

Why We Give: Darren & Klea Marchant



Darren and Klea Marchant are two happy and fulfilled alumni of SUU, partly because of the insitution. And that's why they give back to their alma mater through the annual giving program.

Going to college at SUU just seemed the natural thing for Darren, a Cedar City native. He grew up across the street from campus, so places like the upper quad and sidewalks serpentine through tree groves were his backyard, his playground. He and his dad watched just about every home sporting competition of the Thunderbirds. He even wrote his seventh-grade history project on Old Main, Ol' Sorrel and the founding of the school. "Through the research and interviews with (former) President Sherratt, I gained a respect and appreciation for the history of SUU," Darren says. He and the history project went on to win at the state competition. Even though he and Klea have yet to kiss at the Ol' Sorrel statue, there's no denying Darren is a True T-Bird.

Klea grew up one of five siblings in the Bayles family in Blanding, Utah, three of whom attended SUU. Klea came because of the reputation of SUU's business and accounting programs. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting here. She still appreciates what she was able to obtain through the small-sized classes, and inspirational professors like **David Rees** and **Gary Giles**. Klea passed 75 percent of the CPA exam on her first attempt, and passed the entire exam within one year of graduating. She was immediately recruited and hired by KPMG, one of the most prestigious accounting firms.

She was part of the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) organization and went to national competition with the group. With a resume like that, it's no wonder that she is the business-savvy glue that fortifies Darren's physical therapy practice in Mesquite and Overton, Nevada. She worked in public accounting four years before leaving to help run the practice.

A Psychology major at SUU, Darren loved his classes. He still cherishes how engaging his

professors were, particularly **John Ault** and **Dave Braegger**. “I knew I was not just a number. The professors really care about you.” Darren took advantage of the study abroad program and spent a whole school year in Russia. “I arrived there the day they were bombing the parliament!” Darren attended grad school at Des Moines University where he got his master’s in physical therapy. “After I left,” he reveals, “I realized even more how great SUU is.” He is one of eight kids in his family, six of whom are SUU alumni, and one is currently attending.

Darren and Klea’s ownership of Virgin Valley Physical Therapy

was the result of a drive-by—that is, one day in 2001 the couple took the downtown route instead of the freeway through Mesquite. Darren inquired at VVPT, and he began working there almost immediately. Eight months later, an opportunity presented itself, and the Marchants took it, purchasing the practice. A year later, they opened a second shop down the road a bit, in Overton, Nevada. They have a staff of eight and are ready to expand.

Darren and Klea met while Klea was working out, and Darren was working in the student fitness center at SUU. Nowadays, they’re working together, running two locations of

their practice, and raising four little children. And, by the way, Klea, who despises cold weather, reports that they are surviving

the heat in the Nevada desert just fine, spending plenty of sunny days at the pool!

On top of her many other accomplishments at and through college, Klea received scholarships during her time at SUU. This is one of the reasons, she says, that it is important to her to give back to the institution—because it helped her get to where she is today. Darren, as exhibited, is a son of Cedar City and SUU, and says that is where his heart remains. He loves the University and all the fond memories he has connected to it, and for that, he wants to give back.

Darren and Klea recently suggested that they may make their True T-Birdship official this Homecoming, so keep an eye out for them at the Ol’ Sorrel statue! **SUU**



Darren assists a client with physical therapy while Klea inputs info on a laptop.

