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This is a spousal letter to substantiate my marriage to Julia Fianchetti of Buenos Aires. We have a 10-year-old son, Jorge and she has a 27-year-old daughter, Alma Barrios from a previous marriage.

- My name is Alan Jacob Kelsey, and I am the sponsor. I was born March 15, 1960 in Venezuela and am 60 years old and a Canadian citizen with birth registered abroad.
- My wife's name is Julia Fianchetti, and she is the sponsored spouse. She was born April 3, 1975 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and is an Argentine citizen.
- Our son's name is Jorge Elliot Kelsey, and he is our 10-year-old son and is being sponsored by me as well. He was born June 23, 2010 in Mar del Plata, Argentina and is an Argentine citizen.
- My wife's daughter is Alma Barroso, and she is Julia Fianchetti's and Daniel Barroso's 27-year-old daughter. Alma was born April 26, 1993 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and is an Argentine citizen. She is not being sponsored by me.

I am sponsoring my wife Julia Fianchetti and our son Jorge Elliot Kelsey under a Family Class Sponsorship. We currently live in Mar del Plata, Argentina where we have been living together on a continual basis for 11 and a half years in the case of my wife and for the entire life of our son Jorge.

I met my wife in a Latin American trivia chatroom in early 2005. I had been chatting online with Argentinians at a site called ElSitio.com for several years having seen its ads during Fox Sports Soccer matches from Argentina. I believe the trivia chatroom where I met my wife was on a different site, but I got there through links somebody at El Sitio gave me, as I recall.

We got along well. Her username was Tanta_Tinta_Tonta which means – roughly speaking – lots of dumb talk. Julia has a great sense of humor and we began to joke and flirt until other trivia players got a little annoyed and told us to get a (virtual) room. So, we started chatting privately and developed an online friendship during 2005. She was living in Florida at the time with her daughter and husband – all of them Argentine citizens.

By late 2006 she had moved back to Argentina and settled in Mar del Plata with her daughter Alma while her husband Daniel had chosen to stay in Florida. In November of 2006 I decided to visit her in Mar del Plata, and she agreed, so in late March of 2007 I travelled to Argentina. I departed Ottawa on the 21st and arrived in Buenos Aires in the afternoon of the 22nd of March, seeing that Air Canada flies through Santiago de Chile and then on to Ezeiza, generally arriving around 4 pm. I had to take a taxi to the bus terminal in Retiro (which is also one of the main train stations in Buenos Aires and is near the waterfront) and then took a more than 5-hour bus ride to Mar del Plata south along Highway 2 (Unofficially called La Autopista del Sol). As the sun set and a distant thunderstorm rolled across the pampas through the bus windows off to the southwest, I remember suddenly feeling scared that she wouldn't be there at the bus station. That it had all been a misunderstanding.

As the bus pulled into the old bus station (it's now an upscale mall after extensive remodeling and additional construction and is called El Aldrey Shopping; which is what they call a mall in Argentina) I wondered if I'd recognize her. But there she was under a pool of light looking exactly as in her photographs and webcam. I grabbed my green army surplus backpack that I had picked up years ago at Queen and Bathurst when I lived in Toronto and waved at her as I saw her through the windows. She literally stumbled and blinked furiously with those gorgeous long dark eyelashes and as I hustled down the steps (the long-distance buses in Argentina are usually double-deckers) and down onto the concrete

platform where we reached for each other and hugged. Comically, the centripetal force of my bulging backpack almost sent his spilling onto the platform's floor.

It was a magical 3 weeks together and by the time we said goodbye at the hostel in Buenos Aires (she hates going to say goodbye at airports though she did agree to travel with me to Buenos Aires for a short visit before I flew back) we had already made plans to live together. I remember her waving as I turned and watched through the rear window of the taxi. However, things got complicated over the next few months after her Spanish ex-boyfriend showed up again promising to marry her. He moved in with her and they had a stormy few months together until late 2007 when he returned to Barcelona and his job at a ski centre in the mountains of Catalunya.

In April 2008 I returned. She had moved from her rented house with a tin roof on Brandsen street in Mar del Plata to a 2-bedroom apartment on the third floor on Avenida Camet which faces the Atlantic Ocean. At least the building does. Our apartment was in the rear though we had an angled view of the sea from our kitchen window. The building was located between two neighbourhoods, Perla Norte, and Parque Luro – though I suppose it's more in Perla Norte, being located between Falkner and Strobel streets.

In August after some disagreements and arguments, I returned to Canada, but before I left, I agreed to come back. By April of 2009 I was flying back to Argentina. This time, it would be for good. In November we realized she was pregnant and decided to keep the baby. Our son was born at the end of June in 2010 around 4 in the afternoon at La Clinica del Niño y la Madre (it's now called La Clinica del Niño y la Familia) on Avenida Colon.

In March of 2012, my wife started her business selling women's clothing which she would purchase in the garment district of Buenos Aires. Because of COVID-19 lockdowns she now does all her purchases at a virtual mall that the wholesalers from the Flores garment district have set up for their clients. My wife is very interested in George Brown's Fashion Business Management 2-year course and has been working on her English skills.

