

By James Collins

They were both high school sweethearts. Jeff and Patricia were valedictorians of their respective high schools in Nashua New Hampshire. They were in love but both were going to colleges in different locations. Patricia went to St. Anselm's in Manchester, New Hampshire while Jeff went to the Naval Academy at Annapolis Maryland. They wrote or talked every day but to them the four years dragged on.

The engagement occurred on Christmas of their junior year and they planned to be married upon graduation. As the year progressed, it became apparent that both of them would be honored at their respective graduations. Patricia a Math Major was valedictorian at St. Anselm's and Jeff was number one of the Naval Academy.

The schedule for that final week was like D-Day World War II. Patricia graduated on Saturday, all of our family, Jeff and his family appeared, and we had a rip roaring graduation party. Then Jeff had to return to the Naval Academy and he, Patricia, and his family attended the formal graduation at Annapolis while the rest of us frantically prepared for this highly compressed week. The rest of the Collins family could not attend Jeff's magnificent graduation ceremony as we had the responsibility for the huge wedding planned for the following Saturday.

Jeff got back on Friday in time for the rehearsal at the church and the rehearsal dinner for the bridal party. The following morning was the big day. St. Anselm's church was the location for the wedding ceremony together with a full military presentation of 10 newly commissioned ensigns with their swords and their white uniforms. The day began with rain but just before the ceremony, the rain stopped, the skies opened, the sun shone upon us for the wedding and about an hour and a half thereafter. Then the rain returned but we did not care. We all retired to the Amherst country club for a reception for 250 people. I bankrolled an open bar for the first hour and free beer for the remaining five hours. The party was boisterous. Ten of Jeff's fellow graduates from the Naval Academy in white uniforms attended and an equal number of Patricia's graduating girlfriends filled another table. Family and friends arrived from six different states, and since we had a DJ, the music went on uninterrupted. Members from two other wedding receptions came into ours and asked me if they could dance to our music, as our party was more energetic than theirs was. I told them it was fine as long as they did not drink my liquor. The party went on to the wee hours of the morning as all dispersed to the various hotels, which they had reserved.

Sunday, a number of people rose with hangovers. We invited everyone back to our house for an afternoon barbecue and a further extension of the party. The newlyweds showed up for a couple of hours and then had to give us tearful goodbyes, as Jeff had to report to active duty on Monday morning. This was a wedding to remember.

It was only you, stupid altar what a little bit later that the zero 1.0 home remedy Four very bright children were a result of this marriage. The eldest already has two degrees and is studying and teaching in Ireland to receive a PhD. The second has a PhD in

pharmacy and is associated with a major hospital on the East Coast. The third has a degree and is now in medical school, while the fourth signed up for a six-year course to obtain a PhD degree in another New England college.

THE END