

I spent the years of my childhood helping my grandmother set up her second-grade classroom, covering the walls with colorful posters to set an atmosphere where creativity could emerge from excited students. I watched her work tirelessly as she prepared to teach a new group of students each new school year. I also watched both my father and grandfather come home from a long day of work, covered from head to toe with mud, chemicals and grease.

I am the product of two career fields: education and the energy. I am a fourth-generation descendant of men who settled the Uintah Basin and worked in the Gilsonite Mines for many years. I am also the descendant of many generations of educators, from elementary school up to college professors. I have seen the influence of both of these careers. They correlate. One cannot work without the other. Education perpetuates energy. The energy field cannot succeed without the knowledge and skills education provides. Work study, in all forms of degrees, play an important role for employees of the energy sector. From a high school diploma to a hard-earned doctorate degree and all levels in between are necessary for the advancement of the industry. Energy can progress more than before because of education. Not only just the field of energy, but all careers as well. My aunt Aaryn Birchell, the 2018 Utah Teacher of the Year states, "The industry of education is a quiet one. We do it whether they notice us or not. The birthplace of all careers is founded in the classroom." Her example has taught me that every career is grounded by education.

Living in a rural setting has taught me the necessity of educating people in all fields. The oilfield in the Uintah Basin is notorious for being inconsistent, as it follows a "boom or bust" cycle. With education across all fields, especially oilfield workers, the community will be able to maintain a steadier economy in the Uintah Basin. The results of this will manifest in many positive ways across this region. For example, this new school is available to myself and hundreds of other students due to the funds assisted by the benefits of the oil industry.

Looking back at my progenitors, I have a deep gratitude for the work they have accomplished. They have allowed my progression from a little girl in a colorful kindergarten class room to a senior preparing to graduate from high school. I realize the opportunities I have been afforded are what one would call "my ancestors wildest dreams." I look forward to seeing what the future holds, and

what we can accomplish from education and an advancing energy system. I hope that one day, my grandchildren will remember me for the things I have the opportunity to accomplish because of the education I have received. The more education we have, the better quality of life we can live.

My heritage and current opportunities have shown me how education perpetuates energy, and the difference both can make on the lives of students like myself.