

From Mobsters to Doctors

Mention “Sam and Sam” to anyone who has been around SGS for a long time, and they will immediately brighten up and exclaim “Brush Up Your Shakespeare!” In 2007, seniors Sam King and Sam Wagstaff appeared in the production of “Kiss Me Kate” and brought down the house with their portrayal of two mobsters singing, dancing, and giving romantic advice.

Both Sams have gone on to earn Doctoral degrees, and both have joined the family business: Sam King practices dentistry in Spokane with his father Kevin, and Sam Wagstaff works in Sierre, Switzerland as a Product and Process Development Engineer for Novelis, the aluminum casting technology company his father Bob founded.

Sam King ‘07 graduated from Creighton University in 2011 with a BS in Biology. As an undergraduate he worked in the University Admissions office, served on the University-wide undergraduate expansion committee, was a Teaching Assistant for five different Biology courses, and assisted on a research project dealing with Embryology and the effects of Nicotine.

He earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery from Creighton School of Dentistry in 2016. While in dental school, Sam volunteered at the Omaha One World Clinic and the Omaha Public Health Clinic, providing free dental care to needy clients. Sam made a music video with a dental theme that went viral, and then used his video skills to create a video series for training second-year dental students in Emergency Dentistry. He also volunteered at the Omaha zoo, where he performed a root canal treatment on a mountain gorilla.

Currently, Sam is working on a Fellowship from the Academy of General Dentistry and is a member of the Spears Study Club, advancing his skills in cosmetic dentistry. Sam says, “I love working with my father. He was beyond value during my dental school days, offering advice and help.”

Sam Wagstaff ‘07 graduated from Cornell University in 2013, majoring in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, with a minor in Mathematics. His undergrad years were sandwiched around a two-year church mission to Paris, France.

Sam earned his Masters and Doctor of Science (ScD) from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in just three years. His Master’s thesis dealt with alloying elements in cast aluminum ingots that are used for everything from soda can lids to wing spars on Boeing airliners. Sam’s Doctoral Thesis, “Jet Processing of Direct-Chill Cast Aluminum Ingots,” described new methods to improve the uniformity and thus the mechanical properties of aluminum alloys. His paper has resulted in four patents to date, with more on the way.

In an article in MIT News Magazine, Sam’s professor said, “The reason why this project was successful is, of course, Sam Wagstaff. He’s an amazing graduate student.” Sam’s research was done in cooperation with Bob Wagstaff’s company, Novelis. Talking about working with Novelis, Sam said, “I don’t know of many other companies that would have let me grow as much as I did, and for that I am really grateful.”

Sam enjoys living in Switzerland with his wife Annalise Shumway Wagstaff. Since all his work is done in French, “My Upper School French classes are really paying off!”

— Pete O’Brien, SGS Chemistry Teacher

Below: Annalise and Sam Wagstaff in his M.I.T. doctoral robes, Sam King in his doctor of dentistry robes at Creighton, and the two mobster Sams in the 2007 SGS production of “Kiss Me Kate” encouraging everyone to “Brush Up Your Shakespeare”.

