

Courting of Lynne

It was early March 1972. I was an intern on the orthopedic service at the VA hospital in Tucson, Arizona, in the process of finishing my postgraduate year I in Tucson. It was quite a busy service, with several medical students on board, and I was running it because there were no residents. Several weeks before, I had been fortunate to have been offered the position as a neurosurgical resident in Boston at the New England Medical Center, and I had already planned on leaving Tucson in early June to start my neurosurgical residency in Boston.

I was making rounds with the medical students when I entered a room with multiple patients. We were making rounds on one of the patients when I noticed out of the corner of my eye a nursing student, a tall, beautiful, blonde. After our rounds, not having the heart (nerve) to ask for the telephone number of this beautiful girl, I asked the secretary of the ward if she would mind asking for this girl's telephone number for me. After arching her eyebrows, she agreed to do it. Consequently, half an hour or so later, she came back with the number. She also informed me that she had told the girl really not waste her time, since I would be in town only a few more months. That evening or the next day, I finally had enough courage to call the number and found out that this girl's name was Lynne and that she lived in a dormitory, and in fact the number that I called was a phone in the hall of the dormitory. The call was at first answered by somebody else, who then yelled Lynne's name and she came to the phone. After some awkward discussion, we agreed on a date on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1972.

Nervously, that day I got into my two-seater convertible car and drove to the dormitory. There I asked for Lynne Twohig, who several minutes later came down the stairs looking absolutely stunning. We double dated with my friend Sam and his girlfriend, Brenda, and went to Gentle Ben's, a bar in Tucson and imbibed the appropriate amounts of green beer. The date that

night was long, after we had visited one or two more bars celebrating St. Patrick's Day with green beer.

Over the next several weeks, we dated very heavily, almost daily, often going out, but more often staying at my small apartment near the medical school where one of us would cook. Several weeks later, her parents came to Tucson, apparently to check me out, and we went out for lunch at a restaurant on the Miracle Mile, which is a street in Tucson. On the whole, I thought that went well, but I certainly was anxious. Several days later I took Lynne to Phoenix and introduced her to my parents. This was relatively short but nevertheless, my Dad took Lynne aside and told her that she was what he liked to call "a Sonntag girl." After that pleasant introduction of Lynne to my parents, we drove back to Tucson and continued our intense relationship.

The day finally came for me to leave for Boston. My friend Rick had a girlfriend in Baltimore, and we decided that since he was in Phoenix doing an internship, I would come to Phoenix and pick him up. It happened that Lynne was in Phoenix at that time, as well. I vividly remember getting into my little two-seater 190SL Mercedes, putting all my earthly belongings in the trunk and small space behind the front seats, tying down a suitcase on the roof and leaving Tucson in the rain. About 20 miles outside of Tucson, on the highway toward Phoenix, the suitcase dislodged itself from the top and flew off. I then found room in the small trunk and placed it there.

In Phoenix I picked up Rick and went to Lynne's house to say good-bye. I didn't know at that time exactly what my thoughts or feelings for her were, and our good-byes were quite short. I remember vividly that I was driving with Rick beside me, waving out of the Mercedes to Lynne as I saw her figure become smaller and smaller as we went on north to Flagstaff.

I dropped off Rick in Baltimore and drove to Boston, after getting lost in New York, which was quite scary since I had a flat outside New York and had to put the spare tire on. I now had a flat tire along with all my earthly belongings in the trunk and got lost in Harlem during the night. I eventually found my way out of Harlem and drove up to Boston.

After I started my residency, we exchanged letters, which became more infrequent as time went on. Eventually, however, Lynne came out to Boston and spent two days and nights with me. It was a great time. I wanted to impress her, so we went out to a restaurant and I ordered a small bottle of wine, even though I personally am not a wine drinker. Nevertheless, we had a very nice dinner with a bottle of Riesling, which was quite sweet. After two days in Boston, she flew back to Tucson, and again our letters continued but became more infrequent.

Within six to eight weeks of that visit, I took two or three of my vacation days and flew to Tucson. Lynne picked me up from the airport, and arriving in Tucson, we stopped at a bar that was a favorite of the medical students, the Green Dolphin, about one o'clock in the afternoon. Lynne and I sat down in the bar, and I said I would go ahead and get us two beers. I walked up to the bartender in this bar that I hadn't been in now for approximately six to eight months. It was John, the bartender that I knew from my medical school days who turned around after I ordered the two beers and looked at me and said, "Where have you been? I haven't seen you in the last couple of days." It had been almost eight months.

After that two-day visit in Tucson, I flew back to Boston and our letters of communication basically ceased. That was the spring of 1973.

I had no further communication with Lynne of any sort until I came back to Phoenix in April 1974. My dad, unfortunately, was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1973 and eventually developed brain metastasis. My brothers and I decided to all come back for Easter 1974, to be

with my dad for what would probably be the last time. My older brother lived in Greece at that time with his wife and two daughters, and they all came to Phoenix. My younger brother was already in Phoenix.

While home for Easter, my good friend, Sam, invited me to a party on Saturday, the night before Easter. It was indeed a shock, a surprise, and a roller coaster of emotions when I saw Lynne across the room at this party. We immediately started talking, and talked and talked the whole night until early in the morning. We decided then and there, after much discussion and weighing the various pros and cons, that she would move back to Boston with me and try it for six months. We also decided that I would pick her up the next day, Sunday, after the Easter celebration with my family and go out for the evening.

