

WEDDING EDITION

A Baylor Lariat Special Edition



LOVE IS IN THE AIR Dr. Will Best and Ally Peters both met at Baylor University during their time in graduate school and fell in love.

Photo courtesy of Will Best

Post-grad romance proves the ‘Best’ is yet to come

MAXIMILIAN DIEHL
Staff Writer

Though Baylor students may find their partner for life before graduation, for Dr. Will Best and Ally Peters, their fairy tale romance was not to be found in undergrad.

Best attended Concordia University in Irvine, Calif., for his undergraduate education, where he ran for the men's track team. Best left Irvine with a diploma, but without something else — a fiancée. After graduation, Best found his way to Waco, and arrived at Baylor looking to earn his Ph.D. in statistics. He didn't know he would find his wife as well.

Ally Peters was a Bear through and through. She earned her undergraduate degree at Baylor, was an active member of the Chi Omega sorority and served at Harris Creek Church. She returned to Baylor's Hankamer School of Business to earn her MBA and continue her involvement with Harris Creek, working with the children's ministry every Sunday.

It was at Harris Creek where the couple first met in 2020, according to Best. Peters and Best sat next to each other in a

morning briefing, where they discussed their game plan for dealing with 200 kids.

"I just started talking to her and realized she was also in grad school, asked her to ice cream, and honestly just wanted to talk," Best said. "I had given up on relationships and just wanted my degree and to get out of there. But then, we really just hit it off."

Peters said that day getting ice cream led to their first date.

"I think we both just lost track of time and didn't realize how long we had been talking," Peters said. "And then within a week of the first conversation we went on our first real date."

Their relationship grew with their love for others, rather than just their love for one another. They got to see the best of each other in the way they cared for their friends, hosting a weekly game night and bringing a bunch of eclectic personalities together in a safe place. Between that and their continued volunteer efforts at the church, they got to see each other at their greatest.

"His faith was just so impressive, his commitment to his life group, his friends and to the church," Peters said. "It was really cool to meet in ministry, seeing him just care for children and being intentional with the people he interacts with."

Best's sentiments echoed Peters' in almost every way.

"Seeing Ally with kids was just so great, the way she could care deeply," Best said. "She's the most selfless person I've ever met. She just glows when giving to others."

At about the year mark, they both became 100% sure that this was it. Will bought a ring, called his friends together and started planning a proposal straight from a romance movie. He proposed, she wholeheartedly agreed and the rest was history.

In what was a perfect ending to their Baylor love story, they pulled together a Waco wedding in June 2022 in celebration of not just their love, but the community that they had built together.

"The wedding was so special not only because we were getting married, but because we had an opportunity to bring everyone into the same place," Peters said. "We had a chance to have one last gathering of our entire community."

Best said their wedding was just the beginning in a new chapter of their lives together.

"Every day since the wedding has just been better and better," Best said. "We've just started our lives together. It's been the greatest."



Say 'I Do'
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How brain
development, budgets
and counseling all
apply to your wedding
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OPINION

Ladies, you can keep your maiden name

CAITLYN MEISNER

Copy Editor

Taking your partner's name once married has been custom since the dawn of time. Nowadays, that's not the case.

In 2015, 70% of women took their partner's last name in celebration of their union. Of the 30% of the remaining women who chose to retain their given name, 20% kept their name in full and 10% decided to hyphenate their name, according to a Google Consumer Survey analyzed by The New York Times.

In comparison, in the 1980s, 14% of women kept their maiden name, and in the 1990s, 18% of women did.

Keeping one's maiden name has been a politically charged conversation since it

first happened in the 1850s with Lucy Stone, a female suffragette. After Stone, multiple women continued to face challenges to get paid or to vote — even after the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1919 — if they did not share a last name with their husband.

In light of this, I don't think it's necessary for women to take their partner's name once they get married. I know I won't.

As a woman who has been trying to build her career as a journalist, I want my career and published work to follow my name from when I started. I started as Caitlyn Meisner, and I want to finish under that name. My name will follow me everywhere, and I don't want to confuse

future employers with a name change.

Also, it's an incredible hassle. It's not as simple as just declaring yourself a new person. You have to change all of your legal documents — driver's license, Social Security card and the like.

