A field trip led to a field of dreams. McMinn County High School sweethearts Shari and Patrick first met in the fall of 1964 on a school trip to Cades Cove.

As the season grew colder, their love grew stronger. They became an official couple by attending a Christmas party together that year. Off campus, while dating, Patrick invited 10 friends to the house where they were living. In 1966, they were named "Most Lovable" by their senior classmates.

At age 16, Patrick taught Brenda how to drive so she could drive to work at a telephone company office.

After dating for two and a half years, on June 16, 1967, they shared a small wedding at Patrick’s parents’ Victorian house. Perfectly picturesque, the bride came down the stairs, and the wedding was in the front parlor.

Patrick began college in the fall of 1968 at Tennessee Wesleyan, attending a year and a half before joining the U.S. Air Force in February of 1968. While serving in his country, he attended classes to further his education.

Patrick’s military career allowed the couple to live in many places: Mississippi, Colorado, Italy, Texas, and North Carolina. Patrick also spent time in Thule, Greenland, Vietnam, and Alaska. After his 12 years of service, in 1979, they returned to Athens to raise their sons and to be near and care for their parents. They lived for five years in the house where they were married, before building their 20th and current home.

Patrick went back to college at Patrick Henry College in 1988, working part-time until he finished his bachelor’s degree in May 1990. He retired from the U.S. Postal Service, and Brenda retired from the Tennessee Wesleyan College Library.

Brenda and Patrick raised two successful sons, Sean Jaquish of Athens and Stephen Jaquish of Lebanon. Patrick and Brenda have two loving daughters-in-law and four grandchildren.

Brenda loves to sew and, together, they have babysitting their grandchildren and keeping touch with friends they have met along their journey. Reflecting on their story, Brenda says, “God had his hand in it.”

They have been members of Athens Church of Christ since returning to Athens in 1979. "The only perfect marriage," says Brenda, "is just two imperfect people who refuse to give up on each other and remember the vows they made on their wedding day."


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Jerry and Velva Howell
July 29, 1967

Willard worked for Athens Plow country. “I fell in love with her partly because...” says Velva. “I was adopted by First Baptist Church of Athens.” These two families have been a part of Athens for 38 years.

Willard and Velva met at a McMinn County High School basketball game in November 1966. “We met on a blind date,” says Velva. “We are opposites in a lot of ways, but it seems to work for us,” says Willard. “Continuing The Tradition” Marcie and Willard McKinney August 6, 1957

Beauty is only skin deep — but it was deep enough to get Willard’s attention when he met Wanda.

“...we love each other more today...” says Willard. “We are opposites in a lot of ways, but it seems to work for us,” says Willard. 

“...we love each other more today...” says Willard. “We are opposites in a lot of ways, but it seems to work for us,” says Willard.

Jerry retired from Athens City Schools, where he taught from McMinn County of Tennessee sporting events, and traveling.

Jerry and Velva Howell have been married for 50 years. “...we love each other more today...” says Willard. “We are opposites in a lot of ways, but it seems to work for us,” says Willard.
Two teachers, Fred and Hazel Hicks, have spent more than 50 years learning the greatest lesson of all: Love.

Hazel met Fred when he became a teacher at Mount Harmony School. It was a two-room school, and he taught all subjects and grades first through third, and he taught all grades fourth through eighth.

On Jan. 15, 1965, Fred asked Hazel to attend a basketball game at Hwassasser College. Both of them were teaching and going to school there, and they graduated from Hwassasser at different times. Fred graduated first.

During their courtship, they did not have a lot of money, but they enjoyed going to Fred's sisters' homes to visit and play games. They bonded through Rook, Scrabble, and other card and board games.

They were engaged for three months, and then they got married in First Christian Church in Etowah with Albert Dixon officiating the ceremony. The wedding was small. Both of Hazel's brothers were married at Niota United Methodist Church. The wedding was small. Both of Hazel's brothers were married at Niota United Methodist Church.

They were wed at First Christian Church in Etowah and married at Niota United Methodist Church. The wedding was small. Both of Hazel's brothers were married at Niota United Methodist Church.

The couple dated for three years before getting married at Niota United Methodist Church.

The Hicks say, "But try to work your problems out. Times can be hard," the Hicks say, "but try to work your problems out."

They were married at First Christian Church in Etowah and married at Niota United Methodist Church. The wedding was small. Both of Hazel's brothers were married at Niota United Methodist Church.

The Hicks say, "But try to work your problems out. Times can be hard," the Hicks say, "but try to work your problems out."

Since receiving the golden anniversary club award, the Hicks have spent the past five years traveling to New York, Hawaii, Florida, and Georgia to celebrate their 50th anniversary.

In addition to three wonderful children, they are blessed with three great-grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Since retirement, Roy and Geneva's hobbies include watching television and going to church. They enjoy spending time with each other and living their lives together.

Roy and Geneva have been members of Lakeview Baptist Church in Athens for five years. Roy teaches men's Sunday School classes. Geneva and Roy feel grateful to have both a great church family and blood family.

All couples hoping to one day celebrate a fifty year marriage are encouraged by the McBroons to "Get God in your home and life, and come see us and God at Lakeview Baptist Church."
Bruce and Kathy (Reese) Chambers
January 20, 1968

Love was in the air—or maybe more appropriately the steady stream of love that is born from the small moments that are collected together in the tapestry of life. For Doyle and Kathy Chambers when they first met at the loge pole Pool in the summer of 1964.

They talked on the telephone a lot after that until Kathy, who was 14 when they first met, turned 16 and was allowed to date.

In the spring of 1966, Doyle joined the United States Air Force. Mostly, he left Kathy and Doyle in a long-distance relationship. He was stationed at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Ga., which meant the couple dated when he could come home or when the occasional weekend found them together. “We were going to get married when I graduated high school,” says Kathy, “but we just couldn’t wait.”

Doyle promised her parents that he would finish high school. They accepted, and Doyle and Kathy went on a date to Parkways Baptist Church of Athens. Recounting this segue, the couple says, “Everything we owned fit in a ’65 Mustang. We married on Saturday, and we were back in Valdosta on Monday morning.”

“Living in different parts of the world and learning about the local cultures have made us what we are today,” Bill and Barbara say, “Always be honest with each other, keep God in your life, and take your marriage vows seriously. Marriage is never one-sided. Each one has to give a little to make it work.”

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