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Talk of the Town: Save public education from politicians

Juliette Maiorana
Special to the Courier

Prescott is my hometown. Generations of my family have called Arizona home since it was a territory. In the distant past, my Mormon family, my mining family, and my Mexican-American family all committed their lives to Arizona's economy and future. In the recent past, my mother, my Tia, my brother, and my baby sister all graduated from Prescott High School. My brother served in the military overseas during 9/11, right after high school.

I grew up dirt poor and in a domestically violent home, so as a teenager, I dropped out of PHS. I struggled for years. Eventually, I got a G.E.D., attended Mesa Community College and transferred to Northern Arizona University. I have a B.S. and a M.A. from NAU, and a Ph.D. from the University of California at San Diego. All of my degrees are in U.S. history. Currently, my two sons attend schools in Prescott. Perhaps more than most, I know the real value of a stellar public education.

After years of funding slashes to Arizona's public education system, the most recent budget just passed by Gov. Doug Ducey and the legislature feels like a final offensive on the goals of public education in our state. We consistently rank in the bottom three for public education in the nation, and our college tuition rates are already some of the highest. This budget did not directly attack K-12; instead, they demolished the community college system, the state universities, and services for the poor. But, they did increase funding for prisons. Apparently, they prioritize jails and punishment over education and rehabilitation. These are not my priorities.

Even if you do not have children, investing in them, investing in our state's future is in your best interest. One day soon, these children will be paying into your Social Security. They will be your policemen, firefighters, lawyers and doctors. We owe it to ourselves to ensure they are properly educated.

My newest heroine, Kayla Mueller, dedicated her life to supporting the most vulnerable: the sick, the victimized, the poor, and the young. She gave her life for them. I hope as a community we can follow her example.

Prescott is my hometown, but I do not mind sharing it with the newcomers. I like seeing more black, Latino and Asian people in town than when I was young. I even appreciate the California transplants. Diversity teaches us more about the larger world in which we live. As a community, we need to discuss and organize for how we can save public education from the ideological extremists and the politicians. We have to do it for our future.

Juliette Maiorana is an Arizona native. She received her doctorate in history from the University of California in 2013. Shortly after, she moved back home to Prescott with her two sons. Dr. Maiorana's historical research and writing has been recognized by numerous grants, awards and fellowships. Currently she is working on her first book, 'The Mining Life,' a history of industrial mining and family life in Arizona, the Southwest and northern Mexico.

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Low **41°F**

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Ask The Editor

The Daily Courier Editors
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Q: * As one who thinks "social media" only separates us further and promotes "140 character" thinking, I was surprised and disappointed at the change to requiring a social media account in order to write to the Editor. Why is knowing the identity of the writer more important than the idea being put forth? It's really rather Orwellian. Only the politically correct herd objects to ideas submitted anonymously

A: Some of that concerns legality and others accountability. However, while The Daily Courier has shifted to Facebook...

Q: * When are they going to break ground on the new casino? I thought it was happening last fall yet no signs of construction.

A: The tribe, so far, has no comment but acknowledges the project is still in the works. Watch for an update article.

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