Many women who get higher education degrees struggle with this as well. For a lot of women, it's a question of what name goes on the degree and represents their accomplishments for the rest of their lives.

I haven't written off the idea of hyphenating my name, but I also don't want my maiden name to be silenced into being my middle name. I already have a middle name.

And when it comes to children, I don't think

it would be that confusing. I plan to hyphenate mine and my partner's names to represent our relationship and the product of it.

I promise this isn't some feminist rant; it's not coming from this place of anti-men. I just really don't want to alter my personhood once I sign a piece of paper saying I'm married.

I know this union may mean more to some than others, but I think this is something to consider once you're in a place to do so. Instead of going with the status quo, think about what your name will be once married to see if it really is something you want to do or is something you just think you should do.

Whatever you decide, I'm supportive. This is a personal decision, and I hope all women make a choice that fits their life and marriage.



Say 'I Do' to this wedding playlist

EMMA WEIDMANN

Arts & Life Editor

The right music is important for any moment — car rides, walks on campus, studying. But for the big moments, it's even more important. The music you play at your wedding can influence the event all day long, and picking the right songs means you'll be instantly transported back to that day with each listen. Here are some suggestions for your big day playlist.

"BABY I'M YOURS" ARCTIC MONKEYS

This is for all of the indie snobs like me. Arctic Monkeys did a great job with this song, which was a cover of the 1965 original by Barbara Lewis. It's romantic and classic, but also modern. Arctic Monkeys' version would be a tough contender for one of the best slow dance songs of all time in my book.

"WHEN I'M SIXTY-FOUR" THE BEATLES

While not entirely danceable, this song is adorable and fitting for the occasion. This would make for a good vibe as the day wears on, mixed in with other upbeat songs on the playlist. Maybe it's a little bit dorky, but I think it's a great pick from a band that has a lot of questionable love songs (I'm looking at you, "I Saw Her Standing There." What do you mean, she was 17?).

"AT LAST" ETTA JAMES

This is a classic love song if I've ever heard one. It's timeless and beautiful, and even though it's been played at countless weddings, I don't think it ever gets tired. For a heartwarming, crowd-pleasing playlist, add this one to the mix.

"DAYLIGHT" TAYLOR SWIFT

For any "Swiftie" looking to start a new chapter in your "Love Story," this is a good choice. It's one of Swift's best love songs and has a really beautiful sentiment to it as well.

"UNFORGETTABLE" NAT KING COLE

Clearly, I'm a fan of the really old stuff. You just can't go wrong with the magic that Nat King Cole's voice conjures up. Cole's voice is warm and glowing like Christmas, but works for every season. This is another pick perfect for a slow dance.

"LOVE ME TENDER" ELVIS PRESLEY

I have this song on a very, very old 45 rpm vinyl record, and something about Presley's voice on a decades-old pressing is so much better than anything Spotify could release. I don't play it often, but when I do, I have to savor the moment like I'm the actress in a high-end chocolate commercial.

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OPINION

Bridal stylist tips for planning your wedding, saying ‘yes’ to the dress

JESSICA RAJKUMAR
LTVN Reporter

When you decide to say yes to that special someone and want to celebrate that, you are committing yourself to your partner and celebrating your relationship with everyone closest to you. I have intimate knowledge of the workings of what goes into the physical appearance and aesthetics of the wedding as a bridal stylist and I have also heard stories from hundreds of women. From planning the shades of your dress to sorting out flower girls and bridesmaids, here are a few words of advice for anyone planning their big day.

PERFECT TIMING

While rushing into the romance surrounding a wedding can be tempting, you and your fiancé should ensure you can not only afford wedding and honeymoon costs, but have enough to support yourselves comfortably for the next year.

According to an article published by CNBC on the inflation surrounding the cost of a wedding, the average wedding in 2023 can cost anywhere around \$29,000. Not everyone wants a wedding that would cost that much, so it is important to take a step back with your partner to assess both of your finances and consider how they would look after the wedding.

