



First Lady Kathryn Burgum

Bio Packet

Official Biography

Kathryn Burgum became First Lady on December 15, 2016, when her husband Governor Doug Burgum was sworn in as the 33rd Governor of North Dakota.

As First Lady, Kathryn's priority is supporting and developing initiatives to eliminate the shame and stigma of the chronic disease of addiction in North Dakota's communities.

In long-term recovery for 18 years, she shares her personal experience and encourages others to do the same to normalize the conversation around the disease of addiction. She is spreading the word that addiction is a chronic disease and not a character flaw. Kathryn plays an active role in supporting the Office of Recovery Reinvented as the chair of the Advisory Council.

Her advocacy work has enabled her to partner with advocates, experts in the field, and stakeholders nation-wide including the White House, Faces and Voices of Recovery, the Addiction Policy Forum, and Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation where she serves on the board of trustees.

The second youngest of four children, Kathryn grew up in Jamestown, North Dakota, where her family was in the John Deere business for over 35 years. She held her first job at the family business working in the parts department. She graduated with honors from Jamestown High School, where she was involved in student council, choir, varsity tennis, and cheerleading.

She earned her undergraduate degree in retail business at Arizona State University and a Master of Business Administration degree in human resources from the University of North Texas.

Her 25-year career in human resources and marketing has spanned industries, including retail, biotechnology, software, manufacturing, agriculture and real estate development.

Over her life, Kathryn has donated her time and leadership to many charitable endeavors including at-risk women and children, animal welfare, visionary artists and the arts, and addiction and recovery. Kathryn enjoys reading, fishing, horses, snowboarding and is an avid college football fan.

Quotes

"I am dreaming of a bright future for our state. A future where prevention works, treatment is effective and people recover from addiction. And where we unite to help those affected by the disease of addiction."

"My openness about my recovery has started what I hope will be a lifetime of advocacy. I am working to create opportunities for the people, families and communities devastated by this disease."

"With addiction, stigma puts up walls instead of building bridges. It is socially-constructed, based in fear, and often includes inaccurate information."

"I believe addiction needs to be embraced like any other chronic, progressively fatal illness or disease before real changes can be made in our communities. And before the shame and stigma can be eliminated."

"A universal acceptance of addiction as a disease across our nation, will save lives and provide futures for our next generation of leaders and innovators."

"You can be an advocate just by talking about the disease of addiction. Those in recovery sharing their stories, caregivers talking about those they help struggling with addiction, those in public service talking about addiction and recovery, and corporations creating safe environments for people to talk about addiction and recovery at work."

"There is no shame in addiction, and there is so much hope and possibility in recovery."

"I am like more than 23 million other people across our great nation who have the disease of addiction. And I am a face and voice of recovery."

Official Headshot

