

Fall 2005

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Recommended Citation

Mileham, Mardi (2005) "College Is Family Affair for Elliotts," *Linfield Magazine*: Vol. 2 : No. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol2/iss2/2

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College is family affair for Elliotts

When Brett Elliott '05 transferred to Linfield College to finish his education and play football, little did he know his mom would soon follow in his footsteps.

But come Dec. 18, there will be two Elliotts receiving degrees from Linfield, Brett with a bachelor's of arts in mass communication and Leila '05 with a bachelor's of science in nursing.

Brett is one of Linfield's most recognizable faces following his record-breaking, award-winning season as quarterback of the championship Wildcat football team. Leila has had a much lower profile on the Portland Campus, but is accomplished in her own right. When she was accepted to the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing she already had an undergraduate degree in English and a law degree. After her youngest child graduated from high school last year, she knew she needed to change her focus. Since travel is her passion, nursing seemed like the perfect profession, one that was portable, allowing her to both work and travel.

Plus, she added, she had a first-hand look at the nursing profession while raising her children.

"Brett and his brothers and sister ended up in the hospital a lot with sports injuries and after watching the nurses, I always thought it was just a great job," she said with a smile.

Her education has been very intense. She began the 17-month nursing program in June 2004 and has had classes straight through with the exception of a five-week break this past summer.

"I've given up everything except being a student," she said. "I don't know how some people do it, the single mothers or those with small children. Occasionally I'm a mom, but rarely!"

Attending the same college, albeit on different campuses much to Brett's relief, has strengthened the bond between mother and son.

"She's realized how hard it is," Brett said. "We're both big-time procrastinators. I'll call her up at midnight and ask her to edit a paper and she'll still be up working on her nursing stuff."

Brett hopes to make the NFL draft next spring and play professionally. When his football days are over, he hopes to become a sports broadcaster. He's already had extensive media experience, through interviews with the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and others; writing for the *Linfield Review*; producing his own show on KSLC, the student radio station; and through an internship last summer at 1080 The Fan in Portland.



Leila and Brett Elliott, both '05, celebrate after a football game.

Brett admits he is surprised at how excited and enthusiastic his mother has become about nursing school.

"She is intelligent and passionate about the things she loves, her family and obviously nursing school," he said. "I thought she'd go for a couple of months and quit."

Brett, Leila said, is someone she has watched develop into a leader. "He's a good friend and he's apparently quite chatty except when he's around his mother," she laughs. "While he can appear laid back, he's not when it comes to things he really cares about."

Despite the intensity of her coursework, the only football game Leila missed last year was against the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The family has eight season tickets and those attending vary from game to game. Ten family members attended the Stagg Bowl in Virginia. Football and school will still be the focus this fall for both mother and son, as the Wildcats defend their national championship.

After graduation, while Brett trains and waits for the draft, Leila will travel to India with Professors Vivian Tong and Beverly Epeneter for the Health Care in India class during January Term.

Then, once her husband retires in a few years, they hope to travel extensively, spending several months at a time in different countries, which may allow her to put her nursing skills to work.

"I'd like to stay in a place for three or four months and get to know the people, rather than just be a tourist," she said.

— *Mardi Mileham*