Do not be afraid to postpone the event date, so you can afford not only your dream wedding but can save up for your dream marriage.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The maid of honor should honor your wishes. Choosing your maid of honor or best man can be a difficult decision, especially if there are multiple candidates for the coveted position. But when it comes down to your special day, you need someone in your corner. Your maid of honor is someone who knows you so well, they can spot problems when you

do and won't be afraid to help change things if anything goes wrong.

In my experience, the most content brides have someone who was able to confront problems when the bride and groom couldn't. The maid of honor and best man have the responsibility to advocate for the needs and happiness of the bride and groom, so make sure to find someone who will honor that role.

OBSCESS OVER THE DRESS, NOT STRESS



Planning a wedding is not easy since there are many factors that influence the way your special day will progress. From the type of dress, fabric of the wedding gown and bridesmaid's dresses, to the type of venue that has your desired aesthetic, there are many details the bridal party needs to address in advance. Most of the time, both the bride and groom are working full-time and have schedules that are difficult to change.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Your wedding day is something you do not want to forget, so make sure to consider everything before you rush into something you might not like in 10 years. Look online for tools to help make planning easier, such as Pinterest or wedding quizzes to narrow down what you envision yourself in. Scheduling time to arrange each element of your wedding will reduce anxiety over time.

If you know you are prone to nervousness when dealing with planning an event, hire a wedding planner to sort everything out for you even if it is just for the day. Having someone in your corner who knows what they are doing will alleviate stress day of.

Make sure to have fun and enjoy the process. Every bride I encountered had a unique vision for their special day and took the time to plan out their dream. And while it is impossible to have everything you want, taking time to design your big day with your partner and loved ones will make you the happiest you can be.



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Seniors

THIS IS YOUR LAST WEEK

Schedule your portrait now.

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WE WILL NO LONGER ACCEPT

SENIOR PORTRAITS

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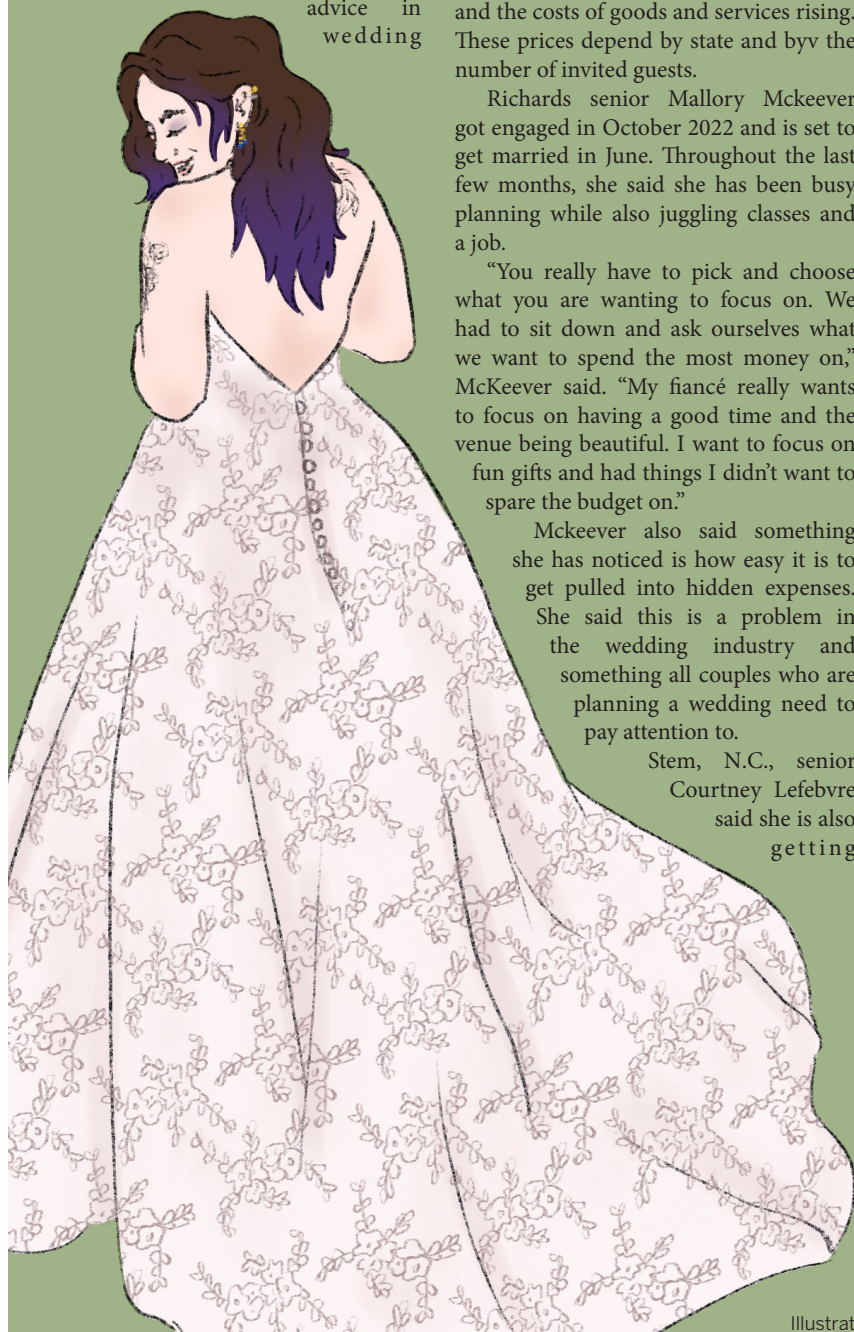
ROUNDUP YEARBOOK

