



IT'S A *Wonderful* AND *Beautiful Life*

Dr. Renee Burke shares her journey as a mother, wife, plastic surgeon, and owner of a growing practice and med spa in South Barrington

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Renee Burke and Brady Tinkham at home with their children Oliver and Avery.

PEOPLE WHO LOOK to improve their appearance for aesthetic reasons, or to correct, reconstruct, or enhance part of their body through the art and science of plastic surgery, are often looking for a new direction in their lives. They want a better quality of life and greater confidence.

The word plastic comes from the Greek word *plastikos*, and the Latin word *plasticus*. Both terms refer to the ability to mold something, to be capable of change, therefore receiving a new direction. As a board-certified plastic surgeon, Dr. Renee Burke has molded her life, her education, training, and profession to help others make those positive changes in their lives.

Much of Dr. Burke's professional culture and personal values are that of a Midwestern upbringing. Born in Dearborn, Michigan, she was raised in Woodhaven, about 15 miles south of Detroit. Her father, Bruce Burke, taught AP History at the high school. Her mom, Sharon Burke, a registered nurse, went back to school for business administration followed by a job at Henry Ford Hospital as an administrator.

Like her older sister and role model Shelley, an internal medicine physician in the Cleveland area, Dr. Burke earned a degree in biology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She rounded her pre-med studies by participating as a guest musician with the university's school of music playing violin which she had studied since preschool.

Wayne State University was the next four years of Dr. Burke's training. After that, she spent five more years in surgical training with the

Emory University Hospital System in Atlanta. Then, a two-year residency at Vanderbilt University in Nashville offered her plastic surgery training. At that point, she was entitled to start or join a practice, but Dr. Burke chose to apply for private practice fellowships—with one year focused on cranio-facial surgery in Miami, followed by a year of oculoplastic and aesthetic training in back in Atlanta. There, she had the remarkable opportunity to work with a man who would become an important mentor as a surgeon and for the business side of running a practice. The late Dr. Codner became her go-to for answers. His practice was stunning, a place that was glamorous. Dr. Burke saw that as an example of what was possible. Today, she has brought that vision to life in South Barrington.

In addition to her day-to-day work, Dr. Burke is a guest on the Plastic Surgery Channel (YouTube) which is an invitation-only group of leaders in the field who meet at the PSC film studio in Dallas twice a year to discuss hot topics, and new products and devices.

She speaks at multiple local and national meetings each year, including the Midwest Society of Plastic Surgeons and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons/Women's Plastic Surgery (WPS). She is the current program chair for the Midwest Association of Plastic Surgeons and is a member of the Practice Management committee for the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, and a former president of ASPS University where she ran a podcast for the past two years called "Enhance Your Practice."





Dr. Burke utilizes the Vectra which is a 3-D imaging device that allows the patient to have a 180° image of the torso, which is then transposed to the computer where she can simulate surgical options. Dr. Burke says that patients love this technology as it offers a look at results before surgery.

A CONVERSATION WITH *Dr. Renee Burke*

QB: *You have an incredible work ethic. Where does that come from?*

RB: My mom was a nurse, and she always wanted my sister and I to become doctors. My dad wanted me to be a lawyer. My mom is the daughter of an immigrant. My grandmother is from Poland. Mom made sure my sister and I had a female pediatrician, perhaps as a role model. For my mom to go to school to become a nurse was a big deal at the time. Her whole focus was to make sure that we had more than she did, to be able to take care of ourselves and our families, and that was driven into us. Work hard enough to not rely on anyone but us. My dad being the teacher was actually the more relaxed one about grades and studying—maybe because we were already putting so much pressure on ourselves. Mom really pushed us to study hard and do better, not accepting mediocrity. We lived next to our grandmother who watched us and told us to study hard and not worry about getting boyfriends!

QB: *How did you and Brady meet?*

RB: I met Brady one night by chance while out with a friend in Atlanta. She mentioned she was talking with someone there who went to Michigan, and his older brother did too, as did my sister. So, we had an instant connection both being Michigan alumni. Brady grew up in North Barrington and

graduated from Barrington High School. He even attended St. Mark's Day School which has been around for a long time. We met in 2006 and married in 2010.

QB: *You recently moved to Barrington Hills from Chicago.*

RB: We lived with our two boys, 6 and 8, in the city, up until 2020. When Covid hit, we were still in Lincoln Park. We felt trapped in our home. Even neighborhood parks were closed. We spent a lot of time commuting to the home of Brady's parents, Beverly and Robert Tinkham, in North Barrington. The kids could run around, and we fell in love with the area. We kept commuting back and forth to the city until I finally said I'd had enough. Within about a week, we had closed on a home in Barrington Hills. The community is wonderful, and we are so fortunate to have such supportive friends and neighbors!

QB: *How was your first day on the job?*

RB: On the very first time I shadowed a private practice plastic surgeon, I was afraid of being late. So, I hadn't eaten anything, and the OR was very warm. Just as the local anesthesia was being injected, I passed out!



Dr. Burke spends quality time with her patients.

