

Operation strategist at McCormack Baron Salazar is active in community

How long have you been with McCormack Baron?

Six weeks. I just started. I actually took the job in December but with the holidays and the baby coming and all, I've only been at it for six weeks.

What did you do before joining the company?

I ran the Vashon Education Compact for about five years, from 2001 to 2006.

Can you explain what the compact is?

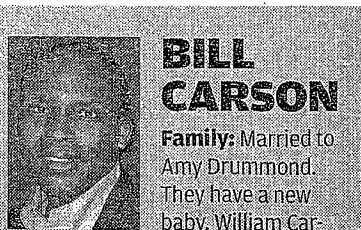
It doesn't exist any longer. We dissolved it in September (2006). It was a venture partnership with some members of the St. Louis corporate community — such as the Danforth Foundation, Edward Jones, Commerce Bank, Monsanto, Enterprise, Purina and Energizer — and the St. Louis Public Schools.

Did you get much accomplished with the compact?

I felt like we did. We oversaw the complete renovation of three schools, and we piloted student achievement programs that helped improve elementary student achievement by 28 percent in math, 86 percent in communication arts and 78 percent in science. We also raised the graduation rate at Vashon from 20 percent to 53 percent. But it was love-hate. It was the most frustrating thing I've ever done.

Why was it so frustrating?

It was very difficult dealing with the school district. Although it was part of the partnership, people there did not always support what we were doing and made it harder to do what needed to be done. Add to that the School Board and all those personalities and politics and it made



BILL CARSON

Family: Married to Amy Drummond. They have a new baby, William Carson, born Jan. 4. Bill

is also stepfather to Amy's children, Emily Luepker, 13, and Martin Luepker, 9. Bill is an only child who was born in the Bronx and lived in Allentown, Pa., most of his life.

Education: Allentown High School, class of 1988; bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Cornell University, 1992; a master of science degree in engineering and policy and a master of engineering management, both from Washington University, 1996.

Job: Bill Carson, 36, is vice president-operations strategy with McCormack Baron Salazar. He leads the housing development company and its nonprofit partner Urban Strategies in efforts to improve business strategy and productivity, internal communications and project cost position.

for a tough situation.

Do you have a viewpoint on the proposed state takeover of the school district?

Yes, I support it totally. I think a state takeover would help stabilize the district and would take the games and personal politics out of the school system.

What do you hope to do with McCormack Baron Salazar?

People think the company is just in St. Louis, but it has about 200

developments around the country, with 750 people in 26 cities. My job is to bridge gaps between the various entities and the company. The long-term thing is that I would like to see McCormack Baron become a real leader in communities of tomorrow — communities that would include such things as environmentally sustainable neighborhoods and that would use information technologies to make seamless the lives of the people living in the communities.

Have you ever used your engineering background professionally?

Oh, yes, I came here with the company Air Products & Chemicals Inc. in 1993. They bought a division of Monsanto and I was a chemical engineer with them. I was only supposed to be here for 10 to 14 months but I stayed.

How did you get so involved in community work?

I'd always been a very involved person. Even as a child, my family was always very involved with church and one thing or another. In college I was even in one of those super secret Ivy League volunteer societies. In 1999, I got involved with Metropolis and then I joined the Mentor St. Louis board. I met my wife through Metropolis. She was doing diversity training and I was doing leadership work.

What boards and activities are you involved with currently?

I am vice president of the Mentor and Focus boards. I am on the Symphony's community partnership board; on the Center of Creative Arts board; on the College Summit Inc. advisory board; and on the board of governors of the Cornell

Club of St. Louis. I'm an advisory member on the Washington University Stern/Kaldi's Scholarship panel; and I'm an operating support panelist for the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

Where do you live?

Since we got married we live in the Tower Grove Heights neighborhood. Before that we lived in Tower Grove East and when I was single, I lived in the Central West End.

Do you have any hobbies?

We love road trips. We will take a road trip to the East Coast in June with all the kids. We also do a lot of art stuff and go to a lot of art openings. And we do a lot of entertaining. We have a dining room table that seats 10 and we like to use it. We had an Iron Chef-style meat loaf dinner party that was fun. I'm the dinner cook in our house. I like to cook and have gotten pretty good at seafood.

What's the last, best book you read?

"The Ingenuity Gap," by Thomas Homer-Dixon.

Do you read magazines? Newspapers?

I read about 12 periodicals a month, such things as Fast Company, National Geographic, Car & Driver, Esquire and my undergraduate university magazine. I also read the Post-Dispatch, the New York Times and the Chicago Sun-Times every day.

What do you drive?

A minivan! Actually, that's Amy's car. An '06 black, Honda Odyssey. I drive a Subaru Turbo, it's a black, '05. But when I turned 30 I got myself a gift. It's a red, Toyota MR2 convertible. It's an '01. I love it but it's just for fun.