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Engaged seniors share advice on wedding planning, budgets

SYDNEY MATTHEWS
Staff Writer

It's not uncommon for Baylor students to get engaged and quickly begin to plan the big event. Some students shared their advice in wedding



planning and how to make the most of the celebration with a tight budget.

In 2023, the average couple will spend roughly \$29,000 on their wedding, \$1,000 more than what it was back in 2022. Prices have increased mainly because of inflation and the costs of goods and services rising. These prices depend by state and by the number of invited guests.

Richards senior Mallory McKeever got engaged in October 2022 and is set to get married in June. Throughout the last few months, she said she has been busy planning while also juggling classes and a job.

"You really have to pick and choose what you are wanting to focus on. We had to sit down and ask ourselves what we want to spend the most money on," McKeever said. "My fiancé really wants to focus on having a good time and the venue being beautiful. I want to focus on fun gifts and had things I didn't want to spare the budget on."

McKeever also said something she has noticed is how easy it is to get pulled into hidden expenses. She said this is a problem in the wedding industry and something all couples who are planning a wedding need to pay attention to.

Stem, N.C., senior Courtney Lefebvre said she is also getting

married in June and has been planning her wedding throughout the last few months.

"My mom has been helping me a lot with the planning," Lefebvre said. "Something that has surprised both of us is how expensive it's become and how even within a month span, a vendors pricing can completely change. Timing was really surprising in terms of getting the budget right."

Due to COVID-19, a lot of brides are now choosing to have their reception parties they had previously placed on hold. Lefebvre said finding a vendor that fits her schedule and price range has been an unexpected challenge.

"My advice would be to stay patient; everything will work out like it's supposed to. At the beginning, it feels like everything is going wrong when finding baseline vendors such as a venue and a florist," Lefebvre said. "It's very chaotic. But, as soon as you get the foundation going, everything falls into place."

McKeever also said venues are hard to secure and often the first step to the wedding process. The location of the wedding and its availability determines the theme of the event and also sets the date.

The biggest advice McKeever said she would give to newly-engaged couples is to figure out a budget and keep in mind it won't always be the most ideal Saturday morning event. She said she is having her wedding on a Thursday because it fits better with her budget. Finding a venue willing to do a Thursday wedding in her ideal time frame was not a big problem.

Lefebvre said even with the unexpected challenges while planning her wedding, she is so excited for the big day.

With her family's guidance throughout the process of planning, Lefebvre said she is thankful to have them with her. She said she encourages everyone planning a wedding to seek support from the closest people to them.

Baylor community ta

KASSIDY TSIKITAS
Staff Writer

Deep in the heart of Baylor's Counseling Center, Student Health and Wellness offers services that help individuals and couples struggling with mental health and conflict.

Baylor's counseling center offers multiple services and tools students can use to talk about the problems they are experiencing to a professional, and some counselors even specialize in relationships.

