

STEPHANIE CONNORS & JEFFREY GORDON

June 6, 2009, in Philadelphia

LOVE

KELLIE PATRICK GATES

Hello there

Jeff and Steph met their junior year at Wissahickon High School in 1998. Jeff was living in Blue Bell. The daughter of a naval officer, Steph had just moved to Ambler from Hawaii, where she was born. The two were in the same social circle and became close friends. After graduation, they kept in touch, mostly through e-mail and instant messaging, while he studied physics and pre-med at Georgetown University and she studied animal science at the University of New Hampshire. It was through those electronic communications that Jeff started to realize he wanted to be more than friends.

Jeff belonged to an a cappella singing group, the Georgetown Chimes. On Steph's birthday, May 15, in 2002, Jeff called her, and the group sang "Happy Birthday" in four-part harmony into the phone.

Steph was "very hopeful" that Jeff went through all that trouble because he was interested in her. "I had the biggest crush on him," she said.

That summer, when the high school friends hung out together back in Pennsylvania, Jeff and Steph often found themselves staying out a little later than the rest of the group, talking. And then one night when Jeff was staying at a friend's home, caring for dogs and plants, he took the plunge and invited Steph to join him there for dinner and a movie.

How does forever sound?

In May 2008, Steph and Jeff, now both 27, were living in Bethesda, Md. He was doing a research fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, and she was working as a sales rep for a small biotech company.

It was the day before Steph's birthday, and Jeff took her to a fancy restaurant. He had asked the waiter to bring over a cake for her birthday. A pianist was playing, and Jeff asked Steph to dance. No one else was dancing. "What are you saying?" she asked in disbelief. But Jeff persuaded her. He asked the musician to play something romantic for Stephanie, and he obliged with "Can't Help Falling in Love." As they danced, a stranger from a



Jen Cleary Photography

nearby table came over and serenaded them.

When the music stopped, Steph began walking back to their table. Jeff pulled her back to him. "Stephanie, there's only one more request I have," he said, getting down on one knee.

The patrons burst into applause. Then the serenader and the other people at his table yelled, "Come on over! Let's see the ring!"

At home

The couple moved back to Pennsylvania shortly after their engagement. Jeff lived in Philadelphia's Graduate Hospital neighborhood and Steph split her time between his place and her parents' home in Ambler. After their honeymoon, the couple moved to Seattle so Jeff could begin his three-year internal medicine residency at the University of Washington Medical Center. Steph is a medical billing consultant, whose job moved with her from Pennsylvania.

It was so them

This couple love music and dancing, and that was evident to their 140 guests.

Father James Walsh, a Georgetown professor and Jesuit priest who sang in the Chimes with Jeff, married the couple at

and Michelle Connors did the party slide, Emily Gordon and Michael Gordon did a tango of sorts, and Kevin Gordon and Kasey Connors mimicked the performance of John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in *Grease*.

"It totally revved everyone up for the reception," Steph said.

Awestruck

After the bridal party photos were taken, Jeff, Steph, and their attendants were allowed to go into the reception area, while the guests were still having cocktails. "We got to see all of the room, with the tables set up. It was breathtaking," Steph said. "The feeling was like, 'Wow, we did it. We're married. And the best party of our lives is about to start.'"

At the end of their dance, Jeff dipped Steph and their guests rose to their feet and applauded. "It was the culmination of our hard work, and to see our friends there clapping for us was pretty cool," Jeff said.

Discretionary spending

A bargain: The couple had attended a formal dance at 30th Street Station in November, and really liked the lighting that was done in the room. They sought quotes from lighting vendors, then discovered that their DJ, Paul Evans with Silver Sound, offered a lighting package. They saved hundreds of dollars by using Evans.

The splurge: Jeff and Steph were originally going to handle all of the wedding planning on their own, but Jeff's mom and the couple's friend Katie convinced them a worry-free day was worth the money.

The getaway

A week at Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Officiant

The Rev. James Walsh of Georgetown University.

Venue

St. Agatha/St. James Catholic Church, Philadelphia, and 30th Street Station.

Catering

Feastivities of Philadelphia

Photography

Jen Cleary of Philadelphia and Los Angeles, via Bella Photography.

Music

Paul Evans of Silver Sound Entertainment, Frazer.

Dress

Bridal & Veil in San Diego.

Invitations

J. Davis Printing, Roxborough.

Planner

Collette Mattmiller of What Dreams Are Made Of, Philadelphia.

St. Agatha/St. James Catholic Church at 38th and Chestnut in Philadelphia.

While in high school, both Jeff and Steph were in the band — he played trumpet, she played flute. Their high school band director, Michael Hood, arranged for the Wissahickon Brass Quintet to play at the wedding.

The reception was held at 30th Street Station. The couple's Bethesda home had been two blocks from a dance studio, so they learned to fox trot, swing and waltz. When they moved back to Pennsylvania, they hired someone to design a dance for them, which they performed at the reception to the Michael Buble version of "L.O.V.E."

The Chimes performed four songs during the reception, including "Happy Birthday." This time it was in honor of the bride's mother, Wendy, whose birthday was the next day.

This didn't happen at rehearsal

The couple's six attendants, all brothers or sisters of the bride or groom, were introduced to the guests in pairs to James Brown's "I Feel Good." Each couple did a goofy version of a dance all the way to their seats. Peter Gordon

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