When Loyalty Pays Off

Even from a young age, Derek Dictson knew he would be an Aggie at New Mexico State University. His pride for the institution grew during his father’s more than 40-year career with NMSU’s Cooperative Extension Service—a career in which Billy Dictson, a retired director, would eventually be honored for by the New Mexico Association and the National Association of County Agriculture Agents Hall of Fame.

So, Derek applied to NMSU and nowhere else. His loyalty paid off. Because Derek lived in New Mexico—then just outside of Clovis in a small town called Texico—he qualified for NMSU’s premier scholarship program: The President’s Associates Scholars.

“It paid my way through school,” Derek says. “I graduated from NMSU without debt, and I understand how rare that is even today.”

Yet, leaving debt-free isn’t the only life-changing benefit of his time at NMSU. During his freshman year, he met his wife, then Nikki McClelland, at a student mixer. They would eventually marry following their sophomore year.

He also connected with one of his greatest mentors, Dr. William Gorman, who then taught agricultural economics in the College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

“I was two years into animal science when I realized I didn’t want to go to vet school,” Derek says.

“Dr. Gorman introduced me to career opportunities in Agricultural Economics, and it’s because of his guidance to switch my major that I’ve been able to be nimble and find success in my career.”

After graduating from NMSU, Derek and Nikki earned their master’s degrees from Texas A&M. Their careers have led them to Seattle, Texas and now Alabama, where the duo works for Auburn University. Derek leads the fundraising efforts for the College of Engineering and Nikki continues the family’s legacy in the university’s extension and outreach efforts.

Yet, no matter where they go, Derek says New Mexico is still home—and it inspired the couple to start thinking about how to give back to the communities that set the course of their lives.

“Right now, Nikki and I are raising our kids so we can’t give back as much as we’d like to,” Derek says. “But it’s Continued on Page 2

Derek ’98 and Nikki ’98 Dictson started planning their will to support their children, Logan and Kylie, when they realized they could also support their NMSU family in the same way. Now, they are two of the youngest members of the NMSU Foundation’s 1888 Society.
DEAR FRIENDS

Our featured alumni have proud Aggie ties that thread through the generations. These testimonials remind us that NMSU is a real home, indeed a family, that cultivates curiosity and knowledge as well as a unique attitude that alumni bring into the world.

Our Aggies are leaders with courageous hearts that are ready and willing to serve in the classroom, in the research lab and in diverse communities around the planet. In land-grant tradition, NMSU Chancellor Dan Arvizu looks forward to the future, and his pledge is that the Aggie nation will deliver innovative solutions to the world’s critical challenges. He encourages us to partner, to be fearless and to “Be Bold. Shape the Future.”

We must work together—giving of our time, talent and philanthropy—to blaze new paths for our progressively vibrant, world-class university. That’s why we are deeply grateful to those listed in our 1888 Society Honor Roll (back page) and present them with the coveted 1888 Society Key to our university’s future.

Warm regards,

Robert D. Peterson
Gift Planning Director
NMSU Foundation
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Continued from Page 1

When Loyalty Pays Off

because of our kids that we started planning for ways to take care of our family when we’re no longer here, and that includes our NMSU family.”

The couple established a planned gift in their estate that will support a future President’s Associates Scholar who is studying in the field of agriculture. With this gift, Derek and Nikki are now two of the youngest members of the NMSU Foundation’s 1888 Society.

“You’re never too young to start thinking about how to take care of the ones you love the most,” Derek says.

“You, like Derek and Nikki, can create a legacy at NMSU. To become a member of The 1888 Society, contact Robert Peterson at (800) 342-6678 or plannedgiving@nmsu.edu.

Derek and Nikki met, married and then graduated from NMSU in the late 1990s. Today, they have great pride in the education and experiences they received and established a new planned gift to give back to where it all began.

“When our estate, we are leaving a certain percentage to our kids and a certain percentage to the organizations we care about, including NMSU. State made us who we are and we’re grateful for all of the opportunities and connections it provided to us along the way.”

