

Cowherds have been valentines for many years

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Valentine's Day may be over. Even the unofficial breakup date (February 18) for people who were really not valentines after all is now past. But love remains in the hearts of Jerry and Mary Cowherd.

The Cowherds were married September 6, 1968, in their pastor's house. Jerry described it as just an old-fashioned wedding presided over by Rev. C.C. Willis, who had also performed their parents' wedding ceremony.

This wedding took place a couple of years after Jerry and Mary met in Campbellsville. Jerry had grown up in Green County while Mary was from Marion County. Mary was 16 when they met, and Jerry was 19 years old.

"We were young people, just milling around," Mary said. "I was with my friends, and he was with his friends when we met."

According to Jerry, the two of them dated for about two years, describing it as being off and on.

"I didn't say that," quipped Mary.

Jerry said that while they were dating, he would go to see Mary every Wednesday and then go back on Sunday afternoon.

Like every married couple, Jerry and Mary sometimes disagreed in their relationship, but they learned how to deal with it.

"I stayed mad when we disagreed," Mary laughed. "They say 'Don't go to bed mad,' but I think I did a few times. But all in all, we just talked about it and went on. Jerry never did go down that trail of being mad but I was always the one who got mad. But I got over it!"

Both agreed that sometimes you just have to let it go, whatever the disagreement is about.

Jerry and Mary mentioned some items that are terribly important to a healthy relationship.

"Well, we found out the hard way," Mary said, "but you should always start with God. We got too busy. We always went to church, but I can't say we always were in tune with God, the way we are now. Start with God and then you have to be best friends. That's my advice."

Jerry also had advice to couples who are seeking a healthy relationship.

"You have to be equally yoked," he said. "If one person is not a Christian, then that person may draw you away. You have to be best friends, and you have to have similar interests. Whatever she does, I always show up for her. When I was coaching, she only missed one football game when I was serving as head coach. She's my number one cheerleader."

Mary and Jerry agreed that in most relationships, the number one obstacle involves finances in some way.

"Everybody wants to start big," Jerry



Photos submitted
Mary and Jerry Cowherd are all decked out for her high school prom.



For Jerry and Mary Cowherd, church attendance has always been a very big part of their lives.

said. "We never had enough to get mad over money. With her being in banking, saving money was always important to her. I always wanted to spend what we had. But we always saved money to pay our taxes, and we are still saving now. We drove our cars for a long time and when we got that car paid off, we kept on making car payments by putting it in the bank for another one. That was something that was easy for us to do."

Spending money is something that should be discussed and sometimes requires the couple to make concessions in order to come to a consensus.

"I wanted her to be happy," Jerry said. "And it doesn't take much to make her happy."

Mary said that Jerry is a gadget buyer.

"Every gadget that comes out, he wants," she said. "But we compromised on what to

buy. We just tried to make each other happy within reason."

Some of the desire to make each other happy is displayed in how they spend their time, especially now that both of them are retired.

"When I was coaching," Jerry said, "there was often a game, football or basketball, on Friday nights. So, when I retired from coaching, every Friday night is now our date night. Whatever she wants to do, I'm in for it. I'm still paying her back now for all the Friday nights I was coaching."

The Cowherds agree that they have both been very blessed in life.

They each worked hard. Mary worked for two years at Union Underwear and then worked for 42 years in banking. Jerry was a coach and teacher but even during the summers, he sometimes worked in construction.



When Jerry Cowherd was a faculty member at GCHS, he and Mary often chaperoned high school proms. They were involved in student life in many ways.

"When I was in college, I worked construction," Jerry said. "We moved to town when I was a sophomore in high school. Before that, I'd pick blackberries and work in hay and tobacco."

The Cowherds have two children, a daughter, Teresa, and a son, Derek.

"Teresa went to UL," Mary said. "She's an industrial engineer."

Jerry said that Teresa has had different jobs as a project manager as companies are bought and sold and reorganized.

"She started with Ford right out of college," Jerry said. "Then she switched to Kroger and from there she went to GE and then to General

Dynamics."

Derek has been involved in sports most of his life and is currently in sports administration at the University of Louisville.

"Derek went to school at UL," Mary said, "then began working at LSU, then to Mississippi, then to Ohio State and then back to UL."

He met his wife while he was at LSU and according to Jerry, their two children, who are 13 and 11, are what he describes as "the apple of our eye."

Jerry said that he missed a lot of time with Derek when he was younger.

"While I was out coaching other people's sons, Mary was

pitching a ball without son," he said. "When he was in middle school, she was taking him everywhere while I coached. When he got big enough, he started following me around in different sports. We are a sports loving family. We've seen more things than most people even think about because of sports."

Because of Derek's jobs with powerhouse schools and their athletic programs, Jerry said that they've been to a Final Four, a football championship game, and several bowl games.

But Jerry and Mary realize there must be priorities in their lives and sports is not the number one priority.

Jerry went on to say that he told the Lord many years ago that his faith was number one, his family was number two and sports were number three.

The Cowherds are grateful for the mentors in their lives.

"Our pastor for 25 years, the Rev. Walter Johnson, has been a great mentor to us," Jerry said. "In addition to him, we had parents and grandparents as well as other extended family members who were good mentors and taught us about life."

Even 59 years after the time they first met, Jerry still describes Mary as his Valentine. That kind of commitment and pledge goes far beyond just one day a year of celebrating a relationship.



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