

Wide open spaces

room to run & fetch

Shiloh, Fonzy & the Thorntons
of Indian Hill

Story by Doug Sandhage / Photos by Rebecca Worple



Opposite page: Where does the Thornton's biggest dog, Shiloh, sit? Usually in places he doesn't fit, says Allison, but he loves doing so. A vase of alliums by Robin Wood Flowers brightens the monochromatic color scheme in the master bedroom. **Above:** Wide-open spaces highlight the Thornton's dramatic living room which is used primarily for entertaining. Modern classic furniture and lighting, placed on a natural Maple wood floor, welcomes their guests. **Left:** The Thornton's foyer is a prime example of their simple, tasteful style. Flowers by Robin Wood; painting by Katia Poulin; table from Voltage.

thinks he is a lap dog." Allison says she has always had a dog or two and thus, she says, they seem to prefer her best. Both were purchased from breeders found online – Fonzy was born in Idaho, Shiloh in New Richmond.

"Allison turned me into a dog lover," says John, though it took a while. He remembers that soon after they met, Allison's dog took his "first" cell phone from a table and the next morning John found it chewed to pieces.

AFTER FOOTBALL

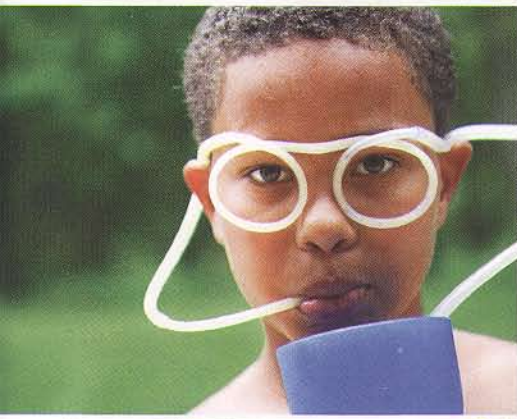
So, we ask John the question everyone asks professional athletes when they retire from the profession: what next?

In June 2009, John and another former Bengals player and best friend, Charles Fisher, founded Jockbiz. The company serves as a "mentor" to athletes, from college through retirement, to help brand their names primarily through community

story continued on page 53



"Clearly there's a ton of love in this house," said photographer Rebecca Worple after capturing the entire family in the master bedroom. Allison chose the prints by artist Deeanne Wagner that hang over the Poltrona-Frau bed. "When I find an artist I like, I buy a couple of pieces," she says.



Art is important throughout the Thornton home, but even more so in son Ty's bedroom. His masterpieces adorn the walls which were painted to match the bedding from Serena & Lily. The blue rug was found at the Rug Gallery.

involvement, and post-career planning. For example, one of their clients is Frostee Rucker from the Bengals. "He wanted his own event and chose the Salvation Army clothing drive," says John. The drive, which John calls a "signature event" for the Jockbiz client, is now titled *Frostee's Challenge*. The first challenge, in August 2009, netted over 3,000 pounds of donations for the agency's Adult Rehabilitation Center in Norwood.

John's personal signature charity event is Jockbiz Bowling for Autism. He and Allison started the event in 2002 in Nashville while he was playing for the Titans. "We've raised over \$200,000 so far for those affected by autism," he says. The last event was in June at Princeton Bowl.

"A signature event is something where the athlete can say 'it's mine.' It's not a team function. We try to find something that they can feel close to, to get guys interested in programs that they really like." However, John says that once the athlete gets into the program offered by Jockbiz, "we just show them how to do it and then they can do it on their own."

A community-minded athlete benefits in two ways, says John: first, it allows him to give back in a way fans expect; and second, it enhances the athlete's value to a team, especially when it comes time to contract extensions and salary.

John says that his 10 years in the NFL gave him lots of opportunities to network with successful business executives,

