

Pablo M. Chavarria

**married to Daisy (Mora) Chavarria who you learn about next week!!! Both Daisy and Pablo are previous Construction Management majors*

Written by: Kira Gangbin

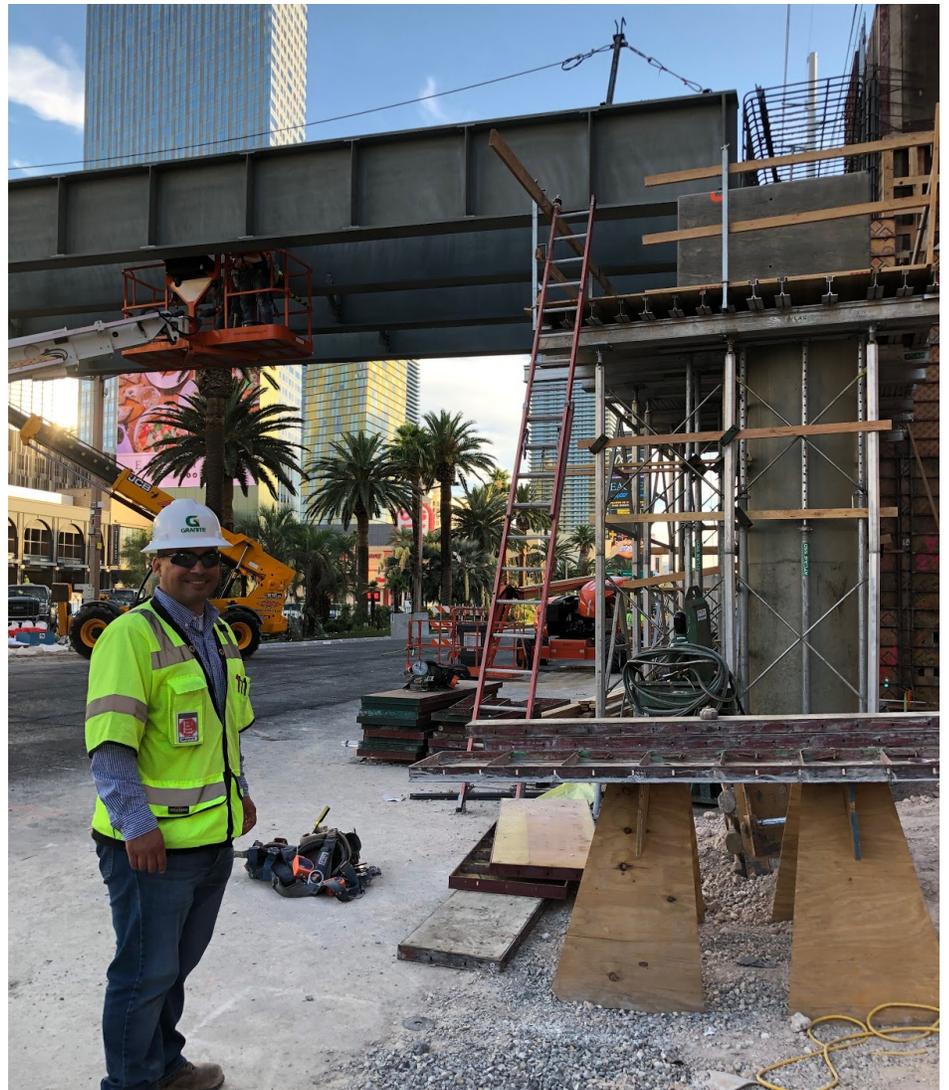
Pablo is an alumnus of Fresno State and graduated with a major in Construction Management in Fall 2008. He currently works for Granite Construction.

Kira Gangbin: How did you and Daisy meet? How many years have you been together?

Check back in 2 weeks for a story you won't want to miss!

Kira Gangbin: What have you enjoyed the most about the Construction Management Program?

Pablo Chavarria: Besides of course meeting my wife Daisy, I always enjoyed the practicality of the CM Program. There really wasn't a single course from the program that I didn't take something away from. It was all useful and could be applied to building work or estimating once I started my career. I think one of the program's strengths is providing opportunity to students



through internships, networking, field trips, and all the activities held through the construction student organizations. The course work, combined with a summer internship and the constant exposure to industry professionals, helped bring a lot of comfort as I came closer to finishing the program because I felt prepared. That was a good feeling.

Kira: What experiences, knowledge, or skills have you learned/ been able to apply in professional work setting coming from this department?

Pablo: There was a lot that I learned in the program that I was able to apply to the work setting, but I'm not going to say that I had a lot of answers. I asked tons of questions and wrote everything down. The construction field, as we all know, is the type of field where you never stop learning something new. However, I like to think I had a better idea of what was expected of me and what questions to ask because of studying topics in the program such as estimating, scheduling, statics, construction law, heavy civil, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC.

Kira: What is your favorite memory from the Construction Management Program?

Pablo: My favorite memory from the CM Program was the 2008 Construction Competition in Reno. I was on the Heavy Civil Team. We ended up being classified as a non-responsive bidder due to not having filled out all of the bid documents correctly, but our bid number was the lowest. We would have had a good shot at winning had we filled out the paperwork thoroughly. However, the many lessons from that experience were never lost. That is a real world scenario, and companies really do get disqualified for these types of mistakes. The entire Reno Competition ordeal was special and provided a lot of valuable experiences. It was great to network with industry professionals afterward as well. I highly recommend students try to get involved in some way with the Reno Competition. Many students travel for the competition even if they aren't participating, which is smart. I think it's one of the best events of the year, and I wish I had checked them out previous to the one time I was involved with it.

