

News Release

Alumni Feature: Jonathon Holland

By *Torchlight e-Newsletter Team* on Thursday, October 1, 2020

Jonathon Holland is a two-time alumnus of UMN Crookston. He first attended from 1987-89 while the institution was a two-year school. He chose UMN Crookston based on advice from his father, who said he should find a career that he loves to do so it wouldn't feel like he was going to work every day. Holland loved spending time with horses, so as a Trojan he earned his associate degree in equine science. When UMN Crookston transitioned to a four-year program, Holland attended in fall of 1993 to the spring of 1995, earning his bachelor's degree in animal industries management.

Although the physicality of the campus changed from his first two years to his last two, Holland feels the atmosphere, intent, and purpose of the campus has remained the same. The important aspects of hands-on learning and the interpersonal relationships between students and faculty continue to exist and allow for student success. He would love to give a shout out to his best friends, Nicky (Demarais) Overgaard 1996 and Christy (Parks) Doyea 1996, who he met as a student and continues to be close with today. The three of them attended together and are now faculty and staff at UMN Crookston. Holland says it's always a fun reunion when the three of them are back on campus together during a non-COVID year.

After graduating in 1995, Holland went off to explore many career opportunities. He worked as an extension educator in South Dakota and helped students learn through 4-H. Next, he put together education programs for the United States Dressage Federation (USDF) while getting to know U.S. Olympians as an added bonus. Seeing Holland loved campus so much, he went back to UMN Crookston in the early 2000s to coach the equestrian team and teach in the equine department. Next, he went to a community college in Rochester, Minn., and taught in their equine program. He then decided he was done teaching and was ready for the next chapter.

Holland now lives on a beautiful farm in Northfield, Minn. He is happily married and enjoys raising horses, mowing his lawn in the country, and baking loads of lefse. Not only that, he is able to work from home as an admissions counselor for UMN Crookston. With the transition from teaching to admissions, Holland still has the opportunity to impact student lives, just in a different manner. He tells students they'll know which campus is right for them based on which one feels like home, similar to how UMN Crookston has made him feel for so long.

All of the amazing experiences he had were not just because of his education, but because of the person he became as he found himself at UMN Crookston. To current students, he would say not to worry about selecting the perfect career, rather to "spend the time and effort to take advantage of the opportunities and learn from the instructors. The career will find them, they should be spending their time focusing on themselves, self-development, and truly enjoying every moment." Holland is who he is today because of his time at UMN Crookston.

Written for the Fall 2020 *Torchlight e-Newsletter*.

Top photo: Jonathon Holland at a dressage equestrian show

Bottom photo: Nicky Overgaard 1996, Jonathon Holland and Christy Doyea 1996



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