"Research shows that relationships affect our mental health, health behaviors, physical health and even our healing rate and mortality risk," the Counseling Center website states.

Students have benefitted from attending couples therapy, whether or not the sessions resulted in a remaining relationship among the partners. Houston sophomore Brooke Foreman said going through counseling helped her realize her worth.

"Communicating is key. Instead of overthinking and brewing thoughts in your head, just communicate your feelings to your partner

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Students weigh in

RAYLEE FOSTER
Staff Writer

The heart is not the only role that plays a part when it comes to love.

The average age for getting married has changed over the years, as has the rate of divorce. One thing has remained the same: the age the frontal lobe develops at 25 years. The development of this part of the brain directly affects an individual's judgment, and may play a role in decision making regarding marriage and relationships.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the median age for one's first marriage has gradually increased. In recent years however, this median has seen a decline, and women are consistently getting married younger. With frontal lobe development completed for women earlier than men, this decision making age range is consistent with brain development age ranges.

The Neurobiology of Love, a study by Franza Francesco and Alba Cervone, found that, because the frontal lobe is connected to judgment, its lack of development while

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Baylor students' view
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talks benefits of couple counseling service

they have to say," Foreman said. "We create problems in our head, not in the relationship." Foreman said communication can help and has helped her learn to and she advises everyone to give

often have problems with our we ask [for] friends, biased," Going at who s and to help g." er, professor social work, said be beneficial to gain tterns and habits of both ionship.

productive ways of relating to a partner and gaining self-ignificant payoffs in the present e future," Pooler said. "People

also need to learn to have realistic expectations of themselves and each other, and counseling can help with that."

Pooler also said avoiding the problems in relationships — no matter how big they are — can erode the trust between the couple and result in the relationship being the primary source of pain.

If couples book a session, the relationship can flourish or completely end. Despite the outcome, Pooler said the most important thing is to learn from the problems and grow individually.

"[After counseling] I see people listen more effectively and communicate their needs, wishes and wants more effectively.

They learn to be more healthy as an individual," Pooler said. "They have more ease and peace, individually and with their partner."

Dr. Brad Brenner, professional counseling psychologist and co-founder of the Therapy Group of NYC, wrote on the overall success of

couples counseling and reported there is a 98% success rate.

"The success of couples therapy and other factors contributes to a decreasing divorce rate in the United States," Brenner said.

His article goes on to explain the steps in counseling such as finding the right fit, setting goals and a timeline. Counseling allows patients to figure out the root of their problems.

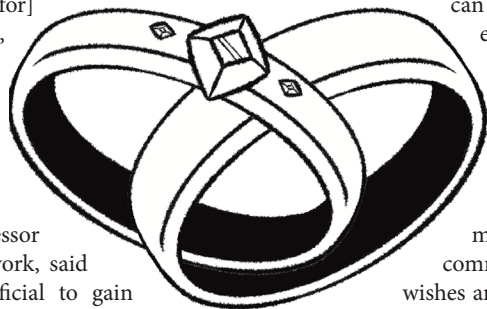
Houston freshman Lucy Varnell said in her Child and Family Studies classes, she is currently learning about different practices and meanings of relationships.

"If you cannot learn to communicate on your own, bringing in a third party may help a lot. It is much better to be prepared in case a fight were to come up rather than wait until there is an issue," Varnell said.

Varnell also said all relationships are bound to have problems; however, people should never stay in one that causes mental and physical harm.

"If you and your partner have numerous fundamental differences, really consider what is important to you, because marriage truly is meant to be a lifelong commitment," Varnell said.

Illustration by Gracie Speer | Cartoonist



Groomsmen morning getaways to make your wedding day memorable

MAXIMILIAN DIEHL
Staff Writer

It's the day of the wedding. Pure joy abounds, nerves and excitement are both sky high and there is a laundry list longer than Tuesday/Thursday classes, to complete. While the bride and groom are on a collision course for the altar, their paths throughout the day could not be more different.