Kira: Who was your favorite professor?

Pablo: That's a tough one. I feel like I took so much from several of my professors, but Dr. Kehde was definitely one of my favorites. I really enjoyed how she taught us to critically analyze contracts and various construction case studies. She was also very approachable and encouraging, which was always appreciated by most of us students.

Kira: Have you pursued a Master's degree, or plan to?

Pablo: I was working on an MBA through Pepperdine University when we were living in LA, but I moved to Las Vegas and work picked up a lot. I still want to pursue completing it.

Kira: Do you have any other friends or family that were in the Construction Management Program?

Pablo: I do not have any family that were in the CM Program at Fresno State, but we have a lot of friends that we made during college that we still keep in touch with. Some of them were at my wedding last year. I wish I could have invited all of them! There has been some talk of trying to hold a reunion soon, and I'm fairly certain it's going to happen. I would be very excited to see our old CM college buddies, so hopefully it goes down.

Kira: What was your job title when first starting your Construction Management career?

Pablo: Construction Engineer (Startup Engineer). My first job on a project was unique. I was in the mechanical group on a Wastewater Treatment Plant, and I helped with startup and commissioning. Essentially, I helped organize and schedule vendors to test and bring live all the equipment on the plant and then tied them together to work as a system.

Kira: How far has your career grown?

Pablo: I am now a Project Manager I with Granite Construction, so I'd say I've come a long way, but I'm probably right where I should be for being in the industry for 11 years.

Kira: Who inspired you to pursue this career and why?

Pablo: My dad inspired me all of the way. My dad graduated from Fresno State with a Masters in Social Work in the mid-80s, but he used to always check out other programs the university offered. I was enlisted in the US Navy for 6 years before going to college, and when I was about to complete my enlistment, I had decided I was going to go to Fresno State and major in accounting. My dad was quick to tell me he couldn't see me sitting down in a cubicle or office for long hours day after day, and he suggested I look into Construction Management at Fresno State. He had done some research for me already and sold me on it easily. I owe him a lot for this. Looking back, I couldn't see myself in that accounting environment either. There is still an element of that in what we

do in our industry, but when you work for a general contractor you usually required work in the field as well.

Kira: How have you seen Construction Management grow?

Pablo: Daisy and I talk about this often because when we graduated in December of 2008, there was a terrible recession. We felt very lucky to both have jobs waiting for us when we graduated, and then we felt lucky to keep our jobs. Since those days, construction has bounced back. Where we live now in Las Vegas, NV, there aren't enough Construction Management professionals in the area to keep up with the demand. Construction is booming big time right now. I'll let that be a plug for any students about to graduate. There are also so many different avenues open to CMs. For a one year period between general contractors, I went to work for Hyperloop-One in the middle of the Nevada desert. Hyperloop-One is a startup company trying to develop an entirely new concept of transportation. It was a fun and very interesting experience.

Kira: Where do you think Construction Management will be in the next 10 years?

Pablo: I think Construction Management will continue to grow even more. I think population growth and new technology is going to demand new infrastructure and the rebuilding of the existing. All CMs are in a good place, whether you are in the program currently or have just graduated.

Kira: What's your favorite part of the job?

Pablo: As a project manager for a general contractor, my favorite part of the job is taking on and overcoming the multiple challenges a project faces as a team, and then feeling the satisfaction of a project being completed and used by others. We get to work around so many talented people, from skilled craftsmen and craftswomen to engineers, designers, and managers. Then if your lucky, you have a minute to catch your breath before jumping into the next one.

Kira: Do you have a family? How do you balance work life and family life?

Pablo: We have two daughters – Sofia is 6 yrs old and Penelope is 5 yrs old. We all share in making some sacrifices to get our daughters to school in the morning, pick them up, take them to soccer practice, etc. And we are always talking about it and adjusting as needed to help support and balance the needs of our family and our projects, which is always changing. I have to say that our mothers have helped us *tremendously*. My mother lives with us, which has been a huge help, and when she

can't help due to her own job, then Daisy's mom will fly out from LA to help us for a week or two. We are very, very lucky. We always talk about how we hope to be in a position where, when our daughters are grown and have their own families, we can fly out at a moment's notice to help them.

Kira: Do you work together with your significant other? Does this make work life more enjoyable?

Pablo: We do not work together in our professional careers. There have been plenty of opportunities for us to work together in our careers, but we decided to work for separate companies. It seems to work well for us. We are both really happy with our jobs and where we are with the companies in which we work. We do work on a side project outside of our companies. We have a few multifamily properties that we have managed ourselves and have actually performed a lot of upgrades ourselves. I think there's a lot of things we learned in both the CM Program and our day-to day jobs that we have been able to apply to this side work. We're definitely busy, but we enjoy all of it.

Kira: Any advice for Construction Management couples?

Pablo: My advice is that since you have found someone that will know from experience what you are going through at work, someone that can empathize and understand that sometimes there are long hours and weekends, someone that can understand the problem-solving that's still running through your mind at home, you should treasure that person and hold on to them because I have found myself with a life that's been very rewarding and exciting and full of love.

Kira: Is there anything about your Fresno State experience that makes you stand out?

Pablo: As mentioned previously, I am a veteran and was in the US Navy for six years before going to college. Once I got to Fresno State, it was apparent that joining the construction clubs such as Students in Construction and Sigma Lambda Chi would be important. I was a member of both of those organizations while in the CM Program.