You, like Derek and Nikki, can create a legacy at NMSU. To become a member of The 1888 Society, contact Robert Peterson at (800) 342-6678 or plannedgiving@nmsu.edu.
Keeping New Mexico’s most talented students in the state is a challenge that for many years, has begged for a solution. Leaders within the NMSU Foundation knew, even in 1978, that NMSU needed to be more competitive with out-of-state schools to win. Then, began the President’s Associates Scholars program.

Since then, more than $3.7 million, provided by generous donors like you, has been awarded to President’s Associates Scholars who are incoming freshmen that attend NMSU to study any discipline. Every scholar must be a resident of New Mexico and carry with them an exemplary academic track record as well as impactful community involvement within their hometowns.

Each year, 15 freshmen—the rising stars of New Mexico’s communities—earn rank as NMSU’s premier scholars and an opportunity to graduate with little to no debt.

Meet Christine Shank, a 2018-19 President’s Associates Scholar. She proudly hails from Santa Rosa, New Mexico, which is also home to the tourist-loved “Blue Hole.” She participated in 4-H for eight years, led as class president for three years and, as a senior, served her school’s National Honor Society chapter as president. On top of that, Christine volunteered countless hours to “Adopt-a-Mile” trash pick-ups, the county fair, feeding the elderly, blood drives and more—all while earning a 4.3 cumulative GPA and a 28 on her ACT.

Christine says all of her work in leading and serving others inspired her dream to become a woman in STEM at NMSU and serve in the United States Air Force, hopefully, as an engineer. “I absolutely love a challenge, so I decided to major in mechanical and aerospace engineering,” Christine says. “My passion for helping others sparked my interest in the military, and I am so happy that my dreams of serving in the United States Air Force are becoming a reality. I can’t think of a better career than serving our country and I’m so grateful for the donors who helped me get here.”

From Albuquerque and Alcalde to Las Cruces and La Luz, NMSU President’s Associates Scholars—just like Christine—show great potential in shaping the future of New Mexico and the world. Make your gift and help NMSU continue to “grow and keep” more of the state’s most valuable assets at home.

“A Scholarship Loyal to New Mexico’s Brightest

Christine Shank plans to be a role model for women in STEM and serve in the United States Air Force, hopefully, as an engineer. She is also one of 15 President’s Associates Scholars for the 2018-19 freshmen class. By making a gift to this program, you’re supporting New Mexico-grown students, like Christine, who will go on to shape the future of the state and beyond.

To support the next class of President’s Associates Scholars, join the NMSU Foundation in April for their Virtual PA Ball. The date and details on how to participate will be available at support.nmsu.edu/PA. Or, make a gift to the program today at advancing.nmsu.edu/givenow.
The 1888 Society recognizes individuals who have notified us that New Mexico State University is included in their estate plan as the beneficiary of a will, trust, life income gift, life insurance policy, retirement plan or other planned gifts.

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Angel Mendez, Editor, NMSU Foundation
Tina Byford, Ph.D., Interim President, NMSU Foundation
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Start Planning for the Future
If you’ve put off writing or solidifying your plans for the future, you’re not alone. Getting started is the hardest part.
Our new guide 7 Months to a Well-Planned Estate can help you take the first steps. Plus, discover an easy way to leave a lasting legacy at NMSU in Make Your Final Wishes Come True. Request your free copies using the enclosed reply card.

Please note, the enclosed free copies using Request your Final Wishes Estate 7 Months to a Future Planning Start

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*recently deceased

Spring 2019: 1888 Society Honor Roll

Anonymous
Lonnie and Maria Elena Abernethy
Scott and Sue Ackleson
Barbara L. Allen
Ernest Sichler and Stephanie Armitage Schiler
Leonard and Stephanie Armstrong
Pres and Patti Askew
Suman Bagga
Audry Bailey
Larry and Gail Barnes
Ron Beacham
Donald and Patsy Beasley
Jari Bennett Grimm
Betty Jane Bidalde
Philip Bills
Chuck and Sally Bisbee

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