

UNITED IN MARRIAGE

by

ROBERT DOWNS

Don and Shirley Downs would like to announce the marriage of their son, Robert Downs, to Jennifer Appel, daughter of Ken and Sue Appel. What follows are a few highlights, written from the groom's point of view, of said events that took place in Stow, MA.

On October 15, 2011, I celebrated the first day of the rest of my life, by marrying a woman who makes me want to be a better man. The ceremony took place at Wedgewood Pines Country Club in Stow, MA. While it was a destination wedding for both of us, it was a place still very much a part of my bride's life, and it will continue to remain close to her heart for the rest of her life. The Reverend Phillip Wangberg officiated the ceremony with excellent precision and poise, as well as throwing in just the right number of jokes to keep the crowd loose.

As is the case with all weddings, a minor hiccup or two makes for a good story later. The Massachusetts wind decided it wanted to be as much a part of our wedding as we did, by knocking over two columns, and more than that many chairs. The cold breezed through our ceremony, trying to counteract the warmth that was shared, but it couldn't ruin an otherwise perfect day. As the colors changed on the trees, I felt a change in my heart, growing fuller with each passing minute.

The vision of Jen walking toward me is an image I won't soon forget. Her smile lights up my world every time it crosses my path, as I'm reminded just how lucky I am to have her in my life. As is often the case in life, it's the little details that make all the difference—from turquoise and chocolate brown gift-wrapped favors, to a photo slideshow that my mom painstakingly put together, to a small cutout leaf and orange painted place card, to lanterns that lined the aisle, to a tree guestbook populated by individual leaves, to a ride in a golf cart, to pulling our individual families together for a group photo, to a photographer who snapped nearly a thousand pictures in approximately five hours—and provide memories that will last a lifetime.

Along with being a traditional Lutheran service, for the most part, we incorporated the ceremonial element of the breaking of the glass, with a small nod to Ken Appel, father-of-the-bride,

and his Jewish heritage. I labored over this particular point considerably, so I could stomp on cue, avoiding any and all injuries that may have resulted from ineffective stomping.

But you don't attend a wedding for the ceremony, even though we received multiple compliments, most of which were directed at our beloved pastor. Guests attend a wedding for the reception. And Wedgewood Pines Country Club knows how to throw one heck of a party. As my lovely bride mentioned more than once, she called our wedding "A dessert-themed party with a wedding thrown in." She probably wasn't too far off either. From a three-tiered wedding cake, to a groom's cake with a golf theme, to multiple pastries, to a sundae bar with two flavors of ice cream and enough toppings to do some serious damage to one's waistline, it had something for everyone.

Our deejay did an excellent job of getting the crowd involved, and my eighty-six year-old grandma hit her stride and rarely came up for air, once her feet touched the dance floor. The two brothers—Jen's and mine—tossed all caution aside, and in the case of one, a few articles of clothing, which might have improved his dancing. We ended our evening of dancing with Vertical Horizon's "Lucky One" and I'd say that's a rather good summary of the way I feel.