

# Regent's pick for spouse was inspired and crucial

Lee Rozen/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

It looks like the University of Idaho Board of Regents has made a wise choice in selecting Dr. Mary Beth Staben - that's doctor as in MD - as the spouse of the next president of the Vandal nation.

According to her husband, "My wife hates to move."

While he spent five years laboring at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion - that's a town, not a color - she kept working as a hospitalist in Lexington, Ky. Her spouse had spent the past 19 years there at the University of Kentucky. By then, she had roots in the city and the last of their three children was finishing high school.

But, says her husband (we'll call him Chuck because it seems that everyone else does), "It turns out she's enthusiastic about this move, but she may not have any more in her, and that's OK."

Darn right it's OK.

Spouses who can't appreciate the beauty of the Palouse and how relatively isolated it is from the lights of the big city - more than five hours from Boise, Portland or Seattle - seem to get itchy feet. Sure, Spokane's closer, but we were talking about big cities, not Sioux Falls or Sioux City or Wichita.

Anyway, we all know what it's like when the spouse isn't happy.

But having a spouse who really doesn't like to move seems to have persuaded Chuck Staben, named this week to replace Duane Nellis as UI president, that he really doesn't like to move, either, and that he will be around for the long haul to build a legacy at the UI.

A couple of months ago there was some discussion in the community about making the next president feel welcome and a part of the community.

We think that would be a little off target. Go after Dr. Mary Beth.

Today.

There are a lot of hospitals around here that could use a hospitalist, a lot of medical clinics that could use a good internist. Let her feel some love.

If Moscow can mount a campaign to make Idaho Republicans feel at home here for even a few days, surely it can persuade Dr. Mary Beth of the city's worthiness.

No doubt we'll have a lot more to say about Chuck Staben and his leadership of the University of Idaho down the road. For now, we think Dr. Mary Beth Staben may be a big key to the UI's future.