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Where are they now?

Coreen Robinson
Iowa State University

Mikayla Larsen
Iowa State University

Charlie Coffey
Iowa State University

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Graduation is just around the corner at Iowa State this spring, but for many students the adventure doesn’t end once they become alumni. Iowa State boasts alumni living in every state and several countries around the world. We caught up with a few of them to see where they are now.

IZAAK MOODY
B.F.A Integrated Studio Arts (Emphasis on Digital Art), 2009
Microsoft HoloLens Project
Art Leader
Seattle, Washington

Izaak Moody got his money’s worth and then some during his time at Iowa State. The Des Moines native came to ISU on a scholarship and was determined to do something he enjoyed.

His passion for video games led him to pursue a career in digital art, designing video games. Working in the Virtual Reality Application Center on campus gave Moody his first taste of working with programmers and developers to translate their work into an eye-pleasing reality.

Moody stuck around Iowa for two years after graduation before making the move to Seattle, a place that he describes as “video game heaven.”

“I originally wanted to work on “Halo,” then I heard some negative things, like 70-hour work weeks,” Moody says. “It still might happen, but it crushed my dream a little bit.”

But in the meantime, Moody has landed an alternative dream job. He’s a lead artist on a video game-related program for Microsoft’s futuristic HoloLens Project. And since the project is still being developed, that’s about all he can say about it.

For Moody, all the hard work is paying off. He says that’s what it really comes down to.

“It’s hard to find the time to sit down and work on the projects and not go out and drink. I did that too, but be persistent. There were a lot of people who told me my dream was a waste of time, but here I am.”

Camille Santerre
B.S. Animal Science, 2014
Cirque Du Soleil
Flyer
Bogotá, Colombia

A year ago, Camille Santerre was finishing up her senior year as a member of the gymnastics team at Iowa State, and it was her best season yet. Today, she is gearing up for a tour with the company of her dreams, world famous circus Cirque Du Soleil.

“Never have a fear to dream big,” Santerre says. “You never know where life will take you. If you work hard and do what it takes, I believe that everything is possible.”
Erik Christian
B.S. Agronomy, 2004
M.S. Crop Production and Physiology, 2007
Ph.D. Crop Production and Physiology, 2012
Iowa State University Department of Agronomy
Lecturer
Ames, Iowa

Erik Christian has traveled the world as a student and faculty member, but his heart stays in Story County.

The Story City native chose Iowa State as the only alternative he saw to community college. That choice landed him in a nationally prestigious agronomy program that he is still a part of more than a decade later. Christian, a 2009 graduate, continued his education at Iowa State, earning his master’s and doctorate degrees in crop production in physiology.

Christian says the changes in technology at Iowa State have been the most noticeable during his time here.

“In my first semester at Iowa State you could register for classes by phone. I did it, mostly just for fun, but that obviously wasn’t an ideal system,” he explains. “During my junior or senior year of college, my roommate got a thumb drive, and I thought that was odd. Now I can store so much more information on something just as small. It just shows how much things have progressed.”

The cliché saying that your college friends are your friends for life holds true for Christian.

“I went to school for 12 years with the same people, and I’m not friends with any of them anymore, but there’s a lot of people I’m still friends with from college,” Christian says. “We’re all like-minded—I met some really good people that I still talk to quite a bit.”

As for changes in the student body? Christian says those are not as big as we would like to think.

“Sure pop culture changes, and I’ve fallen behind there,” Christian says. “But the [Iowa State] Daily headlines are the same stuff as when I was here. I think it’s funny.”

Tiffany Westrom
B.S. Journalism/Mass Communication (Public Relations) and Event Management, 2014
charity: water
Growth Assistant
New York, New York

A tweet led to a dream job for Tiffany Westrom.

Westrom came to Iowa State with no idea what she wanted to major in, but career exploration classes led her toward a career in public relations. A month she spent studying abroad in Costa Rica drew her to nonprofit work.

“The dad of my host family in Costa Rica had to take an entire day off of work just to filter our water,” Westrom explains. “That really drove home for me how big the water crisis is, that it was an issue even in the middle of paradise.”

Soon, Westrom discovered charity: water in New York City and fell in love with the organization. Although charity: water was a fledgling charity, it was already making waves in the industry through its unique model for donations, which tracks every dollar donated and shows the community where it was put to use.

As a junior, Westrom’s dream seemed as though it were coming true when she interviewed for an internship with the organization, but it wasn’t meant to be.

“It can be a huge deterrent to not get your dream job, but don’t give up,” Westrom says. “I stepped out of the box, and it ended up leading to an internship and then a job.”

Determined to achieve her dream, Westrom crafted a tweet and a unique resume that drew the attention of charity: water and landed her an internship that later led to a job. Westrom now manages relationships with donors and helps campaigners meet their donation goals.

“A midwest work ethic stands out,” Westrom says. “Move to where your heart is calling, and don’t be afraid to take risks. Sometimes, they really pay off.”