

News Release

For Senior Heidi Shol Reitmeier, It's Blooming Where You're Planted

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Monday, September 3, 2018

A student work-study job in the greenhouse at the University of Minnesota Crookston helped lead to a major in horticulture for senior Heidi Shol Reitmeier, Crookston, Minn.

"I didn't know what I was going to major in, but my love for working in the greenhouse made me realize I wanted to work with plants," says Reitmeier.

A trip in high school to Costa Rica ignited Reitmeier's passion for plants. "Something inside me woke up, and I found that plants bring me happiness," she says. "I fell in love with the plant life in Costa Rica, and I carried that love with me back to Crookston."



Attending college in her backyard was an easy choice for Reitmeier. "I knew people on the Crookston campus, and they had an influence on my college decision," she says. "It seemed like such a good place for me, and I liked the community connections."

Involvement in the Horticulture Club on campus was a natural for Reitmeier and joining the Crookston Students for Sustainable Development (CSSD) led her to a minor in environmental sciences. Through club involvement, Reitmeier has had opportunities for leadership that engaged her across the campus.

One of her greatest influences in life has been alumna and Lab Services Coordinator Theresa Helgeson, 1996. "Theresa helped me work through what I wanted to do with my future and has been a major encouragement," Reitmeier explains.

She can't neglect to mention Professor Dan Svedarsky when she talks about her U of M Crookston experience. He was her early advisor before she declared a major. "He was so understanding and patient with me as I searched for the spot I belonged," Reitmeier says.



When it comes to favorite classes, she is quick to answer—woody plant materials with Associate Professor Phil Baird and plant taxonomy with Associate Professor Matt Simmons. "I enjoyed them both so much and learned a great deal."

One might describe Reitmeier as rather quiet, and while she agrees, she has an immediate explanation why. "I love plants and prefer to let them do all the show and tell," she smiles.

Among her favorite plants are orchids. She loves the wide variety of orchids growing all over the world as they are one of the most diverse species on earth.

Reitmeier was named Woman of the Year at the student awards ceremony last April. It came as a great surprise to her but not to those who know her. She is a dedicated, hard-working student who is willing to be involved in whatever she is called on to do.



While being named Woman of the Year was huge, Reitmeier celebrated something even bigger this summer when she married her best friend, Ronny Jaeckel Reitmeier. He is an agronomy alumnus from 2014 who was the entrepreneur of a local vegetable growing business, Ronny's Farm to Table. He is now helping in his family's travel agency, Travel Reit LLC and planning to graduate fall 2018 in business administration and management. The two tied the knot July 20 amidst some of the most beautiful flowers anywhere—no surprise there.

"Ronny and I share many of the same interests, and we consider working with plants a real labor of love," Reitmeier says. It is truly special when the love of your life also loves the same things you love, and for Reitmeier growing together has taken on a whole new meaning.

The University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 35 bachelor's degree programs, 23 minors, and 40 areas of emphasis on campus as well as 16 degree programs entirely online. These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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