in chorus at school and sign me up for that talent show I didn’t think I could do. Looking back, she may have seen something in me that I didn’t even see.”



Mom Judy marks McCreery’s ninth birthday in 2002 (left); the two visit the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tenn. (above).

## GOODBYE, IDOL

*“It’s bittersweet [to see it go]. It was a huge part of my life, and I may be an Idol winner, but more than anything, I’m a fan of the show.”*

### A Mother’s Pride

Judy, who has a striking singing voice herself, admits she suspected early on that Scotty’s knack for music might be something special, but feared a maternal bias.

“I remember being so relieved picking up Scotty from his first guitar lesson when he was still in elementary school,” recalls Judy. “His teacher, Gary, who had been a musician in Nashville, met me outside and said, ‘I really see some natural rhythm in him. There’s something there.’ I remember thinking to myself, ‘Good, I’m not crazy after all.’ I had felt from a very early age, Scotty musically had that ‘something extra.’ Hearing an experienced musician confirm that convinced me I should continue to find ways to nurture Scotty’s talent.”

Whether it was his own enthusiasm for Elvis, which began in kindergarten, or Judy singing

along with her favorites—The Carpenters, Ronnie Milsap and Conway Twitty—McCreery’s musical style is significantly influenced by the soundtrack of his childhood. On his next album, due out before the end of the year, McCreery hopes to reflect tradition, while forging his own identity as a musician. “I feel like I’ve figured out more who I am and what I want to say,” he says. “I may only be 22, but I grew up with the older style of country music—what my parents and grandparents raised me on. I want my songs to have some of those qualities.”

So far, keeping one foot planted in his pre-*Idol* life in Garner has helped McCreery plot his career moves, while maintaining strong ties to the people and relationships that have brought him this far.

“One thing my mom has always said is that ‘you are who you hang out with,’” says McCreery. “I’m so thankful that she raised me in church and on the ball field and at school with good kids, good people with high character. I owe so much to that.”



# my favorite

# dish



## SCOTTY'S FAVE

This is a McCreery family favorite, always served on Christmas morning but enjoyed year-round. Judy appreciates healthy cooking tweaks whenever possible and recommends, for fewer carbs, skipping the bread altogether. "It's just as delicious without," she promises.

## JUDY McCREERY'S BREAKFAST PIE

- 6 eggs
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 2 Tbsp chopped onions (optional)
- 1 Tbsp chopped pimiento (optional)
- 1 lb hot pork sausage  
Salt and pepper, to taste
- 6 slices thickly sliced bread (like Texas toast)
- 1 cup shredded cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss or a combination of your favorites)



1. In medium bowl, beat eggs and half-and-half. Add onions and pimiento, if using.
2. Place sausage in a large skillet and cook over medium heat, breaking up with a spoon, until brown. Drain grease and season with salt and pepper; set aside.
3. Grease a 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Line the pan with bread, then scatter sausage and cheese over top. Pour egg mixture over top. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F degrees. Bake 25 to 35 minutes, removing the foil during the last 5 minutes, until the egg mixture is set.

Serves 6

### Breakfast on a Stick!

Watch our video on making Easy Breakfast Kebabs at

[CommunityTable.com/breakfast](http://CommunityTable.com/breakfast)



The McCreery family in 1996, from left: Judy, Scotty, Michael, and Ashley

COURTESY OF JUDY McCREERY

McCREERY BY JEREMY RYAN; BREAKFAST PIE BY ISTOCK PHOTO