

## TCNJ Graduates Kayleigh Shangle and James Shangle

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Kayleigh Shangle and her younger brother James Shangle get along swimmingly – in and out of the pool.



Both graduated from Highland Park High School, 2009 (Kayleigh) and 2012 (James).

Both went on to graduate from The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) – she in 2013, he in 2016.

Both often defined their achievements in terms of seconds, rather than years of experience. They are record-breaking swimmers, holding the same records in swimming at TCNJ – the 100-yard breaststroke and the 200-yard breaststroke.

And both talk with genuine pride about each other’s accomplishments, the influence they have had on one another, and the role TCNJ has played in their lives.

James has been in the news lately for qualifying – by five one-hundredths of a second with a time of 1:03.64 in a 100-meter long-course breaststroke – for the June 26, 2016 US Olympic Trials in Omaha, Nebraska. With four school records and 14 All American honors, James has his mind set on making it to the semi-final round during his 100-breast Olympic trial competition. The top 16 competitors in the qualifying morning race will make it to the semi-final round taking place in the evening. The swimmers that place number one and two in the semi-final race will be chosen for the Olympic team.



Kayleigh never made it to the Olympic trials, but she made her own extraordinary splash at TCNJ. She attended Division III Championships all four years and earned 18 All American awards, the second highest in TCNJ history. Because of her academic and athletic accomplishments, she received the All American Scholarship that is awarded annually by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to 20 athletes, who are going on to earn another degree after their bachelor’s degree. She also was the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) swimmer of the year in 2013.

Needless to say, Kayleigh was a tough act for James to follow – and he almost failed to follow it. Even though he started dreaming about the Olympic Trials in eighth grade, by the time he made it to his senior year in high school, he felt overwhelmed and burned out and decided college was the wrong path for him. Kayleigh, however, did an intervention, convinced him to take a chance on the “amazing” TCNJ environment. “I just loved everything about college, both the swim program and the academic program,” she said.

“If it weren’t for Kayleigh, I would never be going to Omaha, Nebraska, at the end of June, and I never would have gotten my diploma (a few weeks ago),” said James.

Kayleigh was an inspiring role model and extremely supportive of her younger brother, but at the same time perhaps a bit “intimidating ... I thought I might be able to match her athletic feats, but there was no way I could achieve academically what she did,” he said.



Kayleigh was in a five-year master’s program in special education focusing on students with severe disabilities. She said she always loved children, but it was the special education programming at TCNJ and the “amazing” instructors who inspired her specialization. She graduated with a bachelors in Sociology and Education in 2013 and a master’s in Special Education in 2014.

She also mastered the art of persuasion and got James to visit TCNJ, meet the swimming and diving coach, Associate Athletic Director Brian Bishop. That meeting was like jumping into a cold pool, because it “really woke me up, changed my whole perspective,” said James.

“Brian Bishop has been the perfect coach for me ... He always knew how to push me to do better, but realized that I was a kid who initially had problems listening to authority. So he never showered me with compliments, seemed mildly unimpressed with my accomplishments in the pool, but was always there for me, extremely attentive and very instructive, just the best style for my personality,” he said.

James also discovered the same support academically, “I found out how much I loved math. Something clicked, my work habits changed. In my sophomore year, I became a physics major with a specialization in education.”

Kayleigh and their mother Elaine (who is a swimmer and who coached her children before they went to college) and father Keith will be in Omaha on June 26. But James acknowledged that whatever happens at the trials, “it will not define who I am or what happens in my career. I plan to keep swimming one way or another, would love to coach – and teach physics,” James said.

Kayleigh, who no longer swims competitively, has defined her life by becoming a dedicated special education teacher for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities at Green Brook Middle School in central New Jersey. She stays in touch with her athletic side by coaching swimming for the Raritan Valley YMCA Riptide (where Kayleigh and James trained throughout their childhood), as well as for the University Swimming Association, Inc., on the Busch Campus of Rutgers University.

“I think the love of swimming will always be in our genes from my mother’s side of the family,” said James. “She was a swimmer and served as my coach in high school. Her father, my grandfather Roger Hewins, who helped to develop the meteoritic program at Rutgers University, also was a swimmer. He got into the sport in his native England in the 1940s, because it was the one sport he could do with bad eyesight and without glasses; his family could not afford to buy glasses.”

Genes perhaps drove Kayleigh and James into the water. Their success, however, has been due to: disciplined hard work that includes five hours per day of training during the competition season; family support; and TCNJ – “at so many levels, in so many ways,” said Kayleigh.

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