

NORTHSIDE NEWS

Everlasting Love

What is love? Not just any ol’ love, but romantic love! Some might respond “it feels like butterflies in your stomach when you are near that special someone”. Others may offer “it’s how I feel satisfied when I’m with them.” My Valentine’s playlist might help me gain some insight. This question leads me to think of the Andy Williams’ classic “Love Is a Many Splendored Thing.” Williams’ lyrics speak to how love can be expressed and felt in different ways: “Love is a many-splendored thing/It’s the April rose that only grows in the early spring/Love is nature’s way of giving a reason to be living/The golden crown that makes a man a king...” Wow! That brother really makes love feel good! I feel a need to stop writing and ask my spouse for a kiss. I want to imagine the world just stopping – even if only for a few minutes.

So, is love really “all that?” We didn’t want to just take Andy Williams’ word for it. In this issue, we hit the streets to learn about everlasting love in Northside.
-Michael Jones



Donna Bell & Jason James



Willie & Gladys Pendergraft-Brandon



Whitney Robinson & Louie Rivers III



Priya Sreenivasan & Brentton Harrison

When and where did you and your spouse meet?

DB: We met in 1990 at UNC. Jason’s roommate was a good friend from my hometown. Jason told his roommate that he thought I was cute.

GP: We were both widowed. I had been a widow for about 5 years and Mr. Brandon was a widower for about 6 years. Jerome and Joyce Long at St Joseph CME, decided to do a little bit of matchmaking. They would tell me, “you have to meet each other!” It took a couple of years to actually meet because of our busy travel schedules. However, the Longs persisted and invited us to a Valentine’s Day dance in February 2012 at the Church.

WR: We were introduced online in November 2009 after I had just broken up with another boyfriend. I logged in and saw a well-written, inquisitive message from a handsome guy with whom I was an 82 percent match. I wrote him back immediately.

BH: October 2016 at a protest at The Independent newspaper in downtown Durham.

PS: Technically, that’s true, but we didn’t talk at that October meeting. I feel like we first really met at Hudson’s birthday party during a snow day in January 2017!

(Now a test of their memory and a prayer that they get it right:) Where was your first date and what would you share about the experience?

DB: Our first date was at a college party. I remember being really nervous and Jason being very chivalrous.

GP: The Valentine’s Day dance at the Radisson Inn was our first date. Mr. Brandon showed up looking really sharp and he even had a bouquet of roses and a corsage for me. We had great conversation and really got to know each other some.

WR/LR: We arranged to meet in Ann Arbor (Michigan) for a two-part date that began with a walk in and around the Michigan campus for about two hours. Later the same day we met for dinner at a restaurant.

LR: I think she requested a two-part date so she could ditch me if she didn’t like the first part. I know that was her plan, though she still denies it.

BH: Our first date was at Gourmet Kingdom. The experience was amazing, we talked and listened to each other beaming with curiosity.

PS: After we ate, we walked in the rain from Graham Street to UNC’s South Building. We were talking so much we didn’t even notice how far we’d walked!

(Now we move to the really serious stuff:) When and how did you know your spouse was “the one that you wanted to spend the rest of your life with?”

DB: Jason and I were on a date at Carrburritos and I started to cry because I know statistically, I will outlive him and can’t imagine being on earth without him.

JJ: I knew Donna was the one when while listening to her talk one day after we reconnected. She is smart, hilarious, and truly engaged, and I knew I wanted to see her smile and hear her laugh for the rest of my life.

GP: The spark was realizing we had the same mindset concerning our interests and family. We courted from February to October 2012 – meeting with children and getting to know more about each other. We had marriage counseling, planned our wedding and got married October 6, 2012. We have now been married for 10 years.

WB: When my [previous] wife died, I turned it all over to God. I prayed that if I were to be with anyone else, then God would find and send them my way. When I met Gladys, I knew that God was sending her.

BH: I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with Priya in the middle of a disagreement. It was the love and care for each other, a desire for the other to be their “full self” in the middle of us being not on the best of terms that made me realize that my heart, my mind and soul had chosen Priya to walk and face life with.

PS: I knew also after a disagreement, when I realized that Brentton saw my imperfections and still chose to love me, and I saw his and chose the same. It made me realize that I wanted to continue choosing to love him every day!

What is it about your spouse that is “truly amazing or special”?

DB: He supported me in so many of the adventures I have taken him on like running for elected office or starting a new business. When I was in grad school trying to finish my thesis, Jason sent me a special “Take Care of Yourself” care package that was one of the sweetest things anyone had ever done for me.

JJ: Donna just understands me. I don’t have to explain things or go into a lot of detail. She immediately knows what’s going on and what to do or say.