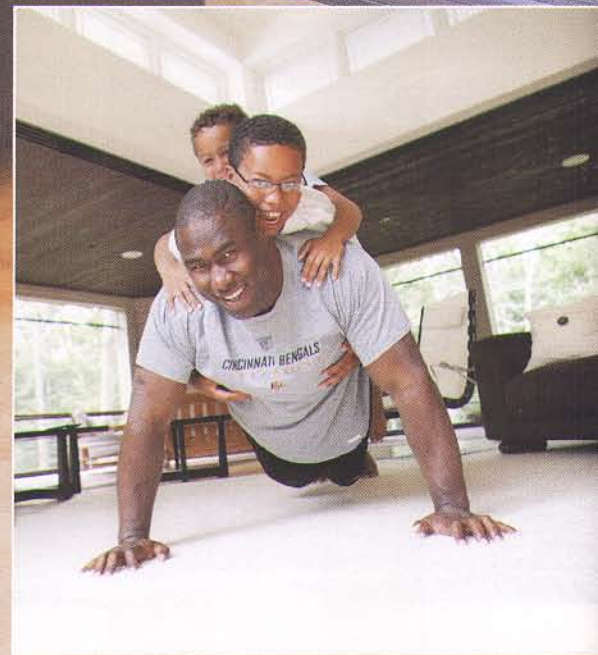
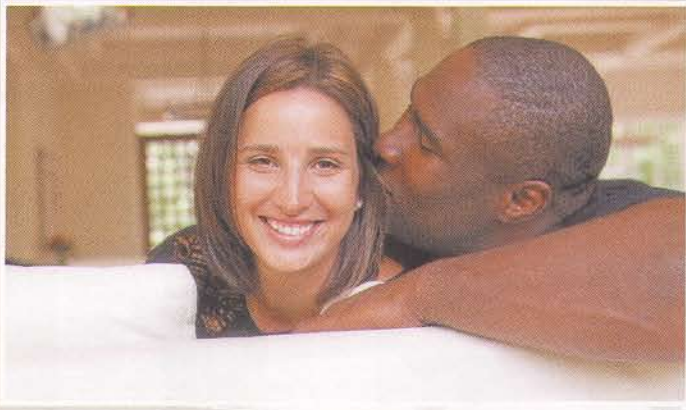
community organizations and the media. These contacts and the power of sports ("you have the power, use it," John says) combine perfectly to help his new business succeed. "A lot of players see the value of charitable community involvement, but don't know how to get involved," he says. The idea, he adds, is "to go out and invest in yourself. Anything can be done. Athletes can have a big impact."

www.jockbiz.com lists its services to include transitioning from college into an NFL career, making connections during the NFL off-season, planning for life after the NFL, and building relationships with the media. John says he knows many of the national sports writers and personalities, and was co-host of WLW's *Bengals Roundtable* during the last football season.

And while he and Allison are busy and the boys and dogs keep them hopping, John says that "I am finally able to breathe. Now that my career athletically is over, I can sit back and enjoy my family. It's a lot less stressful so I'm enjoying life at this point. I get to watch my boys grow up. My wife is finishing school and I get to support that, like she supported me."

Allison agrees. When John was playing football, it was she who "kept the household together."

Though not directly commenting, Fonzy and Shiloh seem to think that everything is just A-OK, a touchdown so to speak, in the Thornton household.



One of the first things that strikes you about John Thornton is that he is a big guy, with big arms, perfect for use in professional football and for lifting kids when it's time to play. *Best Magazine* photographer Rebecca Worple said: "Not knowing anything about football, when I saw John's arms I realized we must incorporate that into the shoot, so he very easily did a few push ups with both kids riding on top. And then Allison came walking out . . . with her big beautiful eyes and warm smile."



The kitchen in the Thornton household does get used, a lot. John and Allison share cooking responsibilities: John primarily for breakfast meals, including everyone's favorites, omelets; and for Allison it's dinner, her specialties being lasagna and homemade macaroni and cheese that John has loved since childhood. Thanksgiving and Christmas feature big family get-togethers at the Thorntons. The kitchen is filled with most every built-in appliance made by Sub-Zero and Wolf, including a 48" side-by-side stainless refrigerator, a dual fuel Wolf range, and Wolf double wall ovens.

The family room is the one place where the Thornton family – including Shiloh and Fonzy – can run, play, throw balls, retrieve balls, watch TV, and yet be steps from the kitchen and an adjoining screened-in porch. The room and the porch are connected to each other through an L-shaped 28 ft. wide by 9 ft. tall pocket door system.





Who Did It?

The following businesses were identified by the Thorntons as having been significantly involved in the home's architecture, design and/or landscaping in recent years:

Builder: Rookwood Custom Home Builders **Designer:** RLT Design **Interior Design:** Amy Watson **Kitchen Cabinets:** J&N Distribution and Design **Custom-Made Front Door:** C&W Custom Woodworking **Appliances:** Ferguson Bath, Kitchen and Lighting Gallery **Plumbing Fixtures:** Keidel **Furniture:** Voltage, Inc. **Flowers:** Robin Wood Flowers