An extremely busy morning full of the integral process of readying hair and makeup is in store for the bridal party on the day of the wedding, but for the men, those hours are mainly empty. It's not as complicated to throw on a rental tuxedo and put gel in your hair. For those long morning hours filled with the nervous anticipation of the big 'I do,' it's best for the guys to use the morning for some fun and mischief.

Gentlemen, if you're not late to your own wedding, is it really a wedding day? The answer is a strong no. So, here are some of the best ways to spend the wedding morning.

GROOMSMEN GETAWAYS >>

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is fine, but getting married before that is especially detrimental."

Johns Creek, Ga., senior Anne Madison Trammell said she viewed marriage at a young age as a growing experience, and not a potential problem. She said it is a way to grow into the role of a wife or husband as opposed to fitting that role into an already independent life.

"You learn what it means to live your life honoring someone else before yourself. As a single person this is hard to learn," Trammell said. "Becoming your own independent person and then trying to make two lives fit together is much harder than creating a life together."

Trammell also said, although the frontal lobe is not fully developed, there is still growth that can be done together. She said brain development in a relationship opens the door to growing together and developing a foundational, strong relationship.

"I think there's wisdom in getting married younger," Trammell said. "Your brain won't be fully developed, but it could be favorable that those last few years of development are

in the context of marriage when decisions don't just affect you, but your spouse as well."

Despite the diverse opinions, a 2016 Baylor study found that the culture of "Ring by Spring" attributed to Christian colleges, can often leave students feeling pressured to commit to lifelong relationships prior to graduation.

The pressure to commit, according to the study, can come from friends, family, churches, peers or society at large. Although many students feel it, the study suggests the reality of students getting married at a young age is much less common.

"I asked students whether they anticipated becoming engaged or being married before they graduated," Stacy Keogh George said in her study. "Only 6.3% of students say that they are either engaged or plan to become engaged before graduation. Given the pressure felt by most students in the survey, there is an evident disconnect between this realist and the students' expectation."

A follow up study from George's 2016 research found Baylor has an 18% marriage rate. Though pressure to comply with 'ring by

spring' culture may seem intense, the reality is the percentage of married undergraduates is much lower.

Not only can brain development affect the longevity of a marriage that begins before the age of 25, but factors outside of brain development can play a role as well.

Beckering said while brain development plays a role, the wide range of change an individual undergoes during college years can result in a decision that is, at the time, good turn stale as their life changes.

"I think you experience a lot of change from ages 18 to 25 and that is partially due to the frontal lobe I guess," Beckering said. "It can make a decision that is really good and sound good at one point, and be quite bad

in the long run, you could make a really poor decision just because you change so much."

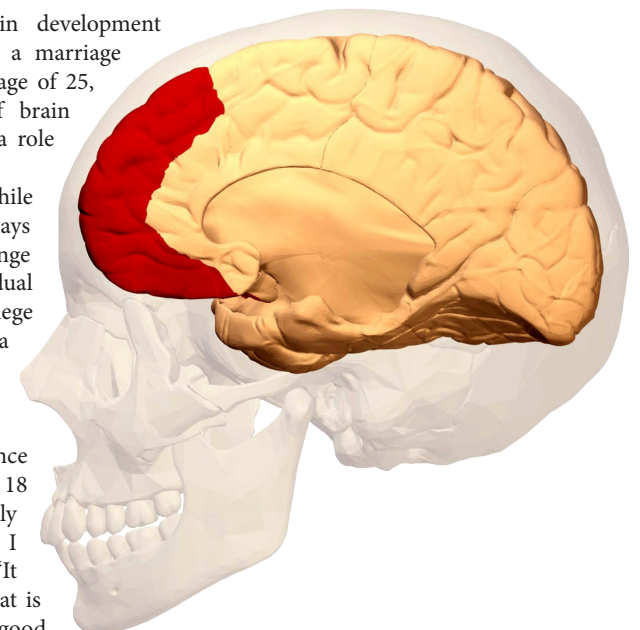


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Freeze the fiancé search, find your forever friends first

JULIANNE FULLERTON
Reporter

We live in a culture at Baylor that heavily pushes the phenomenon of “ring by spring,” which makes it easier than ever to get hooked on the dreamy idea of finding your future spouse in college. While many do find their college sweethearts while living in the Baylor bubble, the college experience should not solely revolve around the pursuit of tying the knot.

