

T H E M A N

"My most memorable evening
in Dallas was the visit of a young
lady who would eventually
become my wife."

— Emmitt Smith



“There’s nothing more important than my family. It’s always been that way and always will be.”

— Emmitt Smith

H Emmitt enters his living room for an exclusive photo shoot. Less than 72 hours before he runs for the biggest and most prestigious rushing record in NFL history, his manner is contemplative. His mood shifts from intense to jovial when his wife, Pat, and children enter the room.

“I’m just so blessed to have him,” his wife Pat boasts. “As a husband, he’s just totally committed to making me happy and being the best provider — a friend and confidant and a supporter. As a father, he’s incredible.”

“His wife and his children are the most important part of his life and everything he does is focused on making their lives better for the future,” says his mother, Mary. “When you become a husband and especially a father, everything changes. Your perspective changes. Emmitt always wanted to know what was next. Now he knows.”

Emmitt’s wife and kids are the focus of this night. Pat, Jasmin (six), Rheagen (four) and Emmitt James Smith IV (five months) — or E.J. — surround Emmitt as they watch Playhouse Disney. His two young girls sprint around the house with nonstop energy. This is Emmitt relaxed.

“This is my life now,” Emmitt says as Pat and the girls attack him with the feared Tickle Monster.

And life is good.

September 11th is a date that evokes powerful emotions for Americans. For Connie Payton, it has added significance. Connie happened to be staying in a Dallas hotel when the terrorists’ attacks started. The phone rang not too long afterward. It was Emmitt Smith, inviting her to stay at his home.

The night before Emmitt received the Walter Payton Spirit of Sweetness Award, the Smiths and Paytons sat down for dinner. Emmitt sat across the

