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BRANDON DAY and his wife, Tammy, chose to return to Norfolk to become more involved in his family's business. Now they are extensively involved in the community as well as statewide activities.

Life in Norfolk wasn't in the plans for Day family

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It's been said life is what happens when you have other plans.

As newlyweds in 1996, Brandon and Tammy Day — now 37 years old — said they never planned to live, work nor raise a family in Norfolk.

Brandon's early childhood years were spent in three major metropolitan cities before his parents, John and Connie (Walters) Day, relocated their consulting firm from the Washington, D.C., area to her hometown of Norfolk in 1980.

Tammy, the former Tammy Barcus, was born in Norfolk but moved to Grand Island as a young girl. She planned a career as a counselor or a therapist.

Brandon said, "Growing up, I never envisioned myself living in Norfolk and working for the family company."

Instead, he was fascinated by politics, following in the footsteps of his mother, who had worked for Bobby Kennedy's presidential campaign while in college.

"I was very into politics," Day said. "I had the opportunity to work on Bob Kerrey's 1982 gubernatorial campaign. It was a rewarding experience."

He was a lobbying assistant in Lincoln while attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and following his graduation in 1994 with a bachelor of science degree in political science.

"I enjoyed the work and the people I worked with," said the 1990 Norfolk High School graduate. "I looked into jobs in the political arena."

Then, in November 1995, Day became the general manager of the storage operation division of his family's business in Lincoln. He held that position until the division was sold in 1998.

On the home front, Day's mother had been battling cancer for several years.

"She asked if we'd (Tammy and me) move to Norfolk," Day said. "The primary motivational force (behind our move) was my mother's health. We were young."

Brandon subsequently increased his involvement with the family's business, The Day Companies Inc., which offers a wide variety of invoicing and billing services.

Tammy, who earned her master's degree in educational psychology from UNL, was employed by Northeast Community College for several years.

Then, in July 2001, Connie Day lost her 10-year battle with cancer at age 52.

"In those four years (1998-2001), we decided we loved Norfolk," Brandon said. "It became our home and where we wanted to raise our children. We had developed great friendships."

And the couple — who met in their early teens on a two-week student trip to Europe — haven't looked back since.

They've immersed themselves in The Day Companies, now in its 32nd year, and generously share their time and expertise on various volunteer fronts.

In late 2001, John Day began stepping down from his day-to-day involvement with the firm. In 2002, Brandon became its chief executive officer. The following year, The Day Companies consolidated its offices into its current 11,000-square-foot office building at 1305 S. 13th St. Additional remodeling is now under way.

Today there are 50 full-time employees at the firm that handles invoices totaling more than \$1 billion annually.

After several years as a stay-at-home mom to daughters Corrin, now 9, and Grace, 6, Tammy is involved in special project-oriented work at The Day Companies.

Brandon and Tammy's business philosophy includes a concentrated focus on the employees.

"A lot of companies are run in a way that don't really make a lot of logical sense and (the bosses) don't value their employees for their work," he said. "I try not to model that behavior."

Continuing, he said, "We are a unique service business. Without the people who work here, we have nothing. They are the company. We try to always remember that, and thank them for what they do and reward them, and make it a good place to work."

Tammy said, "I think people like working here (in part) because the company is invested in so many community projects and charitable causes. We encourage our employees to do community service."

A major activity for the couple and The Day Companies is the annual Relay for Life, a fundraiser for cancer research, which was organized by Connie Day in 1996.

Brandon, formerly on the board of the Norfolk Area Recruiters, serves on the boards of the United Way, the Nebraska Community Foundation and the newly launched Norfolk Area Community Foundation.

Tammy's local involvements include the Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce's new building project, Norfolk Arts Center, Norfolk Family YMCA and the Norfolk Area Community Foundation.

"Norfolk is a great place to live," she said. "We want to do what we can to make it an even better place."

Brandon said he and his family feel "so comfortable" in the Norfolk community. "We also like the people who like living here. They live here because they love this community and its people."