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### The Gates Family: Inspired by the Power of the TU Community

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# The Gates Family: Inspired by the Power of the TU Community

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In the late 1990's, Joel and I fell in love during early morning Taylathon practices and late nights stuffing donor letters in the Atterbury building. The irony of falling in love over donor letters is not lost on me. During our senior year, Joel and I co-chaired homecoming together and sealed the deal that we would be building our future home together when he proposed that summer.

After graduation in 2000, we spent a year serving in different cities in Mexico. Once married, we packed up my small car and drove down to Mexico to begin our lives together, serving at a mission school. We were the very definition of young and naive.

Quickly we learned Taylor is not defined by geography when less than three months into our marriage, a doctor in Mexico discovered Joel had a brain tumor. We flew home for surgery and experienced the community of Taylor from our friends through their support, prayers and visits. The same friends and community are the ones we draw support from today.

We continue to share the ups and downs of life with many of the same friends from that Taylathon team 20 years later. Our community is not defined by our physical locations or geography!

Joel went to work for the family car dealership after healing from the brain tumor. He worked his way through the different positions and departments in the dealership over the next 10 years. He then transitioned to help lead the dealerships when his father and uncle retired in 2010.

Working daily in the dealership, Joel quickly realized the importance of serving others. Helping customers with vehicle repairs, helping coworkers solve problems, and staying late making sure the job is complete. Being a servant is at the center of what Joel does. The servant towel he received at Taylor is put to work with his coworkers daily, and then at home when he serves our family.

I am understanding the servant's towel I received at graduation more each year. It has been in my own home and neighborhood that I have used that towel, much more so than in the mission field in Mexico. It is on sticky hands and dirty floors that my towel gets put to use daily. Our seven kids and neighbor friends running in and out has me on my hands and knees cleaning all the time. The mess means community, the crumbs represent nourishment, and the noise is connection.

Taylor taught Joel and me to crave community. We have been trying to build what we experienced during our time at TU in our home, work, and neighborhood. What started out as leading committees for homecoming and cooking dinner for our Taylathon team now looks more like school board meetings, community involvement through the dealership and a dinner table of teenagers. We are so thankful for the way Taylor opened our eyes to see what leadership looks like.

Twenty years after graduating, Taylor continues to be a part of our lives as we prepare to send our oldest, Gwynyth, to TU this fall as a freshman. We are so excited for her to have a similar experience as she grows and matures over the next four years. We are thankful Taylor continues to expand its majors to meet the needs in our world.

Gwynyth plans to study [Orphans and Vulnerable Children](#) and [Elementary Education](#). We were so thankful that after two weeks of summer institute, Gwynyth understood the "intentional community" she has been hearing about all her life. Taylor today still holds true to the values it held 20 years ago.

With TU love,

Joel ('00) and Angie ('00) Gates

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