



Katelynn Benoit & Derek Barton **Emmanuel College '11 and '09** *Intramurals Love Story*

Tell us a little bit about you and your fiancé.

Derek and I are both from Worcester, MA. Derek, two years older than me, chose Emmanuel after graduating from St. Peter Marian High School. Two years later, I found myself a freshman at Emmanuel College, too. Some will say I followed him, but I'll stand by the fact that I loved the small campus in the heart of the big city. And of course it helped that Derek was there, too. Derek graduated in 2009 with a degree in business management and I graduated in 2011 with a health and counseling psychology degree.

How did you get involved in COF Intramurals?

Derek played intramurals all four years he attended Emmanuel and worked as an intramural official. He also served as a supervisor during his senior year. His flag football team, the *Blue Ribbon Bobcats*, won the intramural championships all four years they played. He also participated in intramural basketball. Sometimes when I would come to visit, there would be intramural games that I would go to watch. So, technically, I have been a part of COF intramurals even before I was a COF student. Once I started attending Emmanuel, Derek suggested that I get a job working for intramurals, too. It gave us an opportunity to spend some time together and make some extra money. I served as a score/timekeeper all four years of college and was promoted to supervisor my junior and senior year.

How did you meet?

We met in high school (well, I was actually in junior high). I was in 8th grade on the cheerleading squad, and he was a sophomore on the basketball team. He actually thought I was someone else when he first approached me, but it all worked out in the end. We dated on and off for a few years, until I was a senior in high school and he was a sophomore at Emmanuel. We decided to make it official on New Year's Eve (2007). We have been together ever since!

Why do you believe COF Intramurals are important? What impact did it have on your life? Do you keep in touch with other students you met during Intramurals?

Intramurals played such a huge role in our college experiences. We both made the commitment to work, and it gave us a sense of responsibility that many of our friends didn't have during college. Working for COF intramurals didn't feel like work, it was fun. We interacted with students from all of the COF schools and met a lot of great people, many with whom we became close friends. Brad was a great supervisor; we still keep in touch with him today.

COF intramurals are awesome (and unique) because it is a chance for all of the six schools to come together and interact with one another. There are so many different sports offered, and everyone can get involved. I would recommend to everyone who attends a COF school to become involved in intramurals!

Tell us about the engagement!

Derek and I got engaged December 31, 2014 in Nashville, TN. Derek surprised me with the trip for my Christmas gift. The way he did it was so perfect. First, I pulled an airplane Christmas tree ornament out of a bag. Next, I pulled out a Nashville ornament, followed by an ornament of a beautiful Christmas tree (which turned out to be the spot which he asked me to marry him).

The day of the proposal, I thought we were going to lunch in this fun hotel we researched. The Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville puts on a huge Christmas display of lights, decorated trees, waterfalls, and greenery, so we were going to check it out. As we were walking through the hotel looking at all of the beautiful scenery, a woman starts to follow us. I realize she is singing *Lovestory* by Taylor Swift, "our song". Once I heard what she was singing I knew that he was going to propose! There's a part in the song that says "Marry me, Juliet. You'll never have to be alone. I love you and that's all I really know. I talked to your dad, go pick out a white dress, it's a love story, baby, just say yes." He had arranged for her to sing "Marry Me Katelynn" as he got down on one knee. It was absolutely perfect! We are in the early stages of planning and hope to be married in September 2016 in Worcester, MA.