

Choosing Home



Each July 4th, we Americans look forward to the countless displays of passionate patriotism, such as fireworks lighting up the night sky, colorful parades, gatherings with family and friends, and savoring those special summer recipes and dishes that we associate with Independence Day. Indeed, throughout the month, we reflect as a nation on the history of how this great country came to be.

For the Poljak family, this time of year is particularly poignant; even though we are not “from here,” we are Americans by choice. My brother, Davor, and I were born far away in a country that no longer exists--the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We grew up about 40 miles from Sarajevo (now the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina and host of the 1984 Winter Olympic Games). As children of strong, hardworking, principled parents, we experienced the best of a comfortable life, followed by the tremendous

difficulties of the collapse of our beloved country. Like many immigrants, having to leave difficult circumstances meant that we were able to choose and create a life in America, that has been more rewarding than we could have dreamed.

Making a new home in Shreveport allowed us to pursue our educational goals and professional dreams, but it has really done even more than that. Becoming American citizens and finding a home in Shreveport has allowed us to redevelop a deep love of country and community and restored our place in the world. Our love of Shreveport is so big that we proudly chose to join other local companies and organizations in displaying a billboard declaring “I ♥ Shreveport”.



A Note on Gratitude

So why do we believe we are among the most patriotic people you’ll ever meet? For Davor and me, the answer is simple: we have a deep and unwavering gratitude for the life and success we have built in America. Personally, we are grateful that in Shreveport, we were able to meet our wives, raise our children, and cultivate good friendships. Professionally, we are grateful that we could establish a thriving business that allows us to work every day with amazing professionals and cultivate enduring multigenerational client relationships. Every day, we have the privilege to work for and be a part of our clients’ success.

Our life experience has taught us the value of perseverance in challenging times, trust, integrity, compassion, and connection to our community. We have also learned that dreams can be achieved and life is to be celebrated. We honor this, as we honor what it took all those years ago when history was made when American colonies wanted to start anew and realize their collective dream to become their own country—to create their own home.

Paying it Forward

We talked in our last column about the joy of giving back and the personal satisfaction that it brings. Part of that joy to be celebrated is our freedom to choose how and where we invest our charitable dollars to help preserve and grow the place we call home for generations to come. Whether guided by our hearts, passion, or patriotism, the opportunity to pay our good fortune forward to help others is, perhaps, the greatest gift of all.

Denis Poljak is a Managing Director and a Wealth Manager with the Poljak Group Wealth Management at Steward Partners in Shreveport, Louisiana.

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