

Heart of a Tiger: Brendan Chapman

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By Tisa Mason
HAYS, Kan. –

I am always inspired by our students' stories. Listening to Brendan Chapman at a recent donor reception did not disappoint. I found his story filled with courage, perseverance, and a humble confidence.

Brendan is a Fort Hays senior finishing his double major in history and secondary education. He aspires to complete his master's and doctorate degrees and teach at a university in the future, passing on knowledge to the next generation and publishing his writings along the way.

Brendan is a Tiger legacy – his mom, Alaina Dresslar, dad, Korrie Chapman, and older brother, Keegan Chapman, are all FHSU alumni. Brendan shared that since he grew up in Hays, he knew all about FHSU's good reputation.

Brendan wanted to study history and was very aware of the excellent reputation of our History Department faculty. Indeed, he is correct, as they are known for excellence in their profession coupled with a deep culture of mentoring and caring for their students.

A major driver of his decision to attend Fort Hays State University was our value proposition. Brendan shared that he knew he could attend FHSU and graduate debt free.

"With the scholarships that I have received, I had the opportunity to dedicate myself to my education without worrying about taking out loans. This will allow me to pursue further education in history, whereas, without scholarships, I would not be able to do so," Brendan said.

As he completes his senior year, he is in the process of applying for graduate schools, including Purdue, Arizona, Kansas, Virginia, and Fort Hays State. The FHSU value proposition, low cost, high quality, and outstanding faculty mentors made his dream of both undergraduate and graduate education possible. It will launch his dream of becoming a professor.

I have heard and written about several student stories, rich with testimony, of faculty who invested authentically in their students. Brendan's experience is no different.

"Throughout my years of studying history, I discovered my passion for cultural history. In order to understand how the public reacts to both historical events and new technologies and to also understand how they promote change, cultural history is the integral piece. By learning more about technologies and events, we can make informed predictions on how people will react. By understanding the causes and effects of the past, we can learn from those actions and will grow as a society. This is the mindset that I intend to pass on to my students – one that encourages them to learn lessons from the past in order to build a better future. By doing this, I seek to inspire greatness in the next generation."

Currently, Brendan is working on a research paper on Music Television with guidance from Dr. McClure. It was Dr. McClure who inspired his passion for cultural history. Brendan plans to submit this paper for publication to California State Fullerton's online history journal. Additionally, he plans to present his paper at the Kansas Association of Historians Annual Conference in March 2023.

“Through these endeavors, I am utilizing skills on writing and presenting academic works learned from my professors, particularly Dr. Amber Nickell and Hollie Marquess. By honing my skills as a writer and academic, I plan on producing several more written works on the history of popular culture in the future,” Brendan noted.

His dreams are to continue to research the past to write books and articles that teach lessons about how the world works. He is passionate about sharing these lessons with his future university students and inspiring them to make the world a better place in their lifetimes, just as his Fort Hays professors have done for him.

Henry David Thoreau said, “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.” This is exactly what Brendan is doing, and that positive forward momentum has been fueled by a university that invests deeply in our students.

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