

Over the course of my life, West Texas A&M has played an important yet peculiar role. I never planned to attend WT and, after a few years, never planned to finish. In the Fall of 2011, I withdrew from the university. I only had 13 credit hours left to complete but they did not apply to my major and I was already headstrong in my plan to open my own agency. I was convinced that a degree would only go so far in the creative field. It shows you can stick with something but creativity is something that cannot be taught so, I took my last semesters tuition and went all in on a rental space on the 9th floor of the Herring Bank Building. I had no clients and no plan. What I did have, though, were the characteristics and skills that were instilled in me through various ways during my time at WT.

Without Lori Westerman's photography and advertising campaign classes I would not be where I am today. The only cameras I had experience with prior were studio cameras at KAMR. They were massive and outdated. At the time of Ms. Weterman's class, DSLR cameras were just becoming popular. The lessons I learned were easily translated over to video and I was able to use the same lenses and exposure techniques to get the result I was looking for. I could say that her campaign class taught me how to research your target market, assemble a plans book or storyboard a concept among other things but the real takeaway was determination. Being forced into a situation with a hard deadline and little experience prepared me for the real world advertising game. It taught me to always say yes to a challenge and never stop working until I had reached the full comprehension of what had caused me to struggle.

Confidence is another trait that I credit to WTAMU. The lessons I learned through classes and activities gave me the confidence to start my own business, cold call clients, believe that I could take on projects I had no experience in, and ask out the woman who is now my wife in Dr.

Byrd's cognitive psychology class. The most priceless thing WT could have ever given me was an opportunity to ask her out on a first date. That date led to starting a family. My family gave me the motivation and support to start a company when most would discourage against it. Now, seven years have flown by since I last attended WT and I have returned in order to thank them for sticking by my side and to set a good example for my son. I want to show him that no matter your position in life and no matter how much time has gone by, you can always finish what you start.

I feel privileged to have been able to be a student at West Texas A&M University. I didn't participate in extracurricular activities and I didn't make any lifelong friendships I seem to hear people talk about when they reminisce their college years. I gained something much more valuable. I gained confidence, motivation, and determination. These are things that will never leave me and with these three traits, I feel that there is no challenge that I cannot overcome. Finishing out this last semester will be bittersweet. I will proudly hang my degree on the wall and know that I have finished writing a long overdue chapter in the story of my life.