GP: I was not looking for a man but God sent me a “good man.” Mr. Brandon is a gentleman who opens doors, brings flowers, etc. I know some of the younger folk see that as old fashioned. He also understands that communication makes a marriage work. It isn’t always “roses.”

WB: She is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. If you put God into it, He will bring it all together.

BH: Her deep intentional care for those around her!

PS: His enthusiasm for experiencing joy and spreading joy & love to those around him.

What is a “perfect date” or experience with your spouse?

DB/JJ: A quiet weekend together with just the two of us and there is nothing to do but have some time just to ourselves. Sometimes we go for a meal together or just for a walk. It is just time to reconnect and strengthen our connection.

GP/WB: Every day for us is a perfect date. We value putting God into whatever you do. If God is in it, it will work. Take time to get to know your partner, marry for love, not for what you think they might have. Money can’t buy you love.

Well, there you have it folks, straight from the experts. These couples and their stories give us a brief glimpse into what love is. Hopefully, you can sense the “butterflies” or the “soul satisfaction” they experience as they do life together. Love is a many-splendored thing.

Interviewed by Michael Jones and Kathy Atwater

When Love was Against the Law: The Love Story of Ruby Farrington and Bruce Simons

Ruby Farrington and Arthur B. (Bruce) Simons met as Civil Rights activists in Chapel Hill in 1963. They married in 1965 and have now been married for nearly 60 years. When their love story got started, however, it was illegal.

Ruby was in high school and Bruce was a college student at UNC when they met. Ruby had gotten involved with school desegregation in seventh grade. By tenth grade she was going to demonstrations and sit-ins for the Civil Rights Movement where she met second-year UNC student Bruce Simons. Ruby was recording names at the sign-up table for an upcoming protest for a public accomodations law against segregation. She recalls, “Bruce came to the table to sign his name and said that he wanted to be a volunteer to sit in or sleep over at the courthouse if the law was not passed.”

University students like Bruce were regular participants in the Movement, and organizers sometimes paired up Black and white activists for the protection of young Black protestors. After Bruce signed up, Ruby said that she didn’t know if it was “anything more than fate” that made her sign up for the same protest. She and her cousin sat behind Bruce and his roommate, and “made enough noise that they noticed us.” What she didn’t know is that Bruce had noticed her a few months before and had been asking about her, but “he was too shy to speak to me.” After they had been dating a while, he admitted, “the first time that he saw me [Ruby] he knew that I was going to be his wife.”

Not everyone was supportive of their relationship. Ruby didn’t know anyone else who dated across racial lines publicly. She remembered, “When the relationship between Bruce and I started to develop...any and everybody that felt responsible [wanted] to warn me that these kinds of relationships never worked.” People who cared about her worried that she might be left alone when Bruce graduated from UNC, possibly with a child to raise. But Ruby wasn’t looking too far into the future and was intrigued by Bruce, thinking “he’s interesting, he’s different. I’d never really known anybody that had had such a wide variety of experiences.”

Katherine “Mama Kat” Council was especially protective of her first child. She remembered, “when they first started dating...I was really against it and I wouldn’t let him come to my house...I just didn’t want nothing to happen. She was the only person I had ever known to go with a white guy and I just didn’t want it to happen, I just felt like something would go wrong.” An aunt convinced Mama Kat to be more accepting of the couple: “she sat down to talk to me and explained to me that, you know, children are growing up and time will change, which I knew, but she said ‘Just leave it alone, turn it to loose.’” After that, Mama Kat came around, adding “since I knew they weren’t going to turn each other loose, I said, ‘I might as well go ahead and be the mama.’” She added, “And it turned out good.”

Bruce never really formally proposed. After his college graduation and Ruby’s high school graduation in 1965, he and Ruby went to New England to build a life together. At that time, the couple “had been dating for like two years.” When they went to get married, the Hillsborough courthouse would not issue the marriage license. Mama Kat remembered, “somebody had told us...that they would do it in Virginia. And we got up there and they said no.”

North Carolina first outlawed interracial marriage in 1741. Interracial marriages did not become legal until the Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court case in 1967. North Carolina legally affirmed the right for interracial couples to marry in 1971, and in 1977, legally validated all interracial marriages that had occurred prior to that date.

Ruby and Bruce Simons were married in Massachusetts in 1965, two years before the Loving v. Virginia decision. Today, they have five children and live in Alaska, celebrating nearly 60 years of marriage. Love wins.

