



Hitched

Students commit during college

BY ALEX BOLES
Assistant Features Editor

They were having a bad day and decided to be each other's Valentines. Six years later, they're married.

Senior Nicole Smith and her husband of six months, Adam, met on Valentine's Day of her freshman year in high school. Smith was 15, Adam was 19, and she said the only reason her parents let the two date was because he called them to ask permission.

"He called my house one day and was like, 'Hey, can I talk to your parents?'" Smith said. "And he actually asked my dad if he could date me because we actually started dating when he was already off going to college. My dad was like, 'Um, yeah, sure' because he was taken off guard, but he definitely respected him for it, and I always give him a hard time for it because Adam never actually asked me, he asked my parents."

Smith said they planned on getting married after her graduation, but instead, they were married when she was 20.

She said people around her questioned her young age and why she was getting married.

"I figured we would get engaged while I was still in school, and it didn't bother me at all," she said. "I mean, definitely sometimes you get people who are like, 'You're

engaged ... are you kidding me?' I guess I was 20 years old, and they were like, 'What are you thinking?'"

Smith said she and her husband have had to deal with a long-distance relationship since they started dating back in high school.

"I think before we got married, the distance thing in a way kind of helped us because it really helped us to decide if we were going to make a commitment to this or not," she said. "Now it is harder because we just want to be together. We've done [long distance] for four years, and now, we just want to be together all the time."

She said she plans to return home to her husband after she graduates and will substitute teach until they begin a family together. Smith said she would like to be home with her husband now but that she knows how important getting an education is for her future and for her family.

Senior Seth Freeman said he proposed to his girlfriend of a year and four months about two weeks ago. A mutual friend introduced the two, and Facebook helped to keep them together.

"We met at [a friend's] house and sent Facebook messages a couple times, and we both came up early for Truman Week last year and hung out a lot and just got to know each other more," Freeman said. "We had a lot of

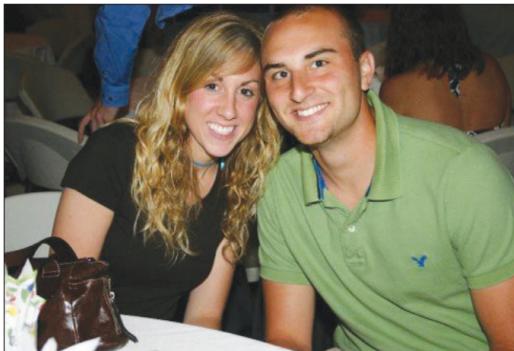


Photo submitted
Senior Seth Freeman proposed to his now fiancé Annie Campbell, who graduated last year, earlier this month.

things in common, and we connected in a very real way, like spiritually, intellectually—so it was good."

Freeman proposed to his now-fiancee on her birthday. He took her on a tour of their relationship, singing to her at each location along the way. He said they went to the places where they first kissed and where they first said 'I love you' to each other.

Back at his apartment, he covered the room with rose petals and candles and decided to sing her favorite song.

"I couldn't memorize [the song]," he said. "I was so nervous the week before [that] I couldn't memorize it, so I had the sheet there with the lyrics on it, so I

asked her to close her eyes while I sang it to her, and after that was over she was bawling, and I proposed. And she said yes."

The couple decided to get married after Freeman graduates and before he goes to medical school in the spring. He said his original plan was to get engaged this summer, but he could not wait any longer. Planning the wedding has been hectic, but their parents have been helpful, he said.

"It's been a challenge, but honestly we're both so excited that we're not concerned about it," Freeman said. "A lot of planning stuff that we've done so far has been just in the evening after classes are over and after I've gotten to study a little bit, and also it's my last semester, and I took kind of a lighter course load. So homework and studying hasn't been really bad so far."

Freeman said his parents have their concerns about how young the couple is, but he is ready for the challenges that await him. He said most of his friends can see how happy he is, and he knows they are happy for him on the inside.

"I think my faith led me to develop an idea of who I was early on and what I wanted in somebody else," he said. "It's funny because [people] bring up stuff like, 'You know it's not going to be easy,' and my response often is that it's never really going to be easy for two people to combine their lives."

Design by Andrea Bailey/Index



Photo submitted
Senior Nicole Smith and her husband Adam Smith married last summer after dating for six years.

Brian Krylowicz, director of University Counseling Services, said the counseling center offers marriage and couples counseling to Truman students even if one of them is not from the University.

"It's interesting because we end up talking a lot about relationships in terms of what we do, but it tends to be we don't get a lot of couples coming in directly for couples counseling," Krylowicz said.

He said that last year the counseling center saw fewer than 10 couples come in for counseling as couples. The third-most-discussed issue he sees when people come in for counseling is romantically related issues, he said. Krylowicz said that with this age group it makes sense to see a number of students concerned with romantic issues.

"It's the 'Facebook official,'" he said. "... Honestly, in the last three years we've seen more Facebook official or the ending of a Facebook official type of thing."

He said premarital counseling is becoming more popular within religious organizations. He said he thinks that it should be used to get some of the issues out, especially with young couples because they will be spending the rest of their lives together.

"What it really comes down to is the thing that I've always seen in relationships that work is you have communication, trust and you never get nasty," he said. "You never get to the point where you just get defensive to each other."

Krylowicz compared relationships in college to the inner workings of a car.

"Your car works really decent if it's revving 30, but your car doesn't work as well when it's revving 120," he said. "It has to be well put together, and that's why race cars and things like that are precision designs. It's the whole 'if it doesn't kill it, it makes it stronger' kind of idea. You need to have communication."

Want to be environmentally friendly for Valentine's Day?



Try out some of these tips to show how much you care for both your valentine and the earth.

- Throw your old flowers away in a compost bin instead of the trash. Better yet, instead of flowers, get your valentine trees or shrubs that can be replanted in the spring.
- Consider gifts made of recycled materials, such as clothing made of water and soda bottles or kitchen tools and decorative items made of recycled plastic or glass.
- Eat a romantic dinner by candlelight to save electricity, or walk instead of drive to your favorite restaurant.
- When sending greeting cards, use cards made with recycled paper.

Source: Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Around The Ville

Healthy Relationships Day

The University Counseling Center hosts a day to evaluate your relationships.



10a.m. to 2 p.m.
Thursday
Student Union Building
Free

Vagina Monologues

Women's Resource Center sponsors the 10th annual production of Eve Ensler's series of monologues.



8 p.m. Monday & Tuesday
Baldwin Auditorium
\$3 for one ticket
\$5 for two

Folklore

Songwriter and musician Charlie Parr will offer a demonstration and discussion of folk music.



1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Friday
SUB Down Under
Free