

## Alumnus discovers home at U of L

### Speed School grad embraces community

By Thompson Perry  
The Louisville Cardinal

Karim Momeni does not have to worry about the old adage, "You can never go home again." When Momeni found his home in Louisville over 30 years ago, he knew almost immediately that he would never leave.

"Louisville has the best people, not just good people, the best," said Momeni. "I travel all around the U.S. for weeks, even months at a time, and I see this. Louisville has very good, friendly people."

The 1982 University of Louisville graduate arrived at the school through his own, unorthodox path. A native Iranian, Momeni came to U of L at the age of 22, his country on the precipice of revolution. The decision to leave the only home he had ever known and relocate to attend U of L would change his life forever.

"My time at U of L made me an independent person," Momeni said. "I was all alone in a new country and just had to survive. U of L was my opportunity."

Momeni made the most of that opportunity, graduating from Speed School with a degree in engineering, playing soccer for the Cardinals along the way.

"The situation with Iran then was much worse (than today)," said Momeni. "I had to play soccer. It was difficult; people booed me at away games."

If strangers away from Momeni's adopted "home" were less

than hospitable, the U of L community embraced him and made him feel comfortable from the very beginning.

"I still see old friends," Momeni said of the people that made his stay as a U of L student so enjoyable. "I love to run into my friends. Every day is a reunion, and reminds me of a memory from the past."

It was the embrace of U of L that not only inspired Momeni to stay in Louisville, but also to give back to the community in his current job with Versatile Construction.

"[Momeni] has an outstanding work ethic in which he pushes himself tirelessly and yet still has time to reflect on his efforts with humor and grace," said Dennis Maltzer, professor of developmental neuropsychology. "Karim is clearly a generous man, with a keen sense of balance."

"I had the privilege of accompanying him in meeting, greeting and interacting with international guests to our community," said friend Oliver Barbez. "His ability to interact with and meld with many cultures is a tremendous asset to our community."

"VC is responsible for a lot of the buildings on the campus, all of the libraries," said Momeni. "I had lower than other companies because I want U of L to be nice, I want students to enjoy a nice place to get an education. U of L is my home and I look at the construction I do here as improving my own home."

Momeni didn't forget about his native Iran, though. His time in the country is still very much a part of the man he is today.

"My greatest wish," Momeni said, "is that, in my lifetime, I can see the good face of peace. I want to be able to take my [Louisville]



In his travels across the world, Karim Momeni has never found a place he loves quite as much as the city of Louisville and the U of L community. Though he recognizes that the atmosphere is ever-changing on campus, he proudly calls U of L 'home' and strives to improve it for the sake of both current students and generations to come.

friends to Iran, to show them the historic buildings, the beautiful people, the hospitality."

Momeni believes that this is not merely a fantasy, but in fact a dream that will one day come to fruition.

"I will see that day," said Momeni. "I didn't give up when I came here. That day will come."

A man who has ignored his life to travel across the world in search of opportunity, Momeni appreciates the value of education and the opportunity provided by U of L.

"If anybody fails here, they want to fail," said Momeni, alluding to the resources abundant to students today.

Momeni doesn't accept that failure of himself.

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