

## “Where are They Now?” Donor Story

### Rob Hickey, BS Aerospace 1988, and Jessica Hickey, BS Civil 1988



If you know Rob and Jessica Hickey, then you know they like adventure. From international sailing trips on a boat they now own to their unique career paths, it has been an adventure since they met each other at SDSU. Rob and Jessica first met in 1986 in a Dynamics class taught by Dr. Balbir Narang. They remember that the final for that class was worth more than 50% of the course grade, and that you could literally see people sweating in their seats as they took the exam. Rob and Jessica also shared that Dr. Narang told everyone not to worry because the final was only a test. They have fond memories of Dr. Narang, saying that he was tough but very fair and taught his students discipline.

As a transfer student, Rob came to SDSU to study Aerospace Engineering. He originally wanted to be an astronaut, but when he grew too tall for NASA’s Apollo program, he decided he wanted to design and build aerospace systems. Jessica was also a transfer student and attended both Grossmont College and SDSU at the same time to complete her degree in Civil Engineering.

As graduates of the College of Engineering in 1988, Rob started his first job at Rohr Industries, Inc. in the Structural Analysis Division, and Jessica was hired at Caltrans working for the San Diego District where she had the opportunity to rotate through assignments. During the time that Rob was with Rohr, the company had a contract with Boeing and a small group of engineers was offered a 3-month assignment in the Pacific Northwest. Rob was one of the engineers offered



the opportunity to work at Boeing in Seattle, and the contract ended up turning into a 19-month assignment.



By the end of the assignment, Rob and Jessica had fallen in love with the Pacific Northwest and with each other, and after getting married in 1993 they had the opportunity to relocate permanently to Seattle. Rob went back to Boeing, and after a brief stint at the King County Department of Transportation, Jessica took a position with Microsoft in their Commercial Real Estate group. At Microsoft and after, Jessica had great mentors and credits them with helping her expand her career path into business development.

This experience led her to eventually venture out on her own and establish 1029 Consulting, an operations management consultancy, where she currently serves as CEO. Rob’s career path also involved shifting from more technical roles to more business-oriented roles, including working at Microsoft for over 15 years. He now co-owns and manages Sound Planning, a corporate event planning company.

Although the Hickey’s entrepreneurial spirit led them both to venture outside engineering, they both credit their SDSU engineering education with teaching them how to think and solve problems. One of Rob’s favorite sayings is: “Your education will teach you about a job, but your job will teach you about yourself and what you really want to do.” According to the Hickeys, SDSU gave them a lot of life lessons that they still use every day.

To say that the Hickeys are loyal to SDSU is an understatement. After graduation they immediately stepped up and worked for SDSU’s Orientation Leader program, working with incoming students and their parents. Rob and Jessica currently provide leadership for the SDSU Pacific Northwest Alumni Council and Jessica developed what has become the Fall Forum and Red Talks. Both are also multiyear mentors in the Aztec Mentor Program. The Hickeys have been providing philanthropic support to SDSU for over 30 years, and most recently named a student study area in the new Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex.



**Rob and Jessica Hickey are Aztec Proud, and SDSU is proud of them!**