

*"My husband stuttered around in German. It would have been much easier for me in English because I had spent a year in Great Britain, so I knew English. My husband insisted in speaking German, which was a talent."* — Karin Harmon



Krista Goodman/Index

Professor of art history James Harmon met his wife Karin during his time spent traveling around Germany. After 43 years of marriage Karin Harmon said that although marriage isn't a fairy tale, you learn to grow with one another.

# All Eyes On: James and Karin Harmon

**Professor, wife share the story of their first date, which took place in a Volkswagen bus**

BY CASSANDRA MCCARTY  
Features Editor

James Harmon, professor of art history took a journey 43 years ago that included a Volkswagen bus, a waterfall, steak and wine. After traveling around German villages during his time spent active in the United States Seventh Army Band, James Harmon met Karin Hahn and after a brief courtship, they married.

Karin Harmon said she and James were introduced to one another in Germany when he was wandering from village to village studying the architecture of churches. Their first important outing, she said, was a road trip in a Volkswagen bus from Stuttgart to Urach to see a waterfall.

"Well, on the way down there it clouded up, and there was thunder and lightning,"

Karin said. "Umbrella or no, we were soaking wet, so we decided that since we were already soaking wet, it couldn't get any worse. So we kept walking and went to the waterfall."

Karin said that after visiting the waterfall, they went back to the Volkswagen bus, and it ended up being very cozy because it was warm and James had a meal waiting for the couple. While eating their dinner of steak and wine, Karin said they ended up laughing about the rain and what it did to their appearances. Karin said she decided. If a man could laugh about a situation like he did the afternoon in the bus, he would make a great husband, because he could laugh about anything.

Karin said she and James did not fiddle

around in their courtship, marrying quickly in a civil ceremony May 5, 1967. However, when his parents arrived from Indiana in the beginning of August, they had a church wedding.

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Karin Harmon  
Wife of Art Professor

Although Karin and James Harmon said they fell in love quickly because they have so many things in common with one another, they did not share the same language. James spoke English and Karin spoke German.

Karin said that when she first met James he insisted on speaking German so he could become fluent. She felt lucky, she said, because her husband can now speak German without making many errors, while her friends' husbands did not pick up the language.

"My husband stuttered around in German," Karin said. "It would have been much eas-

ier for me in English because I had spent a year in Great Britain, so I knew English. My husband insisted in speaking German, which was a talent. But through his insistence I have a husband who actually speaks German. It was worthwhile to have the patience."

James said that even before he married Karin he had always planned to stay in Germany after his time serving in the Seventh Army Band to study the language and the art history.

"I decided I wanted to do that, and Karin was extremely helpful in that effort because she made it possible for me to bump up my language skills to the place where I knew it needed to be," James said.

Karin said that despite the years she and James Harmon have been married, there are times when they get on one another's nerves, and marriage is not like the fairy tale painted for young children. However, she said that as they grow in age, they have grown together.

"With age and with time one learns to understand each other so much better," Karin Harmon said. "And one would not want to be without [the] other."

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