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Touchdown: Former Ragin' Cajun Opens New Doors Through Bachelor's Online

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Tyrell Fenroy

GRADUATION YEAR
2023

MAJOR
General Studies

HOMETOWN
LaPlace, La.

When Tyrell Fenroy had the chance to pursue a football career in the NFL, he took it. But that meant leaving behind unfinished business at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

"I told my mom and my dad when I first started at UL Lafayette that I was going to finish school, so I didn't want to leave that task undone," says Fenroy. "I gave them my word when I first came here on a scholarship that I was going to finish."

Completing his degree initially proved difficult as he held down a full-time law enforcement position and began a family with his wife Heidi.

But after finding he could complete his **degree online**, Fenroy, 36, is nearing the endzone, fulfilling his promise and opening new opportunities.

"Having a degree, it opens so many doors."

Calling an Audible

Fenroy came to UL Lafayette as a freshman in 2005 from LaPlace, Louisiana, on a football scholarship. In addition to financial support, he found the athletics department helped him find his footing as he began his life away from home.

"It was different because I didn't have parents that wake you up. But being a part of the football team, you had coaches always checking on you, making sure you went to class, making sure you're sitting in the first couple of seats in the front row," he says.

Fenroy studied criminal justice as he became an outstanding running back for the Ragin' Cajuns, becoming the University's all-time rushing leader with 4,646 yards. His No. 32 jersey was retired before his final game in 2008, when he left the University to pursue a career in the NFL.

He returned to Acadiana in 2010 to begin his career in law enforcement with the Lafayette Sheriff's Office and immediately began looking to complete his bachelor's degree.

"I briefly came back to school and took a class while I had my full-time job. It was weird and awkward because I was in uniform. I was taking some night classes and being in class — that wasn't working out," he says. "So, I left and came back another semester. I came back maybe three times."

What Fenroy needed was a way to complete his degree that fit his goals and his schedule.

Finding the Right Play

Fenroy was considering how he could take the credits he's already earned and finish his degree when he connected with University College about a General Studies degree. Academic advisor Sharon Williams-Gregory told him about the **online program**, which would allow him to complete his degree in two semesters without having to commute or rearrange his schedule around class times.

"It was perfect because I have a full-time job, I'm married, I have three small kids, the youngest being 4 and oldest being 9, so it worked out perfectly because I could schedule being in school around my life," says Fenroy. "I have from early in the morning to late at night to do my coursework, as long as it's done before the deadline, so it fits in with my schedule."

Fenroy had never taken online courses before enrolling in the Bachelor of General Studies online, but he had a good idea of what to expect thanks to University College staff and administrators.



“When I finalized that I was coming back to school, they explained everything to me thoroughly, as in what I needed to do, how the online program worked, the classes, the schedule — they really went through and explained everything,” he says.

Trusting the Team



On top of a full-time position with the Lafayette City Marshal’s Office and raising three active boys, Fenroy works part-time security at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center, is a non-faculty football coach at Breaux Bridge High School, and recently launched his own inflatable rental business.

It was a team effort to coordinate all of those priorities with his coursework, says Fenroy.

“I have a schedule, I use my phone for a calendar, for alerts. My wife is a big help. She helps me balance everything out,” he says. “If I forget something, she’s always sending me a reminder, ‘Hey, you got this...’ or ‘Don’t forget you got that...’.”

Fenroy said they knew going in it wouldn’t be easy, but that it would be worth it.

“When I mentioned it to her, she said, ‘Whatever you want to do. Just know that you have my full support,’” he says. “It wasn’t an easy task, but she was willing to step up to the plate, knowing how determined I was to finish school. So, she’s been supportive since day one when I decided I wanted to go back to school.”

In addition to support from his family and University College, Fenroy’s instructors were understanding, as well.

“I’ve had great professors,” he says. “They have been very informative, and they understood the busy work life while being in school.”

With his bachelor’s nearly in-hand, Fenroy is looking toward the future, knowing he’s taken a big step in securing more options for his career, whichever way it may go.

“I’ve been in law enforcement 13 years, so hopefully this leads up to a promotion,” he says. “Last year was also my first year coaching football at Breaux Bridge, and that’s my passion. So that can open another door now that I have a degree.

“It opens so many opportunities.”

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