I grew up believing the cliché that almost everyone meets their spouse in college. Taking a step back, I can confidently say that this is not true for everyone. Don't get me wrong; I love hearing about college love stories. However, it becomes concerning when people turn their college years into a mission to find their happily ever after.

Instead, I suggest focusing your college experience on finding your future bridesmaids or groomsmen first. While potential spouses may come and go, the pivotal friendships you form during your college years will outlive any heartbreak.

These days, relationships seem to be more fickle — they come and go. It seems like everyone has different perceptions



of what dating should look like, how it should feel and what the actual definition of a relationship is. This leads to confusion and inconsistency.

In the midst of navigating relationship problems, or lack thereof, who supports you when you are at your highest moments and lowest of lows? Chances are, your friends have been sticking by you no matter what season of life you're in. They remain consistent through any curveballs that life throws your way.

One thing I love about the college experience is that everyone has the opportunity to find a steadfast community that can stand by them. Baylor provides a plethora of opportunities to get plugged in.

College is the first time in someone's life when they truly get to choose the community they surround themselves with. Even compared to post-graduate life, nothing will quite match the freedom we have right now to be intentional and present in creating lifelong friendships.

According to a study done by Stanford University, only around 19% of couples meet their spouse during their college years. In fact, it was much more common to meet someone through a friend or even online.

When someone puts all their time and energy into only pursuing a relationship during college, they often miss out on pursuing other deep friendships outside of that. Friendships

help with personal development, and when you spend less time with the people who know you best, you're only hurting yourself.

“The pivotal friendships you form during your college years will outlive any heartbreak.”

Everyone comes into college with their own ideas of what they will get out of it. For some, it's just a degree. For others, it's a spouse. For me, I've valued finding a community — an authentic community that walks alongside me no matter what I'm going through, whether that be enduring a hard class or needing to find a formal date.

These four short years will go by in the blink of an eye, so why not spend the time intentionally pouring into the friendships around us so that they will last beyond graduation?

When that engagement finally comes around, your friends will be there to run along beside you and share in your excitement. After all, your bridesmaids and groomsmen have been with you from day one, so there is truly no one better to celebrate with.

GROOMSMEN GETAWAYS from Page 5

Brunch

First of all, make a reservation well in advance for a sizable party and dedicate yourself to taking at least one picture over the course of the day. Naturally, any special occasion in Waco that calls for brunch means Magnolia Table. It's a great place to start with the seasonal menu and vibes of the famous eatery. For a more chill experience, Café Cappuccino and The Olive Branch are great options in the Waco area.

And for those looking to absolutely pound some pancakes or tear into chicken and waffles, Waco Waffle Co should be the go-to. Of course, this is just prep for the most important event of the day — golf.

Golf

The choice of either 9 or 18 holes or a trip to TopGolf is best decided by time constraints and general ability of the group. It can be a great time to spend a few hours on the course, a place for competition and friendly bets. If most of the group is unable to complete nine holes in less than a couple of hours, or would be generally frustrated by the difficulty curve presented by the sport, go to TopGolf and just hack away.

Pro tip: they tell you not to do the “Happy Gilmore” run-up, but there's no consequences if you do. As any college athlete these days would tell you, “just do it.”

Spa day

For those more inclined to a life of luxury, a trip to the spa for some rest and relaxation may be the best recipe for a successful wedding day. This one could also be coupled with some level of outdoors-iness. It's never a bad call to get a breath of fresh air or to take care of yourself to get in a solid mentality for such an important day. Maybe that massage and scrub will give you an onstage glow or just detangle your beard. Either way, it's a win.

Cheat meal

Is there a certain meal that you just absolutely love but your spouse can't stand? Perhaps the morning of the wedding is the right day to take advantage of a meal without their influence on it. A massive pizza, a helping of ultra spicy Thai food or maybe even a luxurious seafood meal before the young adult budgeting really has to kick in. It's your wedding day, there is nothing wrong with blowing some cash.

After all of this, be absolutely certain that you're within that reasonable range of 10 to 15 minutes late to your own wedding, not “bride-left-at-the-altar” level of late. She might not forgive you or any of your friends for that one.

