

Spencer Rogers looked to BYU early. “I grew up in Latin America where I was exposed to BYU through traveling groups like Young Ambassadors and Folk Dancers,” explained Rogers. “I looked forward to attending BYU from a very young age.”

After his freshman year at BYU, Rogers served in the Canada Montreal mission as a French- and Spanish-speaking missionary. As he was preparing to come home, Rogers received some unique instruction. “I returned to BYU with a charge from my mission president to visit personally with David Kennedy,” said Rogers. A phone call later, Rogers had a time set up to meet with Kennedy.

“We spent about an hour talking about his experiences,” said Rogers. “I left there convinced that serving as ambassador-at-large for the Church was the best job in the world. Brother Kennedy’s counsel to me was very simple—be the best member you can be, get a good education, move to the ‘mission field’—where your service can have the greatest impact. That counsel molded the rest of my education.”

Following Kennedy’s advice, Rogers spent his junior year of college at a university in Lyon, France. While there, he traveled throughout Europe and eastern Europe. To broaden his international experience even more, Rogers also spent a semester on the London study abroad program.

“When I returned to Provo, I focused my studies on international economics, Russian, and humanities. My favorite teachers were Stan Taylor, who taught me to use logic and reason and to think clearly and pay attention to detail, and Jon Green, who taught me to love humanities,” Rogers explained.

Ready to go abroad once again, Rogers returned to France during his senior year, to work as a travel guide and an interpreter for a folk dance group. Rogers said, “While on that trip, I developed a friendship with a group of Ukrainian folk dancers, and to this day, I remain friends with many of them.”

Post-graduation, Rogers relocated to Ukraine, where he taught at a university. If teaching in the Ukraine wasn’t exciting enough, Rogers made the largest step of his life en route—marriage. “On our way there, my sweetheart Erin O’Connell and I were married in the Stockholm Sweden Temple as my parents were serving a mission in Norway at the time and could not otherwise have attended,” Rogers explained.

“After an ordeal in Hungary trying to get our work papers approved through the Soviet Embassy, we finally arrived in L’viv, Ukraine. We intended to stay two years but returned to Provo after six months due to illness.”

During their stay in Ukraine, the Rogers saw firsthand the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

“My background in international relations and international economics helped me to appreciate what we were experiencing. Since then, we have traveled extensively and have witnessed tremendous change in Ukraine. We return regularly and enjoy our close friendships there,” he added.

The Rogers now live in Pleasant Grove and are the parents of seven children. He is a parallel entrepreneur and has served on several nonprofit and for-profit boards and has launched eight companies thus far. He recently spent six years in San Jose, California, as the CEO of a nonprofit organization. On a personal note, Rogers is a PADI dive master and enjoys scuba diving, traveling, fishing, horseback riding, and exploring Utah on his ATV.

No Events