Kathryn Wall

Quotations are from interviews that you can find on From the Rock Wall (www.fromtherockwall.org):

Katherine “Mama Kat” Council interviewed by Heidi Dodson, et al. on September 1, 2017: https://fromtherockwall.org/oral-histories/katherine-council-8

Ruby Farrington Simons interviewed by John Kenyon “Yonni” Chapman on April 28, 1996: https://fromtherockwall.org/oral-histories/ruby-farrington-simons-on-the-african-american-freedom-struggle-and-civil-rights-movement-in-chapel-hill

Love

As I contemplate on what love is, my mind immediately goes to 1 Corinthians Chapter 13. It explicitly explains what love is; therefore, I will use that scripture as the basis for my presentation of what love is.

A synonym for love is charity which is used in the Bible in the before mentioned text (1 Corinthians 13). This scripture begins by sharing what we are like when we do not have love:

- We are a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal when we speak without love.
 - Even though we may have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and faith so we can remove mountains, we are nothing without love.
 - Even when we give all that we have to the poor, or give ourselves to be burned, it profits nothing because we are not doing such in love.
 - Love suffers long. It is kind. It does not envy. It does not push itself forward.
 - Love rejoices in the truth, not iniquity.
 - Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things.
 - Love never fails as do prophecies. Love never ceases as will tongues. Love will never vanish as will knowledge.
 - Love is sacrificing your wants and desires to please others.
 - Love shows selflessness!
- Pamela R. Kirkland

Snap Benefits Decreasing in March 2023

If you participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), you need to know about upcoming changes to your benefit allowance. Since January 2021, SNAP recipients have received extra emergency allotments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, amounting to \$95 a month or greater. **Starting in March, SNAP recipients will see this emergency allotment go away.**

Without this allotment, benefits will be based on income and expenses reported to the program. **Make sure your information is up to date so that you can receive all that you’re eligible for.** For more information on how this will affect you or to check your benefit balance, call the local Orange County SNAP office at 888-622-7328. If you’d like new ideas about how to make pennies count, here are some ways to stretch your budget:

- Keep track of when the new sales week begins (usually Wednesday) and try to shop in the morning on that day to ensure that the products you want are in stock.
- Don’t waste money on produce and specialty items at the grocery store. If you’re able to attend farmers’ markets like the Carrboro or the Chapel Hill Farmer’s Market, the “Double Bucks” program will match what you spend in SNAP dollars and then give you double. **If you spend \$10, you will get \$20 to use in the market!**

Carrboro Farmer’s Market	Chapel Hill Farmer’s Market
Open Saturdays, 9am-12pm	Open Saturdays, 9am-12pm
301 W Main Street, Carrboro, NC	201 S. Estes Drive, Chapel Hill, NC
(919) 280-3326	(919) 533-9496
- Make friends with the butcher or the produce man and don’t be afraid to ask questions. Chances are, they’ll be willing to tell you about the best deals and when to find certain products, and they might even put them aside for you!
- Look into using a grocery rewards credit cards that can give you cashback when you purchase at the market. And use the store’s loyalty card to get more savings.
- If you’re feeling creative, **use your SNAP benefits to purchase seeds, plants, and gardening supplies** to plant your own food! You can use Amazon to shop a variety of SNAP-eligible planting kits.

Need help locating a store that participates in SNAP? Scan this QR code with your smartphone or go to https://www.myplate.gov/app/shopsimple online to locate retailers and farmers’ markets near you. You can also use this tool to find more helpful budgeting tips, storage practices to keep food fresher, recipes, and nutrition information for SNAP-eligible foods.



Alexandra Adair, UNC student service partner

February Birthdays Happy 90th birthday to Mr. James Atwater!

- February 1 Barbara Wall
- February 3 Pearl Cole
- February 5 Lola Merritt
- February 9 Carolyn Briggs
- February 11 Janell Riggsbee
- February 15 Sarita Nwachukwu
- February 15 Rev. Troy Harrison
- February 15 Seneta King
- February 16 Calvin Smith
- February 24 Della Pollock
- February 25 Brentton Harrison
- February 25 Barbara Smith



Jan. 23



Mr. Antonio Leon Gattis
12/6/64 ~ 6/12/22



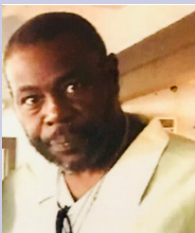
Mr. Albert Allen IV
8/7/61 ~ 12/25/22



Mrs. Leola Blanche (Cotton) Poole
5/8/1921 - 1/31/23



Mr. Thomas Earl Davis
1/22/49 ~ 12/18/22



Mr. Raymond Edwards Jr.
12/22/61 ~ 1/7/23



Mrs. Nannie (Brown) Boldin
8/15/25 - 2/2/23



Ms. Sandra (Diddy) Weaver Erwin
10/2/43 ~ 12/24/22



Mr. Harold Lee Stone
4/29/53 - 1/25/23



Ms. Emma Thompson
9/11/1922 ~ 2/2/23