

WE DEFINE THE *Future*



PRESS RELEASE

6-6-18

Contact: Mike Singer

760-341-2883, ext. 78107

msinger@csusb.edu

Husband and wife will graduate together at CSUSB Palm Desert Campus

PALM DESERT, Calif. – Luis and Wendy Castaneira are both first-generation college students, have been together for 11 years and have four children. They will earn their bachelor's degrees together at the Cal State San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus Commencement ceremony on June 14.

Luis will receive a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and is graduating cum laude, with university and departmental honors. He is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and a member of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society.

Wendy will receive a bachelor's degree in nursing and is graduating cum laude, with university and departmental honors as well. She is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau-Rho Beta Nursing

Honor Society, the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society and the National Student Nurses Association. She is a community engagement and leadership award recipient, a presidential volunteer award recipient, a Rogers Scholar and vice president of the Coyote Student Nurses of the Desert.

Wendy chose to attend PDC because her close friend was accepted and planned to attend, it is the only local four-year public university and it has a nursing program. She was accepted to other universities, but chose to stay in the area and the Palm Desert Campus allowed her to do so.

Luis says that his wife encouraged him to transfer from College of the Desert and continue his education at PDC. They say it was never their goal to attend or graduate together, it just happened that way because of their goals and the accessibility of the campus.

Luis grew up in Santa Maria, Calif. Wendy, who grew up in Phoenix, Ariz., says that she grew up in an abusive home with an absent father and was homeless at the age of 18. They both wanted to pursue an education and that drew them together. They came to the desert when Luis joined the military and was stationed in Twentynine Palms in 2010.

Wendy says that she has wanted to work with labor and delivery since she was five years-old. Her passion is to help those in need. As a labor and delivery nurse, she feels that she can advocate for mothers and babies and help them have a safe and memorable experience. With her bilingual skills, she is also able to help those mothers facing a language barrier during their labor. Her plan is to work on the labor and delivery floor at a hospital in the Coachella Valley, and once she has gained experience, obtain a master's degree in midwifery.

Luis chose to earn a degree in criminal justice because he wants to help people who are put in difficult life situations, especially juveniles because he feels that they need more guidance and lack role models. He says that juveniles are easily manipulated by unfortunate events and he wants to try to prevent these situations from guiding the rest of their lives. He plans to apply for a juvenile probation officer position with Riverside or San Bernardino counties.

Both agree that family has been their motivation for completing their degree.

Luis says that, "Finishing with a bachelor's degree will encourage my kids to become scholars." Wendy feels that, "Showing my kids the benefits of school and how hard I worked for my grades to achieve not only my degree, but to graduate with honors, will help them become scholars too."

She is also very motivated to work in a hospital doing her dream job. Luis and Wendy are determined to provide their family with a house and a new car to give their kids more space to grow into.

The university's motto is "We Define the Future." Luis says that PDC helped him define his future by providing knowledgeable and outstanding professors whose passion in teaching criminal justice made him want to achieve more in life and become someone who could change the future of others just like his professors did for him. Wendy says that PDC has helped define her future by providing her with the education needed to be the best nurse she can be and give her family the stability they need.

Located in beautiful Palm Desert, the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor's and master's degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, and teacher credentials and certificates. With more than 1,400 students, it is the Coachella Valley's four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region's growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the campus' Office of Public Affairs at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the campus website at pdc.csusb.edu.