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CHICAGO MAGAZINE / DECEMBER 2007 / A NAME GAME



## A Name Game

We test out a few baby nameologists on two pairs of soon-to-be parents.

BY DAWN REISS

An increasingly popular reference tool for soon-to-be parents, a nameologist suggests baby names based on everything from family history to numerology. With the help of two local couples, *Chicago* tested out one of the country's most-sought-after practitioners, Maryanna Korwitts of Naperville, author of *Name Power 101*, and two of her competitors, a California couple and a Cleveland-area mother of two.

**The Halbachs:** Sara and Shane, both 27, of Woodlawn. Sara is a genetic counselor at the University of Chicago; Shane is a software engineer at Argonne National Laboratory. They recently welcomed their first child, a daughter. They want to name her something traditional that is not highly common.

**The Waldrons:** Lisa, 37, and Jim, 38, of West Bucktown. Lisa is a freelance advertising creative director; Jim, a former goalkeeper for the Chicago Sting, owns Them, a company that represents film directors. They are expecting a baby boy; they'd like to name him something unusual but masculine.

### NAMEOLOGIST



THE HALBACHS

**Maryanna Korwitts** bases everything on numerology—every letter equals a number in the universe—and three key points: how a name looks and sounds (is it a tongue twister?); societal association (the name "Bambi" sounds like a hooker, she says); and the silent mood or feeling of a word. From \$150. [babynamecentral.com](#)

**Whitney Walker and Eric Reyes**, of San Leandro, California, break down the surname phonetically and listen to sounds and rhythms. Their book, *The Perfect Baby Name*, organizes 3,500 names by sound. From \$50. [theperfectbabyname.com](#)

**Jennifer Cook**, of Cleveland, focuses on what kind of person the parents envision their baby will grow up to be. For a politician, Cook suggests simple but common names (John, Jane); for a performer, easy to spell names (Justin Timberlake); for athletes, last names for first names (Peyton Manning). From \$65. [cooknaming.com](#)

THE PARENTS SAY...



THE WALDRONS

**Eliza.** "It has a nice feel, and it has a very strong subliminal quality of being expressive and academic and having financial stability and independence."

**Veronica.** "Veronica" has the short 'o' sound in the middle of it like 'Halbach.'"

**Violet, Vivian, and Aurora.** "Aurora," she says, is "a beautiful name that is not common. They have a great last name, a flowing name that has a hard sound at the end so it's easy to pair with other names."

Evelyn (but they're calling her Evie)

**Dell and Riley.** "Dell" is short and to the point. It's a name that could work well in the sports arena. Subliminally, "Riley" carries many of the same traits as "Dell." Additionally, the name has a wonderful sound quality with the two syllables and soft sounds."

**Darius.** "It shares the short 'o'/ar' sound that 'Waldron' makes. If they use Lisa's maiden name, 'Leone,' for his middle name, it would flow well because they both share the 'yes' sound."

**Dean, Edward, and Harvey.** Cook says she chose strong names with strong sounds. She doesn't think an athlete's name should be "flowy."

**Finley, August, or Keller** (the favorite). After watching the Bears play, Jim jokingly said, "Why don't we just name our son Coach Michael Keller Ditka Waldron?"

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