Adam Lordon with his Mom, Nancy Lordon, on the Marilyn Denis Show.

Building Vibrant COMMUNITIES

Saint Mary's Grad Becomes Mayor of Home Town

BY KRISTA KEOUGH

As a young boy growing up in Chatham, New Brunswick, Adam Lordon's mother instilled in him and his siblings the importance of giving back. As a city councilor and the first female Deputy Mayor of the City, Nancy Lordon was as well-known for her community service as she was for her involvement in politics.

She was an avid volunteer, championed initiatives to reduce poverty, supported environmental causes, and was an advocate for women in government. There's no doubt that his mother inspired him, but if you had told Adam then that today he would be the Mayor of Miramichi, "I wouldn't have believed you," he says, with a laugh.

It wasn't until Adam visited Halifax for the first time on a high school class trip to Saint Mary's that he considered going to university in another province. As soon as he arrived

on campus, he immediately felt a sense of community; everyone he met welcomed him and put him at ease. Plus, the prospect of a new adventure—close to home but not too far away—intrigued him.

In September 2002, Adam returned to Halifax, this time as a Saint Mary's student. He lived and worked in residence, and was voted Residence Assistant of the year for Loyola twice. As the volunteer coordinator and event planner at SMUSA, he instituted activities like SMUmazing Race, which involved dozens of local sponsors and volunteers from the community. He also co-founded the Random Acts of Kindness Squad, bringing alive his mother's teachings on campus.

Voted Valedictorian of his class in 2007, Adam graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree (magna cum laude) with majors in

Marketing and Management. "I was the first of my generation in my mom's family to graduate from university," says Adam. He adds that seeing how proud his mother was, for him to graduate and be valedictorian, is something he will never forget.

With his degree in hand, Adam set out on his next adventure: moving to Toronto. Many of his friends from Saint Mary's were living and working there, too, and it wasn't long before he made a name for himself in his chosen field of TV production. After an internship at MTV Canada, he moved up the ranks at So You Think You Can Dance Canada, and went on to become a senior producer for The Marilyn Denis Show.

But in the summer of 2014, Adam's life took a very unexpected turn. His mother, Nancy, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and he quickly returned home. After only a few months Nancy

passed away, but her legacy has lived on in many, and some very unexpected, ways.

"Coming home changed my life in the worst possible way, but I believe now that it all happened for a reason," says Adam. When he returned to Miramichi, he became quickly aware of the role that young people were playing in the revival and renewal of his community. "The older generation was handing us the baton. They wanted us to become involved. I saw this as my opportunity." He ran to fill Nancy's seat in the by-election, becoming the youngest councilor the city has ever had, and was elected Mayor of Miramichi in November 2016. At 32-years-old, he is the youngest mayor in the city's history.

Today, Adam is busy producing and directing documentaries, videos, and working on TV shows like Amazing Race Canada and Master Chef Canada, while balancing his mayoral duties. Although being the Mayor of Miramichi is not a full-time job, Adam is totally committed to the role. Over the next two and a half years, he is looking forward to securing funding for a multiplex sports facility and finishing several waterfront development projects.

He credits Saint Mary's with giving him a foundation from which to learn, along with some of his best memories. "The connections I made and the community we formed together—both professional and social—has just continued to grow." Adam believes that he received as much of an education outside the classroom, pointing to the university's global campus standing. "I gained my sense of the world at Saint Mary's and learned how to be a conscientious global citizen."

In memory of his mother, Adam's family established the Nancy Lordon Memorial Scholarship Fund to give financial support to female students who are involved in their community. Each summer they host a free BBQ in Miramichi and collect donations for the fund. Not only is it a way to give back, it's about living out the values his mother taught him.

"I love gathering people together to do service in mom's name and raise money for those in need," he says. "My mom is undoubtedly my hero. None of my accomplishments would be possible if it weren't for her." ✧

CREATING GROWTH
at Home

BY RENÉE HARTLEIB

Colin Gillis, right, with Smarter Spaces co-owner, Dan MacIntosh

As a 14-year-old kid helping to run his family's bed & breakfast in Cape Breton, Colin Gillis would have had a hard time imagining a future in 3D scanning. But that's exactly where he is.

As co-owner of the fast-growing company Smarter Spaces, Gillis and his business partner, Dan MacIntosh, help companies, organizations, landlords, developers, and commercial brokers create detailed digital models of the inner workings of buildings.

"We help our clients better understand their spaces," says Gillis, adding that 3D scanning aids in renovations, by reducing change orders and saving time and money. Scanning can also assist in the creation of evacuation maps and fire safety plans.

One client, a property landlord in downtown St. John's, Newfoundland, had Smarter Spaces create a 3D rendering of one of their rental units for a prospective tenant. It's incredibly lifelike and includes details like the placement of a computer keyboard at each cubicle.

Gillis' team also inserted actual photos of the view of the St. John's Harbour into the rendering, which will undoubtedly be a selling point. The prospective tenant can actually "walk" through the space and feel they are in it. In a competitive rental market, where landlords need to ensure their space stands out, this is a big boost.

The Smarter Spaces team uses LiDAR (light detection and ranging) technology—the same tools the military has been using for years— in a mobile unit that fits into a backpack and creates a meticulous record of what a space contains. "Rather than examining above ceilings with a flashlight and guessing what's in the space, 3D scanning produces an accurate image," says Gillis. It's this accuracy that has clients lining up to work with his company. "It sounds simple, but one of the biggest causes of cost overruns in any building project are the 'I didn't know that was there' moments."

Smarter Spaces evolved from a company called IPECC, a project