

A Family Affair: Cimarron Father, Son Earn Degrees From K-State

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MANHATTAN -- It's graduation time at Kansas State University and the Max and Linda Irsik family of Cimarron has double the reasons to celebrate. Max Irsik and his son, Maxson, are both earning degrees from K-State this semester.

For Max Irsik, the road to his third degree from K-State took him into cyberspace with the university's award-winning master in agribusiness program. The two-year program is Web-based, allowing students to fit course work around their work and family schedules. Students also are required to attend two one-week sessions on the Manhattan campus each year.

Irsik earned a bachelor's degree in 1975 and a doctor of veterinary medicine degree in 1977, both from K-State. He owned a large animal veterinary clinic in Cimarron for more than 20 years. He sold the practice and now works as a veterinary consultant.

"I enrolled in the agribusiness program just to increase my skills. It is an area I have a lot of interest in," Max Irsik said. "The program was excellent and I learned a lot. I really enjoyed working online. Once you got into it, it was like being in a classroom setting."

He also said coming to campus for the two one-week sessions each year helped.

"I got to know my professors and fellow students, which was nice," he said. "But even when working online, the instructors were available 24 hours a day. You could call them or leave e-mail messages and they would get right back to you."

Max Irsik said his new degree should be helpful when he considers his future career options, which may include teaching.

While Max Irsik does not plan to attend his commencement from K-State's Graduate School, he will be at commencement for his son. Maxson Irsik will earn his bachelor's degree in finance Saturday, Dec. 14, at commencement for K-State's College of Business Administration.

The younger Irsik is a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity, as well as K-State's Alpha Kappa Psi, a professional business fraternity, and the Student Financial Association. He will be putting his new degree to good use as a financial planner with a national financial services firm in Kansas City.

"I'm more proud of my son graduating," Max Irsik said. "But I think Maxson thinks it's fun that I finished my degree at the same time he did."

Max Irsik gets dittos on that from his son, who says he's just as proud of his father.

"I'm really impressed at how he balanced his job and his academic life," Maxson Irsik said. "I think it's great K-State allows people to have a life and still earn a degree."

The younger Irsik also said he's not surprised his father could successfully juggle work and school.

"He always works hard — he works hard until the jobs done," Maxson Irsik said. "I've always admired that my father is so honest and straightforward. If he tells you he's going to do something, he does it."

Maxson Irsik's commencement from K-State won't be the last in the Irsik family. His sister, Tessa Irsik, is a senior in elementary education at K-State. The youngest Irsik, Maudie, attends Liberty High School, Liberty, Mo.