

Alumni Spotlight

Corry Beth Vargo and Michael King: Westmoreland Alumni Couple Celebrating 15 years of Marriage



When we decide that we want to go to college, we hope to gain an education, meet some friends along the way, and make lasting memories. Little did the Westmoreland County Community College alumni couple, Corry Beth Vargo and Michael Vincent, know that they had met their forever person.

Vargo, 41, and King, 43, both of Youngwood, met at the college while taking classes in multimedia technology. Vargo began her journey in 2001 and graduated in 2004. Other areas of study included photography, business management and TV/video production. King began in 2002 and graduated in 2005 and studied business and multimedia.

So, how was the decision made to attend Westmoreland County Community College?

Vargo states, "It was the best choice for multimedia technology because it was close to home had high-tech classrooms and software, and was affordable."

Besides meeting each other, the couple both have fond memories that stick out during their time as students.

"We both really enjoyed the creative process of video production," says Vargo. "A friend, Andrew Vleck, wrote a script for us to act out in TV class and it was incredibly awkward! Mike and I were friends for five years before dating, so the whole thing is caught on tape. You can see the uncut version on YouTube."

Both recall a favorite instructor that they had.

"Dave Uhrinek was my favorite instructor because the way he explained video production made it fun and exciting," said Vargo. King agrees. "Dave Uhrinek was my favorite because he taught from a knowledgeable, real-world perspective. He got right in there with us and helped with every step of the assignments, making sure we all knew our way around everything in a studio production."

After earning their degrees and certifications at the college, Vargo transferred to Robert Morris University and earned a B.A. in Media Arts. She started her own photography business in 2006. King was promoted to a retail management position which helped him in his current role as a business owner, and assisted Vargo in wedding and event photography.

In 2009, King and Vargo married at the Mattress Factory Art Museum in Pittsburgh and started a family in 2012, which includes two beautiful children, one scaredy cat, one naughty cat and also two frogs. The couple always dreamed of owning an art/media-based family entertainment business and, in 2015, they started playing escape rooms. After planning to start up an escape room business, an opportunity arose in 2017 to purchase an operating escape room. They have been enjoying all aspects of game design, puzzle building, marketing and managing daily operations at 5th Street Escape Room in Charleroi, PA, ever since.

Vargo states how the college has helped prepare them for their current careers. "We utilize our art, management and multimedia technology knowledge daily to market and manage our projects, both professionally and recreationally."

The couple currently belongs to the Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce and love getting involved in community events and fundraisers as well as a worldwide connection to other escape room owners. In their free time, they love traveling to family friendly destinations, exploring immersive entertainment venues, playing all sorts of games (video and board/card), and future planning!

Advice to current college students?

“Our advice is if you think you may want to own your own business one day, be sure to take some marketing and business classes. When you find your circle of friends, stay close to them, for they may end up being your friend for life, a business partner or even a spouse! We had great, life-changing experiences while attending Westmoreland. We hope you take advantage of not only the educational aspects of the school but also the social ones as well,” says the couple.

5th Street Escape Room is fun for all ages and includes challenges like National Heist, The Witches Stone, Meatlocker, and Escape from Paradise. For more information, visit <https://5thstreetescaperoom.com/> or call 724.483.4618.