

Teachers share personal love stories

Staff speaks about proposals, wedding stories

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"It was a balmy evening in South Florida," Andre Raymond said. "As a group of *juene fille* emerged from the freshman dorm, Roxanne caught my eye; her flaxen hair moved softly as a gentle zephyr moved effortlessly through her dusky tresses. My heart fluttered and my knees weakened; her beauty had entranced me, and it was love at first sight."

He laughs and then explains that, because life isn't a romance novel, most relationships, including his own, don't really start out this way.

Raymond, who has been married to his wife Roxanne for almost 29 years, says the reality of their relationship is like a partnership of the soul.

"Roxanne and I started out as really good friends, actually," Andre said. "We both went to Palm Beach Atlantic University in Florida, and we just hung around together on campus. I eventually asked her out, and she was nice enough to go on a date with me, but it didn't last very long."

Andre planned on taking Roxanne on a movie date, but on the way there, she said she had a headache and wanted to go home.

"Then, a year later, the tables turned, and she asked me out," Andre said. "She invited me to accompany her to a banquet she had been invited to, and while we were there, we laughed and laughed and got along amazingly."

After that, Andre and Roxanne started spending more and more time together.

"It got to the point where we were doing almost everything with each other exclusively," Andre said. "She became my best friend over time."

One night, when the couple was on the phone while states apart during summer break, they realized they had more in common than they had originally thought.

"She asked me what I was planning to do after college, and I replied, 'I really think I'm going to go into camp work,'" Andre said. "And she said, 'me, too!'"

Then, silence.

"I think that's when we knew we were going to marry each other," he said.

Andre remembers well the anxiety he felt in deciding how to ask for Roxanne's hand in marriage.

"I was scared to death to ask her to marry me," Andre said. "I couldn't put off asking forever, but I had to think: what was I risking? I could lose my best friend."

Roxanne noticed that he was acting differently, so she asked him what was wrong.

"I explained everything I had been feeling to her," Andre said. "Afterwards, she kind of just sat there, and I was so worried as to what she was thinking when she said, 'Well, you only told me you were thinking about asking me to marry you. If you're waiting for a response, you haven't really asked me yet.'"

Realizing his mistake, he popped the question, and she accepted.

"And that was that," Andre said. "There was no skywriting or anything. I had planned to ask her in a different way, but it just didn't happen."

When Andre and Roxanne married, she was 21 years old, and he was 22.

"We got married on August 8, 1987: eight, eight, eight, seven," Andre said.

Recently, the couple purchased a cottage in Connecticut in the same area Andre's parents and grandparents lived, and they plan on living there after they retire.

"And when I think about my grandparents and how the two of them were able to grow old together in such a beautiful place, it's wonderful," Andre said. "Even in their old age, my grandparents held hands while sitting on the couch together, and that's what romance is to me: growing old hand-in-hand. I can't imagine growing old with anybody but Roxanne. She is my soul mate, she's my wife, and I love her dearly."

Like Andre, Family and Consumer Science teacher Jennie Bailey, who has been with her husband, Bruce, for 30 years, feels she married her best friend.

"Bruce and I grew up in the same area, but I didn't really know him until I was in high school," Bailey said. "I was only slightly aware of his existence before then. He was two years older."

The couple began dating during her junior year of high school, when he was a freshman at Abilene Christian University.

"We dated for four years, or until he graduated college, because he had promised himself he wouldn't get married until he had a degree and a good job," Jennie said.

She thinks their mutual attraction came from the fact that they shared similar life views.

"We had the same ideals as far as religious beliefs, family, and, most importantly, my decision to be a stay-at-home mom," Jennie said.

Jennie also loved being with Bruce's family.

"It was similar to mine and very easy to



Science teacher Andre Raymond and wife Roxanne (above) pose for a photograph during their summer vacation in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The couple frequently visits MA and own a cottage in Connecticut. The newlywed Mr. and Mrs. Raymond (right) smile in a picture taken at their wedding. The couple wed when Roxanne was 21 and Andre was 22, and have spent just around 29 years of marriage together. The two also have two children, Emily and Sam.

PHOTOS PROVIDED.



Rick Davis and wife DeVona (above) are photographed at their daughter's wedding. The two (left) also stand closely for a snapshot taken at a Valentine's dance. The couple found one another at a young age, but have grown in love for 33 years.

