



OUR SHARED FUTURE: THE STORY OF RON MARTIN

Orano Northern Scholarship Recipient

Believe in yourself and work hard.

Following that simple formula allowed a teenager from Uranium City to earn multiple university degrees, proudly serve his people, and establish his own dental practice at Fort Qu'Appelle in southern Saskatchewan.

Talk about impacting lives daily!

Ron Martin was born and went to school in Uranium City when it was still a boom town in the 1970s. He was the second oldest of 11 children in a hard-working First Nations family. His father worked as a mill operator at the Beaverlodge uranium mine and later served as Chief of the Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation. His mother worked a variety of jobs in addition to looking after the family.

Ron says his parents set a great example that he followed from an early age. He started working odd jobs in his early teens and was working full time at the Uranium City hotel by the time he was in high school.

"I started working when I was 14," he said. "On the weekends I'd be working 15 hours a day. On week nights I'd go there after school and be there until midnight."

Despite the heavy work schedule, Ron managed to get solid grades at school. He graduated in 1980 as the Beaverlodge mine was beginning to wind down. With the encouragement of the school's counselor, he decided to attend the University of Saskatchewan with the goal of getting into a profession.

With all of his time devoted to studies, Ron excelled at university.

"Coming into university I suddenly had time to study," he said. "Even if I had a couple of hours a day to study it was a lot more than I had in high school."

With a strong academic performance, he applied for and received a scholarship from Orano (then Cogema) that continued throughout his studies. He also worked as a summer student at the Beaverlodge mine while attending university.

Orano believes that by helping individuals rise we can build a stronger community. Considering Ron's incredible work ethic, Orano was proud to invest in his education.

"I got a great array of trades experience while working as a summer student. "I worked on construction ... general contracting ... and in the environmental department of the mine looking at air and water quality," he said. "It could have been a good living but I wanted to do other things."

Ron's first degree was a bachelor of science in anatomy. He applied to the colleges of law and dentistry and was accepted to both. He chose dentistry because you get to use your hands and eyes while working and the immediate relief it provides to patients.

Orano understands that a healthy and gratifying work life is an important part of our community's future. By creating your best self this allows all of us to grow stronger together.

While studying dentistry, he completed bachelor's degree in sociology and also found time to deliver pizza in the evenings.

Ron is grateful for the scholarships and summer employment opportunities he received.

"As a student you're grateful for it because a lot of times it's the difference between success ... being able to go on and continue with your studies ... or just saying to heck with it."

"You had less to worry about and had more time to focus on your studies. That was the key thing. You didn't have to worry about other things."

After graduation, Ron spent a year working at a hospital at Moose Factory in northern Ontario. He then returned to Saskatchewan to provide dental services in remote northern communities on a fly-in basis. After that he established his own practice at Fort Qu'Appelle where he also provides care to patients from the First Nation communities northeast of Regina.

Ron says northern youth today should be aware of the opportunities that are out there – such as many of the health, educational and wellness initiatives Orano invests in throughout northern Saskatchewan.

"When I was going to school the doors were partly open. It was a little bit tough to get through. Now the doors are swung wide open and you should take advantage of it. It's there, you just have to bear down and do it."

Orano Canada is proud to have supported Ron.

oranocanada.com

