



Ten years ago the graduating class of 1998 left St. Mary's for other adventures. For my part, I prepared to attend Stanford University after working a summer job with the US Forest Service. Over the next half decade I obtained both a bachelors and masters degree from Stanford and returned to work with the Forest Service each summer in between academic years. Most recently, I have finished a second graduate degree in business from Georgetown University and I am currently preparing to start new adventures yet again.

I studied Mechanical Engineering as an undergraduate out of curiosity about the physical universe. The academic rigor of Stanford's engineering curriculum was both inspiring and very challenging. I struggled with many of my overly theoretical courses but always managed to shine in subjects that required actual engineering practice and problem solving. I also found that I could express myself in writing better than many of my classmates. This ability was due in no small part to the teachings of Alastair Hunter whose disdain for "laudatory statements" and other such offenses still disciplines my writing to this day (saving his Queen's English much abuse). Similarly, I learned much from Ann Hunter who gave me an appreciation for literature and concise written expression.

I am also thankful for St. Mary's athletic programs that gave me the chance to compete in a number of different sports. More importantly, I am grateful for the school's sensible philosophy which presented sports as supplements to education rather than replacements for it. I learned a great deal from those who fostered my athletic development especially football coach Dick Mauer and golf coach / Latin teacher Frank Phillips. After St. Mary's, I brought my passion for sports with me to college where I adapted my former football skills to rugby.

Stanford's rugby team provided much needed balance with my demanding study schedule. I especially enjoyed the sport's unparalleled level of camaraderie that always seemed to accompany its fierce competition. Few games have

such international appeal and even fewer still will test a person's character to such extents. I often recall watching my first rugby game and fearing the carnage that usually characterizes an aggressive

match. Sometimes fear gives impetus for growth. In studying our fears we acquire the discipline to overcome them. When appropriately combined with academics, certain sports offer a tremendous



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opportunity for this type of improvement. A serious knee injury ended my rugby career midway through my sophomore year. Fortunately, a talented (and lovely) physical therapist helped me recover quickly following a surgery to repair ruptured ligaments. Despite never returning to the rugby pitch, I did learn a great deal from my experiences playing one of the world's greatest games.

During the spring of my senior year, I applied to a masters program at Stanford and to the US Forest Service's elite airborne firefighting unit (commonly referred to as Smokejumpers). Both applications met with success and I subsequently made arrangements for moving to Redding, CA where I would undergo jump training. The timing of this training required me to leave school before completing all of my necessary undergraduate classes. Stanford's "coterminous" policies fortunately allowed me to make up any incomplete courses while simultaneously pursuing my graduate degree. This arrangement satisfied the University Registrar, but sadly forced me to sacrifice several last months with dear college friends. Spring on Stanford's campus is an amazingly beautiful time when seniors enjoy many wonderful sendoff traditions designed to foster a lifelong connection with the university. I regretted leaving all that behind, but I learned so much in return by taking another path.

My Smokejumping career spanned two summers and included fifty three parachute jumps. During the winter between my first and second seasons, I finished my remaining undergraduate engineering courses in addition to a full masters curriculum (forgoing much sleep). In June of 2003 I graduated from Stanford with a BS in mechanical engineering and an MS in civil & environmental engineering. The summer after graduating would also be my last fire season with the Forest Service as I realized the need for more stability in life. Smokejumping was an amazing adventure but seemed lacking in longevity given its notorious reputation for breaking bones and shattering families. Nevertheless, my time with the Forest Service had given me an informal education equal in value to anything I learned in a classroom. Most importantly, this experience taught me

that scholastic achievement is neither the primary determinant of intelligence nor the measure of a person's character. Many of my Forest Service colleagues lacked formal education and several had come from difficult pasts. However, these same individuals often possessed wisdom far in excess of the most revered professors I met during my university studies. In my adventures I also encountered several other St. Mary's alums who shared the Forest Service experience along with me including: brothers Joe and Bill Narus and Mike Meeke. I enjoyed working alongside these former class / teammates who also taught me a great deal.

After the Forest Service, I eventually decided to use my degrees and try engineering. I worked with two different companies over three years but was unsatisfied by the meticulous and somewhat remedial nature of engineering. I was frustrated by the profession's inherently conservative bias and limited opportunities for advancement. In an effort to compliment my technical education, I decided to move on from engineering and pursue a business degree at Georgetown University. Georgetown's emphasis on international business and its location in Washington D.C. attracted my ambitions for working across national boundaries. After all, the world is a big and fascinating place with lots to experience! I remember first realizing this during a St. Mary's sponsored spring break trip to Italy (led by Mr. Patrick Naumes and Mr. Frank Phillips). The wonders of Rome's great monuments left a lasting impression that I still recall today.

Studying at Georgetown was an enlightening experience that supplemented what I had learned in engineering school. I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the complexities of finance, economics and business operations while living in the nation's capital. Fortunately, the basic economic theory and speaking skills that Mr. Hal Wing taught me at St. Mary's did not fully atrophy during my time as an engineer and I was able to rapidly adapt to Georgetown's graduate business curriculum. Under the guidance of Georgetown's faculty, I became fascinated by the workings of global markets and the consequences of macroeconomic policymaking. The flow of capital and goods explains a great deal

about the modern world and its challenges. I am confident that future events will further transcend national borders and create previously unimaginable economic opportunities. I am, however, less confident that this will all occur in an equitable fashion. Healthy policy dialogue will hopefully add balance to progress and uphold the dignity of all global citizens.

Georgetown also offered ample opportunities for life outside of school. While there, I met an intelligent and lovely Ukrainian girl who was also studying for her MBA. We are still together despite the State Department's visa provisions which currently require that she reside in Ukraine for two years. Bureaucracy often prevails, but surely cannot triumph forever. At least I hope that's true...

Between my first and second years of business school I had the good fortune of interning with the World Bank helping to fund pro-poor infrastructure initiatives around the globe. I have since become very passionate about such work as it combines exposure to large engineering projects with advanced financial concepts and meaningful objectives. Basic infrastructure services form the backbone of civilization and are the foundation for all greater human endeavors. Governments in developing and advanced countries alike are recognizing the need to upgrade infrastructure as urban populations expand. Public institutions have simultaneously discovered that private sector capital and expertise can extend governments' limited resources (when appropriately managed). Having just recently graduated from Georgetown, I look forward to further working on infrastructure related initiatives either with the World Bank or perhaps a private firm.

I have been away from St. Mary's now for ten years (almost to the day). Looking back, I realize that much of my life since bears markings from my time there. St. Mary's certainly did not teach me everything, but I truly believe that its teachers and coaches gave me a lot. I am grateful for that - especially considering my frequent unruly behavior in class! I hope that my future actions will continue to be indicative of a person who was educated in the private Catholic tradition and the values contained within.