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY TRIO

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce,
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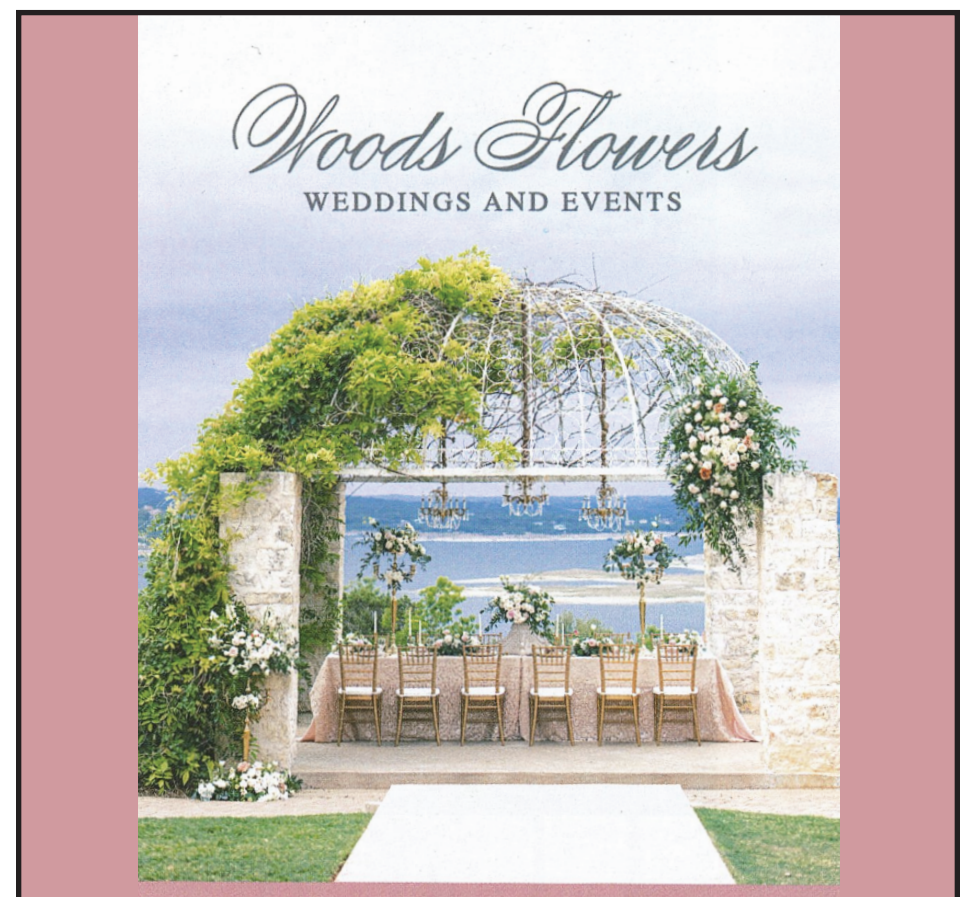
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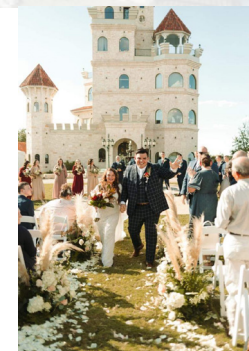
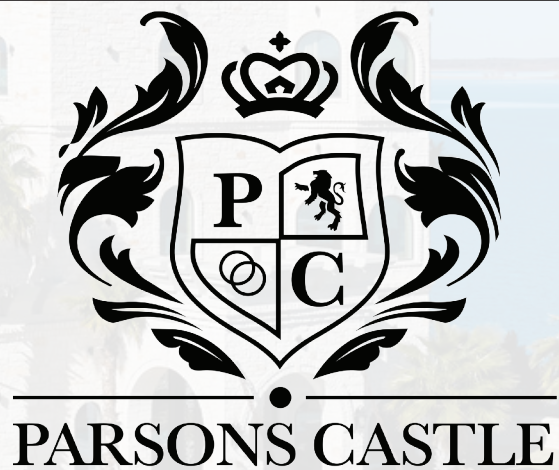
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