When I arrived at Lynne's house that evening and rang the doorbell, her father was waiting for me and asked me to step onto the back patio with him. I was nervous as hell and thought I kind of knew what was coming, but certainly did not know for sure. After we settled onto the patio chairs in the backyard, he said he had heard from Lynne that she was thinking of going back with me to Boston for the next six months. I told him, yes, that is certainly what we discussed. He then directly asked me what my intentions were. Obviously I was in somewhat of a hot seat and I believe I mumbled something like, "Well, if things work out we might get married." This I thought was a reasonable statement and would appease a father. He, however, answered, "Well if you are thinking of getting married, then why don't you marry her now?" To this I replied, "We can certainly do that." At that moment Lynne appeared through the patio doors, and I sheepishly looked up at her and said, "I think I just agreed with your dad that we should get married." She looked down at me and said, "We have to talk."

We got into her Volkswagen, and for reasons still unknown to me, ended up in the parking lot of a Circle K convenience store. After much discussion, weighing the considerations that my dad was still alive and my family was all together in Phoenix, and her dad's suggestion (or request, or demand), we agreed to get married. We drove back to her house and announced this to her parents. This was Sunday night.

Since my flight back to Boston was Thursday and I had to be on call on Friday, we decided to get married that Wednesday. This set the wheels in motion and shows the phenomenal efficiency and work ethic of her parents. Suffice it to say, Monday or Tuesday, I met the priest who was going to marry us and who, after several questions about what religion the children should be raised in, repetitively asked me if I had been married before, since I was almost thirty years old at the time. I repeatedly answered no, I had never been married before. After our second meeting with him, either the same or the next day, after he again asked me multiple questions concerning raising children, my faith, and the details of the ceremony on Wednesday, he repetitively asked me if I had been married before and once again, I repeatedly answered him that I had not and said, "This will be my first marriage."

Eventually, he was appeased with my answer. Meanwhile, during these two or three days, Lynne and I drove to Tucson where she had an apartment with two of her girlfriends. We removed her belongings from the apartment and took most of them with us to Phoenix. While in Tucson, we also went to a department store and Lynne, with her girlfriends, and with me in the distance, picked out a wedding dress. After driving back to Phoenix with her belongings from the apartment, we had a rehearsal dinner at a Mexican restaurant. Surprisingly, her brother from Spokane, her grandfather and his wife, and an uncle from San Diego all made it to this rehearsal

dinner, as well as my whole family including my brother and his family who had prolonged his vacation.

The rehearsal dinner was in a Mexican restaurant, and it is customary that the groom's family pays for this. Since I had no cash, I paid for this with a credit card, and I remember how expensive I thought it was. The rehearsal dinner cost \$84.00. The next day, April 24th, Lynne and I got married at six o'clock at night in Brophy Chapel. It was a great day. Many of my friends from Tucson came up, and the friends who were in Phoenix attended. My father and mother were there, as well as my older brother and his family, and my younger brother. Lynne's family, extended family and many friends were there as well. Sam, Rüdiger, and Guenther were my best men. Lynne had her three best girlfriends as her maids of honor. I only owned one suit at the time, which I had bought in the basement of Filene's Department Store in Boston, and I wore that as my wedding suit. I still don't know why I had brought it along, possibly thinking I might wear it for Easter church service.

After a beautiful service and exchanging our vows at the church, we had the reception at Lynne's parents house. Lynne's mother had arranged the food, which friends of the family had prepared. There was a keg of beer in the backyard to which my friends and I helped ourselves frequently. Sam had provided Lynne and me with a Lincoln Town Car for the drive after the reception that evening to a hotel. At that time, and still, I thought that was just an unbelievably generous gesture. After a very lively reception--one that, I should mention, was marked by many unusual things, one of the more unusual being our friend Carol Bailey's climbing through the kitchen window to get her drink--and after a lot of hugs and kisses were exchanged, Lynne and I got into the Lincoln and drove to a Holiday Inn on Van Buren Street.

After our first night as a married couple at the Holiday Inn, Lynne and I drove to her parents' house where breakfast was waiting for us, as well as my immediate family and her immediate family. Pictures were taken and we all headed to the airport. At the airport, I knew it was most likely the last time I would see my father. I remember very vividly walking down the ramp to the tarmac and up the steps to the plane, waving to my family--my father, my mother, my younger brother, my older brother and his wife and two children. Indeed, that was the last time I saw my Dad.

Our trip to Boston was uneventful. We stopped in Chicago where we met Lynne's uncle and his wife and had a beer with them during our layover. My recollection of that visit was that Uncle Ernie relayed to me that he really did not think very much of doctors or nurses. This was obviously interesting, since Lynne was a nurse and I was a physician. We got back on the plane and went to Boston where our friend, John Hamm, picked us up from the airport. He was quite surprised that I was with Lynne, since he had planned on only picking me up.

My apartment was the basic bachelor apartment, where you could sit in a chair at the kitchen table and reach the refrigerator without getting up. This was very advantageous when you wanted to obtain liquid refreshments, but Lynne was somewhat surprised when she arrived in the apartment and upon opening the door found that there were only three cans of beer and nothing else in the refrigerator.

We settled into our married life somewhat, although it was initially very difficult for her since she had no friends or any other support system, and I was gone basically ninety percent of the time, only coming home two out of three nights and then totally exhausted.

Nevertheless, our marriage made it through the rough times when I was a resident in Boston, and little did we know then that we would last for forty years and counting. In retrospect,

I owe a great deal to Lynne's father's suggestion, or mandate, that we should get married. It was the best move of my life, and it was also the last time my whole family was together.

Thus was the courtship of Lynne.