In early 2013 her divorce to her first husband who is still in Miami was finalized, and we decided to make our common-law relationship official and get married. The ceremony was civil at the Registrar on Avenida Independencia. It was the third week of May in 2013 and her father, her stepmother, her aunt, and daughter, as well as my younger brother, were there. We had the wedding reception in Sierra de los Padres at what used to be called Horizonte Rojo just a couple hundred metres outside the entrance archway. It was wonderful and me and Julia danced to Me and Mrs. Jones although general dancing was not allowed at that establishment. With inflation and the cost of travel, we decided to pass on a honeymoon.

In 2014 after a home invasion, we decided to move to a smaller apartment at our current address on Alsina street where we've been for over 6 years now. We're over 10 blocks from the Playa Popular which gets really crowded in summer, but Playa Varese is about 20 blocks away and is much nicer. However, the location is great seeing there's shops and restaurants nearby in what is called La Zona Guemes and my institute (Cem English) has one of its branches (there's 4 of them in the city) 3 blocks away. Of course, currently all my classes are online using Zoom or Google Meet.

At home we mostly speak Spanish, although our son has been taking English classes at the institute where I teach, and his English has improved by leaps and bounds over the last year as I help him with pronunciation. We can now have conversations in English, which is wonderful.

My wife Julia had a fairly tough life growing up in Buenos Aires, seeing middle class in Argentina covers a lot of ground and often people's economic fortunes are subject to policy fluctuations and the ever-present inflation and corruption. Her father Daniel was a merchant sailor often abroad and he and her mother Graciela separated and divorced when my wife was a young child. Julia was raised by her paternal grandparents in the Almagro neighbourhood of Buenos Aires in what is called a Plano Horizontal or PH for short, located on Potosi street. Her Aunt – also called Graciela like her mother – was a key figure in those early years. She managed to ensure that Julia attended a Catholic primary school run by nuns, but then when Julia moved in with her mother and partner in Recoleta (an upscale neighbourhood downtown) she went to a public high school but was unable to finish. Julia married young and had her daughter Alma as a teenager and then with her husband (also called Daniel like her father) they moved to the coast to a small town called Mar del Tuyu near Santa Teresita - the seaside resort town where she used to go every summer with her aunt and grandparents. In January, 1998, Julia, Daniel and their daughter Alma moved to Miami where they lived until she and her daughter went back to Argentina in 2006.

She finished her high school degree in 2013 at Universitas – an adult education institute that used to have a branch on Avenida Luro between Salta and Independencia.

What I love about Julia is how she finds reasons to enjoy life despite how difficult it's been for her. As a middleclass Canadian who has lived most of his life in one of the most stable countries in the world, it's been an adjustment for me getting used to life here, but she has shown me how to enjoy the smaller and simpler things in life. Yes, she loves getting perfume at Christmas and she loves fashion – it's her passion and she's a great salesperson and skilled small business operator – but she's changed me in ways I never thought possible at my age. That's a gift that's beyond any value one can place on it.

We're very different people. She's a night person. I like mornings. She's swift and intuitive in her approach to things. I'm ploddingly analytic. We argue about everything sometimes, but we always in the end realize how much we mean to each other. Our son is a unique combination of the two of us but very much his own person. He loves his older sister Alma dearly, but she's always off backpacking in some part of Argentina, so he hasn't seen her much lately.

Unfortunately, our son hasn't had enough contact with his grandparents. His Argentine grandfather Daniel saw him a few times up through the wedding in 2013, but my wife's stepmother has cut off contact in the last few years. My father passed away from pulmonary fibrosis in November of 2010, so he was only able to talk to our son over the phone from his hospital bed. Jorge was only a few months old so he only could gurgle at him but at least he heard his voice. He has been seeing more of his maternal grandmother Graciela lately. He does talk to my mother on the phone every now and then and she flew down to see him with my younger brother David (who was also at the wedding while my mother remained in Whitehorse for our wedding because of the distance and her back problems) in 2011 when he was almost a year old. As she told me: I don't want to die before seeing my grandson like your father did.

My younger brother David also came down for the wedding and in late 2015 (late October and early November as I recall) again came down to visit us. He gets along well with Julia, thank goodness but Julia is always a little awkward with my mother who nonetheless is wonderfully happy that I've managed finally to start a family.

We've decided to move to Canada (back to Canada in my case, of course) and so I am sponsoring my wife and our son. As I was born in South America and was therefore a Canadian citizen with my birth registered abroad, and as my son was born in June of 2010 a year after the law changed in April of 2009, I was no longer able to obtain Canadian citizenship for him.

My wife plans to enroll in George Brown's Fashion for Small Business 2-year program and then work in the online fashion business (for example with a company like Stitch Fix) while I plan to return to my Alma Mater, Queen's University, and take the Graduate Diploma in Immigration and Citizenship Law which I plan to do over 4 semesters rather than 2 semesters. As someone fluent in Spanish and with a working knowledge of French, I look forward to the opportunities that the graduate diploma from Queen's will provide.

We plan to buy a home and settle in Kingston although my wife will be commuting during the week to Toronto for her classes at George Brown University for the first two years.

Need help?

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