

Script – Print - Of Marriage and a Mission

Couple graduates together from OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing

For better or worse, for richer or poorer - for dedicated patient care.

That last line is not part of the traditional wedding vows, but it could have been for Brandon and Sarah May. The couple is graduating together with their degrees in nursing from OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing.

They're originally from California, but say getting into nursing school there is difficult and expensive. In Illinois they researched colleges and chose Saint Anthony for its nurse examination pass rate and because it's faith-based.

"We're grateful that we're in a state where it was easier to get into a school," says Sarah May, an OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduate. "And then, I, I might be biased, but I do think Saint Anthony's is the best nursing school in this area."

Nursing was not Sarah's first choice for a career, but Brandon convinced her she had what it takes and she eventually convinced herself. That's the way it's been since the two have been together - they celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary in July. However, the partnership and trust was rooted long before that.

"Before we started this nursing program, we actually had the same jobs," says Sarah May, an OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduate. "Like we worked at a factory together. We worked at a sporting goods store together. We worked at a flower shop together. Same schedules and everything. It was really good. It works out for us. We only need one car."

"Everyone was kind of surprised," says Brandon May, an OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduate. "And they're thinking, like, you'll either get closer or further apart. So, it definitely has brought us closer. We have a kid that everybody loves here too. So, it's just - they adopted us."

Graduating from the Saint Anthony program is just the first step for the pair. They now plan to each pursue doctorates as family nurse practitioners and Brandon is taking on the added challenge of getting a doctorate as an acute care practitioner.

They also want to share their skills through missionary work overseas. Because, as Brandon see it, no matter who or where they are, nursing is all about the patient.

"Be there for the person." says Brandon May, an OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduate. "And, because, you know, when they come into the hospital - any kind of setting - they're vulnerable. And I think that - just myself - If feel like, you know, when I do missionary work, that stuff is all volunteer. I truly just care. And yes it's good to have all these technical skills and everything, but being there - taking your time, letting the person know they're important and an equal person - I think that's highly valued."

"The family nurse practice in a rural area, which is what I want to do, that's my part of the dream coming to the table," says Sarah May, an OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduate. "And so, we're hoping to like have a big horse ranch in the middle of nowhere that needs health care. And we can have a family practice clinic where he'll do part-time and I'll do full-time. But within a few hours of a big hospital that he can commute to to do his acute care."

Still, despite what promises to be a daunting study schedule, the May's learned while at Saint Anthony that you still need to think and make time for family - which for them also includes a three-and-half year-old boy named Airo (air-oh).

"And sometimes we have date nights and we study," says Brandon May, an OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing graduate. "And, you know, it's not a big deal. Because we both understand and we both actually love learning. So it's nice when we can bounce ideas off of each other, ask each other question and see how she understands. One funny thing that freaks out the teachers is, when we take our tests, we pretty much always get the exact same score. We might miss certain questions differently, but, like, it's always the same. We're always just, like neck and neck all the time and it's always just really good because we can study together."

This spring OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony College of Nursing will graduate 112 students. 88 with Bachelor of Science Nursing degrees, 15 Masters of Science Nursing and 9 Doctorate of Nursing Practice.

Learn more at osfhealthcare.org/sacn.