PHOTOS PROVIDED



Family and Consumer Science teacher and FCCLA Sponsor Jennie Bailey and husband Bruce (above) recreate one of their wedding photos (right). The couple attended the same high school and married 30 years ago. Jennie explained that the two have been through many trials, but have remained in love through it all.

PHOTOS PROVIDED.



be around," Jennie said. "Also, his family went to Colorado every year, and I got to go with them after we started dating, so that was always fun."

Bailey says that throughout her marriage, no problem has ever been too hard to overcome.

"We promised each other from the start that divorce would never be a part of our vocabularies," Bailey said.

However, Jennie explains that her marriage has not always been "sunshine and roses."

"I guess the most difficult time in our marriage was when I was sick with breast cancer," Jennie said. "But we stuck it out. We're committed to each other, and when issues arise we always work to resolve them."

Bailey describes how her husband proposed to her.

"My favorite flower was (and still is) daisies, so on my birthday one year, I walked into his apartment and there were yellow and white daisies everywhere," Jennie said. "There must have been hundreds of them. As I was taking it all in, he bent down on one knee, pulled out a ring, and asked me to marry him."

The pair married on August 3, 1985.

"We had a traditional church wedding, as most people did at the time," Jennie said. "Our wedding was covered in yellow and white daisies, too. The daisies looked kind of unpleasant paired with the deep red velvet carpet and tapestries in the church, but oh well."

Mathematics teacher Rick Davis and his wife, DeVona, have been married equally as long as the Baileys. However, their story is quite different.

"We met at church when we were both kids," Rick said. "She was in sixth grade when she moved to town, and we lived in New Mexico at the time. I began to really notice her when she was a freshman in high school. I just thought she was the cutest, sweetest, most ladylike girl I'd ever met: prim and proper, and I've always loved her smile."

Rick asked DeVona to be his girlfriend right before his senior year of high school. She was only 15 at the time.

"She wasn't allowed to go on dates yet, so I had to wait a year before I could take her out," Rick said. "So I went to her house to watch TV with her and her family from time to time."

After DeVona turned 16, she and Rick went on typical movie dates and participated in many church youth group activities together. Unfortunately, Rick soon moved from New Mexico to Texas, but the pair still managed to maintain their relationship.

"Even before I moved, we talked about getting married, so that she could come down and join me here," Rick said. "Once, my parents brought her with them from New Mexico to come see me, and one day, during her visit, we went shopping, and we bought a ring together. We set the date to get married, and that night I proposed to her under the stars. I was pretty confident she was going to say yes, since, you know, we had planned everything out, and I had bought the ring with her."

Davis chose a romantic setting to officially ask the all-important question.

"I proposed to her out in the country, standing by a pond, in the moonlight," Rick said. "In response, I guess she just kind of rolled her eyes, said yes, and made me stand back up. She had just turned 17, and was almost 18 when we got married."

During their engagement, Rick only saw DeVona four times before the ceremony because they lived so far apart.

"Getting married was kind of strange, because even though we were used to talking to each other over the phone, we weren't used to being in each other's presence," Rick said. "We were just so young; my wife had just started college. She went before I did, because when we first got married, I had no idea what I wanted to do. She had known from a young age that she wanted to be an accountant."

During the early years of their marriage, the Davises faced great financial struggle.

"We had to go to college one at a time because we could barely feed ourselves or pay the bills," Rick said. "While she was in school, I worked manual labor, minimum wage jobs. It wasn't until after she graduated and our financial situation got a little better that I went to college."

The Davises shared a small farmhouse early on in their marriage.

"We were poor, but we had each other," Davis said. "We didn't starve to death, either. Sometimes, we were able to scrounge up enough change to go to a nearby café, where we'd split a hamburger and a piece of peanut butter pie. Those are sweet memories."

Nearby relatives took turns "adopting" the young couple.

"They'd just watch after us, and we went to church with them," Davis said. "My wife and I were the only young people who went there, and I remember we played dominoes with the old people. They became our best friends."

After graduating from college, Rick began his first teaching job, and has been educating ever since.

"DeVona and I have been married for 33 years, and it just gets sweeter," Rick said. "I'm so incredibly lucky, and so, so blessed that she's never given up on us, even after everything we've been through."