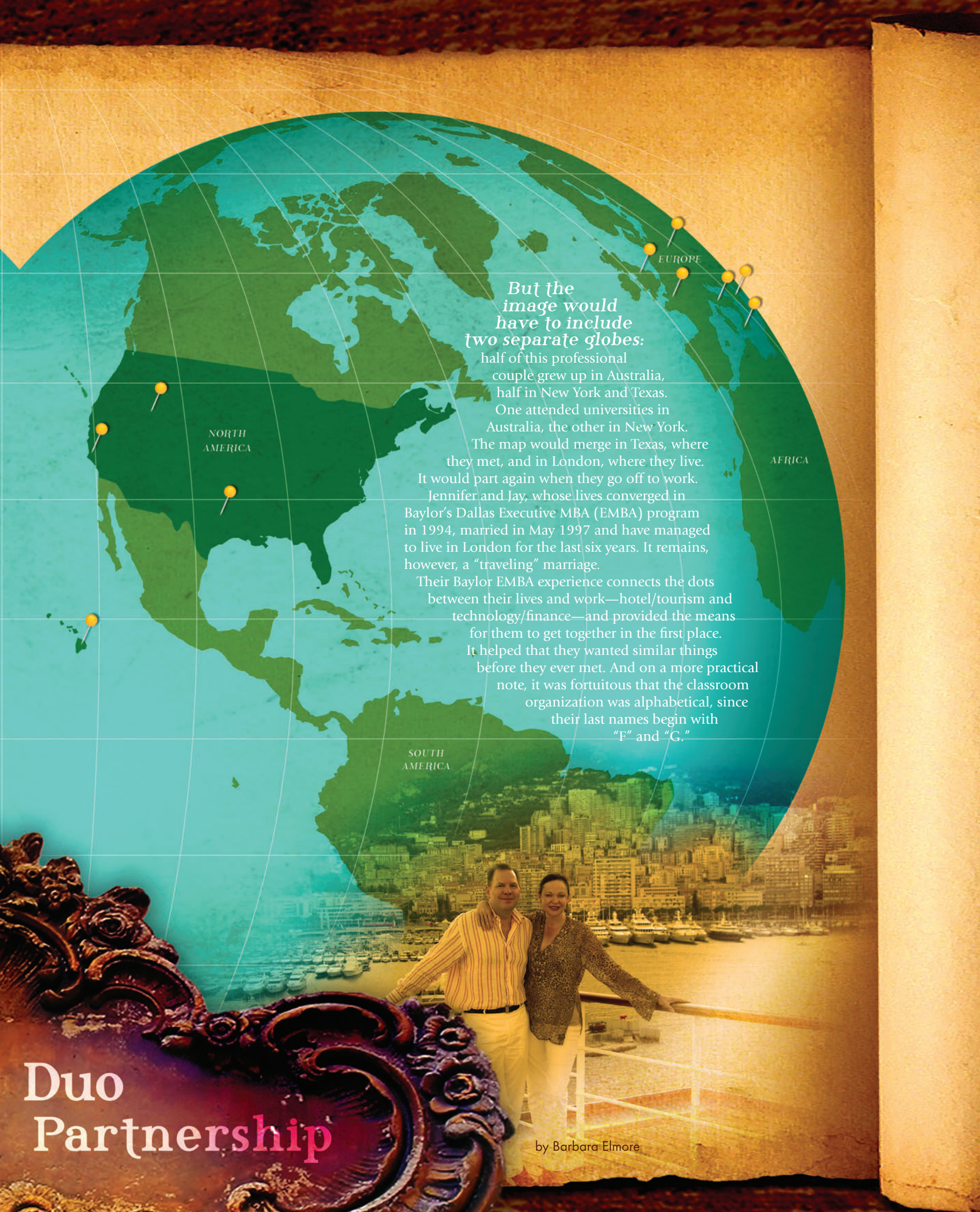


A photo album for Jennifer Fox and James B. (Jay) Gambrell IV might resemble a “Where’s Waldo?” montage—with a smart-looking couple substituting for the perpetually blank-faced Waldo. >>>



EMBA
Creates Global



*But the
image would
have to include
two separate globes:*

half of this professional couple grew up in Australia, half in New York and Texas. One attended universities in Australia, the other in New York.

The map would merge in Texas, where they met, and in London, where they live. It would part again when they go off to work.

Jennifer and Jay, whose lives converged in Baylor's Dallas Executive MBA (EMBA) program in 1994, married in May 1997 and have managed to live in London for the last six years. It remains, however, a "traveling" marriage.

Their Baylor EMBA experience connects the dots between their lives and work—hotel/tourism and technology/finance—and provided the means for them to get together in the first place. It helped that they wanted similar things before they ever met. And on a more practical note, it was fortuitous that the classroom organization was alphabetical, since their last names begin with "F" and "G."

Duo Partnership

by Barbara Elmore

“We met the first day of class, since we were asked to line up alphabetically and she was Fox, next to my Gambrell,” Jay said. “Since the first week of induction was similar to a corporate team building, we got exposed to each other in some fairly unusual circumstances.”

“We sat next to each other for every class from day one...and he asked me to marry him the week of graduation,” Jennifer said. “It was all very romantic; my parents arrived for my graduation, and they got to meet Jay and they fell in love with him too.”

Jay said many things drew him to Jennifer. “Ah, let me count the ways. She is, of course, beautiful and kind. We were fortunate to become the best of friends over the course of the program. We were part of the same study group and spent many long hours together. We got to see each other excel, deal with stress, soar with success—as well as a few late nights with pizza and a statistics textbook.”