QB: *Well, you've made it past that moment. How important are safety and medical standards to you?*

RB: Here is the most important thing. A lot of people don't know the difference between a board-certified plastic surgeon, and a board-certified cosmetic surgeon. A medical practitioner can do surgeries with little-to-no training beyond the medical degree and no accreditations as a board-certified cosmetic surgeon. I am a board-certified plastic surgeon based on years of training at an accredited program and governed by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

The operating rooms in my office are accredited by the AAAASF—the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities—a U.S. governing body which requires the highest standards possible. Our facility is

inspected, we must keep excellent records, stock certain medications, and follow strict guidelines. For us, it's all about safety first, and to remove any likelihood of human error.

QB: *What is your new facility like?*

RB: We have 12,000 square feet of space in total. We have 4,000 sq. ft. of space each for our Med Spa, administration space and clinical exam rooms, and operating facility, which includes two operating rooms with four recovery bays. Our space is designed to assure the utmost privacy for our patients. We recently put up my favorite part, our artwork which allows me to display my personality a bit.

QB: *To stay in shape and maintain some balance, you are a dedicated runner. How did you get started?*

RB: I have run 47 marathons, including 14 Boston Marathons, and I'm headed back to Boston again next April. It's a big part of my life and I ran my first marathon when I was 17 and a new freshman at The University of Michigan. At that time, running marathons was not popular and I had seen articles in the newspaper about the Detroit Marathon and I had the ridiculous notion that if I could run five miles, I could probably run a marathon! So, I bought the one book I could find at the bookstore on marathon training and happened to qualify for the Boston Marathon the following spring. The long, quiet miles on the road here give me the best time of my day to think about every part of my life from family to business.

QB: *How do you find time for yourself with such a demanding schedule?*

RB: I'm an early riser, and I know that's the only time in the day guaranteed to be mine, before the kids wake up. I enjoy running and swimming. If you see someone with the blinking vest on the roads, that's me! To get away, we don't take long vacations, but rather long weekends. I also started taking online French lessons through Harper College—it gives me something outside of work or exercise. I hope to be able to get around Paris in the future by speaking the language.

QB: *What have you learned from being a mom?*

RB: Being a mom helps put things into perspective. I see colleagues slaving away and not having any balance in their lives. It also balances you and helps you learn how to say no. "No" is a complete sentence! Life is too short to not take time to support your children. I won't remember all the hours spent in the OR, but I will always cherish the look on my son's face at school when I came to his classroom to be a surprise reader.

QB: *What is your outlook for the future?*

RB: I was on an early morning run the other day listening to an interview with Olympic runner English Gardner. She said that every morning she asks herself when she wakes up, "If your dreams came true today, right now, are you ready? Did you put in the time, the effort?"

QB: *And you thought?*

RB: Yes, I'm ready!

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EARNING THE *Trust* OF THE *Community*

TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE your health and appearance can be a significant decision for anyone. For Dr. Burke, her growing practice is built on years of effort. “Here in Barrington, you have to earn people’s trust,” Dr. Burke said. “My business didn’t just fall into my lap. It started with the scary prospect of starting my own practice, being in the process of building out my first office, and learning I was pregnant at the same time.” She let others know that she cared about being a positive part of the medical community. “One of the things I did was to go visit many other doctors in the area and introduce myself in person,” she said. Today, with a growing business, Dr. Burke feels that her patients have found value and are confident in her practice, and it has enabled her to build out a new and expanded surgical and med spa center to accommodate more patients.

“People have hopes and expectations, and they rely on a good outcome,” Dr. Burke said. “For anyone visiting my office—I want them to feel special and pampered, whether they are in for surgery, or Med Spa services. A patient’s decision to improve their life and appearance can be emotional and physical, and there can be a considerable investment. We want to be realistic with our patients, deliver what they want, and offer a safe environment that adheres to the highest possible standards of accreditation. It is important to me that when someone walks into our new space, that they stop, look around, and feel good, that they feel they deserve this moment and to be here, taking care of themselves.”

We reached out to a few of those patients and asked to hear their thoughts.

Taking a Leap of Faith

“My initial thought of plastic surgery did not come easy; however, this was the final stage of a long, tough journey I embarked upon. From the initial consultation, it became clear after interviewing other plastic surgeons, the views and skills of Dr. Burke came with confidence, care, astute listening skills, and of course a stellar training record.

Immediately I felt at ease that my choice to have a very large amount of skin removed and liposuction performed by a surgeon who was highly trained, turned out to be a life-changing decision, one that I could not be happier with. Dr. Burke has created a safe, skilled, energetic, caring, and high-standards environment that makes her practice an easy decision to recommend to others who are embarking on a journey of appearance changes.” —**Todd H.**



Dr. Renee Burke and Brady Tinkham enjoy being part of the Barrington area after their recent move here from the city.

High Standards in Hiring

“The Med Spa in Dr. Burke’s office is luxurious and high-end while still being state of the art. Her Med Spa staff are all highly trained professionals who make you feel very comfortable and at ease. You truly feel that they are listening to your concerns and thoughtful in how they recommend treatments. I appreciate that they work together as a team to address your needs, to customize your experience, and to achieve amazing results. I have had the pleasure of meeting all the Med Spa staff, and they are just the sweetest, most welcoming group of ladies. You can tell that Dr. Burke takes her hiring seriously and has a very high standard for the people she employs at her practice.” —**Kristin C.**