**Married Nanooks student-athletes bring partnership to UAF**

By Nona Letuligasenoa

In early September, the Alaska Nanooks Department of Athletics hosted its annual Student-Athlete Orientation. As the horde of student-athletes started to slowly disperse from the free pizza table afterward, Assistant Athletic Director of Compliance Kayne Gutierrez asked two of Alaska’s tallest athletes if they wanted to take an extra box of pizza home with them.

They graciously accepted, since neither Trent Molesworth nor his wife Angela were able to cook dinner that night — both had attended the mandatory orientation to represent their respective teams.

The Molesworths officially joined the ranks of the Alaska Nanooks at the start of the 2016-2017 school year, both coming in with two years of eligibility left after transferring from Scottsdale Community College in Arizona.

Since then, Angela has made a name for herself as Alaska volleyball’s powerful outside hitter, while Trent’s uncanny ability to collect rebounds and shoot from behind the arc has aided the Alaska Nanooks men’s basketball team in its hunt to return to the conference tournament next month.

**Fate for two Fighting Artichokes**

In the summer of 2014, Angela Webb had noticed a new family move in down the street from her and her family in Gilbert, Arizona. The Molesworth family ended up attending the Webbs' church. As fate would have it, both Angela and the oldest Molesworth son, Trent, were about to start their freshman year at Scottsdale Community College. Angela was going to be a member of the Fighting Artichokes’ volleyball team, and Trent a member of the men’s basketball team.

Trent, who had just completed a two-year mission in California, didn’t get the chance to talk to Angela until the first day of school.

But throughout their first year on campus, the couple bonded over the demands of being student-athletes while keeping close ties with their family and their church. After nine months of dating, the couple tied the knot on June 26, 2015.

“Trent was so easy to talk to and we got along so unbelievably well, it was like we had known each other for years,” Angela said of the early stages of their relationship. “I had truly never met anyone like him. He has the sweetest heart.”

The feeling was mutual, “Angela was so easy to get along with,” Trent said. “I always wanted to be with someone that I could consider my best friend, and she is. I also knew I wanted to marry someone who is genuinely loving and has a desire to help others, and I see both of those qualities in Angela.”

**From AZ to AK**

After two years with the Scottsdale Community College Fighting Artichokes, Trent and Angela were ready for the next step in their academic and athletic careers. The sought to join an NCAA program that would accept both of them.

“As we were going through the recruiting process, we pretty much had four things we wanted: an engineering program, a men’s basketball team, a volleyball team and somewhere that would offer an adventure for us," Trent said. "UAF had each of those four qualities and we decided to take a chance and come here all the way from Arizona.”

After being recruited by both Alaska volleyball head coach Brian Scott and Alaska men’s basketball head coach Mick Durham, both Trent and Angela signed their NCAA National Letters of Intent together on April 29, 2016.

**Direct impacts**

Both of the Molesworths have fit in well on their respective teams.

On a team with only three players over six feet tall, it was not hard to pick out 6-foot-2-inch Angela on Alaska volleyball’s first day of preseason training in fall 2016. Head coach Brian Scott worked with a mix of eight returners and six newcomers.

At the conclusion of the 3-24 season, Angela, an art major, had appeared in each of Alaska’s 27 games and led the team with 2.82 points per set and 2.57 kills per set. She also collected 42 blocks on the year to rank third among her teammates.

“Angela’s size and athletic ability allowed her to be a real threat for any opponent we faced in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference,” Scott said.

Scott also praised Angela’s off-court abilities, “Like all of her teammates, she has spent hours of community service in the town she now calls home. Whenever opportunities to serve arise, she is always one to participate and does a very good job at giving back," he said.

Trent and the Alaska Nanooks men’s basketball team are in the midst of trying to secure a spot in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championships. The electrical engineering major has appeared in each of Alaska’s 19 games this season, helping the Nanooks to an 8-11 overall mark.

Standing at 6 feet, 4 inches and weighing 225 pounds, Trent averages 11.6 minutes on the court per game and has shot 24 for 56 from the field this season, a .429 field-goal percentage. He has averaged 2.3 rebounds per game.

“Trent has given us experience and maturity at the power forward position this season,” Durham said. “He has the rare ability to also shoot well from the three-point line and rebound for us.”

“Trent is also a great model of a student-athlete for us," Durham added.

**Making it look easy**

It’s not easy to be a student-athlete — trying to balance classes, homework, practices, workouts and travel takes a lot of practice in time management. It’s even harder for married student-athletes, but the Molesworths make it look easy.

“Being a student-athlete at UAF is tough because we travel so much and both of us spend a lot of time practicing our sports,” Angela said. “It can be hard to be away from each other for long periods of time but we really try to make it work with the time we have. On the other hand, we have a lot of support surrounding us and we will always have our No. 1 fan cheering in the crowd.”

“Communication is key,” Trent said. “With so many other things going on, it is important for us to communicate with each other so we know what’s happening in the other’s life. We try to set aside time for one another and on a date at least once a week. It really helps with our relationship and we continue to enjoy each other’s company.”

Coming in as junior transfers, both Angela and Trent have one year of eligibility remaining with the Alaska Nanooks, where they are set to return next year for the senior seasons.

After that, they expect to trade in the snow for sand once more. “After college, we plan on going back to Arizona,” Angela said. “Trent plans on graduating with his degree in electrical engineering and working in the Phoenix area. We also plan to start a family once we move back.”

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Cutlines

*UAF photo composite by JR Ancheta*
Angela and Trent Molesworth, who star for the Alaska Nanooks volleyball and basketball teams, respectively, were married in 2015.

*Photo by Christian Garcia*
Angela Molesworth leads the Nanooks volleyball team in points and kills per set in her first season in Fairbanks.

*Photo by Paul McCarthy*
Trent Molesworth, left, joined the Nanooks men’s basketball team this season from Scottsdale Community College in Arizona.