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Landscape Job Leads to Successful Photography Business

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- At age 14, Jono Spear worked a landscaping job to save money for his first camera. Little did he know this would eventually lead to a successful photography business that would pay for his education at Cedarville University.

Now, he's both a college graduate and a successful business owner.

Spear, from South Bend, Indiana, grew up with eight siblings, and it was one of his older brothers who sparked his interest in photography. After purchasing a beginning-level camera, Spear watched YouTube videos and read as many photography blogs as he could to help him understand the technical elements of photography.

During middle school, he gained experience taking photographs of his siblings and senior portraits for friends.

"I wasn't old enough to have my driver's license, so if a friend asked me to take their family photos I would say 'yes, but you're going to have to pick me up,'" said Spear.

A pivotal moment came when a couple asked Spear to photograph their wedding.

"From that wedding, another couple saw those photos and liked them, and I photographed more weddings, and it snowballed from there. I decided that I wanted to primarily do weddings and engagements," said Spear.

Jono Spear Photography became an official business prior to the start of his freshman year at a community college.

Entering college, Spear dreamed of pursuing a degree in business so he could become an insurance agent. He altered this plan after feeling led to enter full-time ministry. He decided to transfer to Cedarville University so he could major in biblical studies.

"After visiting Cedarville, it just felt like home. I could tell the people and the professors genuinely cared about me, and I love that Cedarville stands for the authority of the Word of God," said Spear.

During Spear's time at Cedarville, he met his wife, Sarah, during their first year. Now they both are photographers in the family photography business. After graduation in May, Spear will serve as the student ministry director at his home church, Gospel City, in Granger, Indiana.

"The pastor who was my youth pastor will be mentoring me and training me in the position. God saved me when I was 16, and he's given me a love for students," said Spear.

Spear hopes to continue his photography career during his full-time ministry job.

“I know I can’t maintain the capacity of a full-time photography studio while doing ministry, but I hope to still do photography because it’s such a blast.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 5,082 [undergraduate](#), [graduate](#), and [dual-enrollment](#) high school students in more than 175 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, high graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and the #4 national ranking by the Wall Street Journal for student engagement. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu

Written by Abby Totten

Photo Captions:

1 – Jono Spear Headshot.

2 – Jono and his wife Sarah at their wedding in August 2021.