After the wedding on Australia’s Gold Coast, Jennifer and Jay began trekking Waldo-like to different countries—often different continents—for their professions, and regularly reuniting in London. The city provides easy access to Europe as well as the U.S. and Australia, where the couple’s families still live.

London is also home base for both of their companies. Jennifer is COO of managed operations for InterContinental Hotels Group’s (IHG) Continental Europe operations, and London is its global headquarters. Jay is CEO of Artisan Software Tools.

Born in Broken Hill, Australia, Jennifer grew up in Adelaide and continued after high school at a university in Sydney. After graduating, she started in the hotel business and lived in major Australian cities. Her company asked her to move to Dallas in 1993.

Before she transferred, she had begun studying for her MBA degree at Bond University in Australia. “I was working for Sheraton hotels, and they asked me to transfer to Dallas to be general manager of the Sheraton Park Central Hotel,” she said. “When I arrived, the first thing I did was investigate colleges so that I could complete my studies.” She found Baylor’s EMBA program, but had to start all over again because of the program’s lock-step model, requiring enrollees to start and finish together.



Jay, who obtained his bachelor’s degree from State University of New York, was born in Monterey, Calif., grew up in Greenwich Village, N.Y., and moved to Texas for his last two years of high school. His mother is from San Antonio and his father from Austin, so he spent summers in Texas.

He also was living in Dallas when he decided to enroll in the EMBA program. Although he considered SMU’s program, **Baylor was his first choice because he wanted to keep working, and the Baylor plan allowed that.** “I also liked that the program was small—25 students—and was lock-step, so I would have to commit to the entire program and not just take a few classes,” he said.

But he was most interested in Baylor because of family connections. His father, James B. (Jim) Gambrell, taught economics at Baylor in 1950. His great grandfather, J.B. Gambrell, was once president of the Southern Baptist Convention and an editor of the *Baptist Standard*, which he owned with George Truett and several others. “So it was fairly easy to make the decision,” he added.

Although they did not know each other before meeting in the EMBA program, Jennifer and Jay chose the same university for strikingly similar reasons. **“I liked the structure of the program with the weekends staying on campus,”** Jennifer said. **“I felt I would do well in a smaller environment, allowing for greater focus and support from the faculty.”**

She also is focused on her business—hotels and tourism. “I never considered any other industry and really love the challenges and excitement,” said Jennifer, a 25-year veteran of marketing, operating and repositioning resort, luxury and business hotels. As a chief operating officer for IHG, she is responsible for the operations and development of about 50 hotels, and 20 that are under construction. Her region includes the United Kingdom, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and the countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia.

Her responsibilities keep her in the air almost every week. In one recent month, she traveled to Kiev, Malta, St. Petersburg and Paris. “It is interesting and exciting, although the constant travel can get very tiring at times,” she said.

For Jennifer, earning an MBA is a path to long-term career success. Admittedly ambitious, she believes an MBA is crucial for competing. “The knowledge gained...is invaluable and essential in the corporate world today,” she said. “I loved the class interaction. Everyone coming from a different field provided me with a greater insight into other industries and this broadened my knowledge.”

She continues with her education, working to complete her doctorate from the International School of Management in Paris.

Jay's road, while different from his wife's, is no less traveled. Artisan Software Tools is based in the United Kingdom with operations in Germany, France, Italy and the United States. The company employs about 150 people, making specialty application development tools for large engineering companies, which use its products to create complex, software-intensive systems. "Think airplanes, missiles, automobiles, nuclear power plants, etc.," Jay said.

His background is mostly in technology and finance. "I started in commercial real estate selling office buildings and apartment complexes to institutional investors such as pension funds," he said. "From there I moved into finance and restructuring assets such as real estate and companies." After earning his MBA, he moved into technology with a focus on telecommunications, including wireless, pay TV and online marketing, which all share a common theme—a software component. "From there I made the switch into producing software for sale to others, not just for internal use," he said.

Finishing the EMBA program was, for him, the start of a new phase. "I had spent many years doing consulting and deal-making, and I had occasionally worked doing interim management," he said. Jay decided he preferred operating roles, and evaluated his skills and experiences to find the right place. "I believed I needed to add an MBA to make me more marketable, as well as to make me more capable," he said. His studies have continued; he has obtained a doctorate from the International School of Management in Paris.

Since their wedding in 1997, the couple lived in Hawaii, New York, California and Hong Kong before making London home. Besides being the base for their businesses, it's a global city, "a melting pot of nationalities and viewpoints," Jay said. "Of course being an American in the UK allows you to do things that locals cannot get away with, as they almost expect Americans to be a bit brash—especially those from Texas."

The EMBA program provided both Jennifer and Jay clear "before and after" lines in their personal lives and careers. Jennifer said she could not have gone as far professionally without it. "It opens up your eyes and your mind to the great possibility of what you can do and become," she said. "And of course, through Baylor I met Jay."

Jay is just as clear. "The first job I landed after completing my MBA was the CFO for a young telecom company, where I later became the CEO," he said. "That was the launching pad for the second phase of my career. It's all about the difference before and after the MBA." Committing to an EMBA program, he said, is "emblematic of desiring to make a change in your career by dramatically changing your place and commitment in the jobs market."

Without Baylor's EMBA program,
Jay said, **"I would not be where I am today—either married to the greatest woman ever or with a career and job I love as well."**



▶ www.baylor.edu/business/emba

