

SWOSU Graduation Special Now, 25 Years and 50 Years Ago

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Trevor Brownen (left) will graduate from SWOSU on Saturday, May 12. Brownen's mother graduated 25 years ago from SWOSU, while grandfather Joe Johns (right) graduated 50 years ago from the university in Weatherford.

This year's Southwestern Oklahoma State University graduation ceremony is going to create and bring back fond memories for at least one particular family.

Trevor Brownen will graduate from SWOSU on May 12 with a double major in accounting and finance. Earning that degree is a time of celebration but what makes this so special for the Brownen family is that Trevor's mom, Traci Brownen of Lindsay, graduated from the university in Weatherford exactly 25 years ago and his grandfather, Joe Johns of Weatherford, also graduated from SWOSU exactly 50 years ago.

Trevor said when he was making his college choice, his family's tradition at SWOSU was a major factor in his decision. Graduating from Minco High School, he was selected to the President's Leadership Class at SWOSU. His four years at the university has resulted in meeting wonderful people and developing lasting friendships.

"I can't imagine my college experience being better at any other university," Trevor said.

His grandfather, Joe Johns, graduated in 1962 with a degree in business administration and a minor in economics. He worked his way through school and laughs as he remembers cramming four years of learning into six years of school. Johns was the first person in his family to graduate from college, and his fondest memory is walking across the stage in Rankin Williams Fieldhouse.

"I am very thankful for my education and the opportunity I had to carry the torch of learning to a new height in my family," Johns said.

His daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons—Traci, Richard, Trent and Trevor—all attended SWOSU.

Traci will celebrate her 25th year as a SWOSU graduate by attending her son's ceremony. Unlike her father, Traci graduated after only three years of schooling at the age of 20. She earned degrees in elementary education and special education. She took classes at SWOSU during her senior year at Weatherford High School.

She married husband Richard in 1986, six months before her graduation in 1987. She taught for two years in nearby public schools while Richard finished school at SWOSU. Traci worked on her graduate degree in psychometry while her husband was finishing his degree.

One of her best memories of SWOSU is registrar Bob Klaassen, who was always a friendly face on campus and willing to help answer questions. She also remembers her advisor, Wanda Stimson, who guided her path to graduate in only three years.

It will be a special weekend to celebrate Trevor's college graduation on May 12, but it will also be a special time for both Joe and Traci to reminisce as they attend festivities at SWOSU.