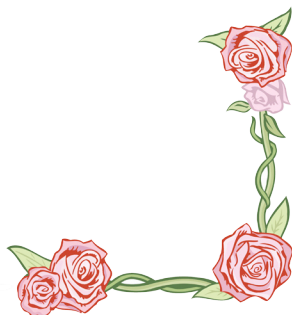
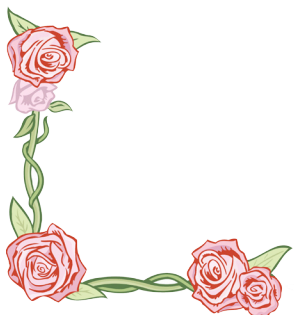


The Wedding Ceremony of
Susan Norene Gries & Mark Lloyd Langston
Camp Westwind, Oregon
13 September 2008





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Music

Music provided by Peggy Gries and friends

The Processional

♡ Mark Langston escorts mothers Marcia Langston and Elaine Gries to their seats and stays up front.

♡ Groomsman Matt Hopkins and Bridesmaids Caroline Broadbent and Chris Ferrante

Then the rest proceed:

♡ Ringbearer Etani di Properzio, gives rings to Dan Dundon

♡ Best Man Dan Dundon and Matron of Honor Jennifer di Properzio

♡ Flower girls Sage Hall and Athena di Properzio

♡ Groomsman Scott Langston and Bridesmaid Nancy Cothran

♡ Flower girls Alison Langston and Hesperus di Properzio

♡ Groomsman Paul Gries and Bridesmaid Tara Nierenberg

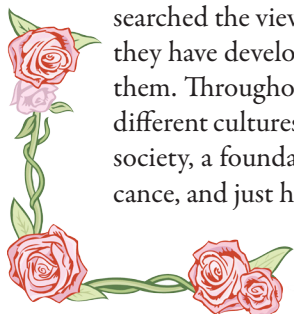
♡ Sue Gries and father David Gries

♡ Groomsman George Newbury and Bridesmaid Jennifer Gilden

The Ceremony

Good afternoon! We are here to perform, witness, and celebrate the joining together in marriage of Susan Norene Gries and Mark Lloyd Langston.

Mark and Sue take this marriage seriously. With me, they have researched the views of marriage of different cultures and religions, and they have developed a ceremony that will bring in aspects of many of them. Throughout history, they have found, all over the world, in all different cultures, marriage has been viewed as the basic foundation of society, a foundation that brings stability, has a deep spiritual significance, and just helps people learn to live.





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For example, in the aboriginal cultures in Australia, marriage was not just a union between two individuals but a link that brought two families together in a special relationship, bringing mutual obligations and responsibilities, and rights, to all involved. In these aboriginal cultures, all people were expected to marry.

In some native American Indian cultures, marriage was so important that the bridal couple selected four sponsors —not the parents, of course, but well-respected elders, who committed to a lifetime of support for the couple, giving spiritual and marital guidance.

In China, the Confucians believed that one purpose of marriage was the cultivation of virtue. And did you know that the second of the two characters in the Chinese word for marriage means *friendship*, *love*, and *harmony*, indicating the correct way of living for a married couple.

Mark and Sue's relationship —founded on friendship, love, and harmony—is important to them, and Anne McMillan will read an Arabic Blessing that beautifully conveys aspects of this relationship.

An Arabic Blessing

You are my friend

*And a friend is one to whom one may pour out all the
contents of one's heart —chaff and grain together,*

Knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it,

Keep what is worth keeping and, with the breath of kindness,

Blow the rest away.

In East Indian cultures, marriage is considered to be holy and divine. Hindus believe that there is only one God and that we all are, at our core, that One God. Marriage is a life-long social and spiritual responsibility that presents the opportunity for two people to grow into soul mates and realize that One-ness.



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Janet Miles' poem *Two Trees* shows these two souls coming together, while evoking a connection of people and nature that is so important to Sue and Mark. In fact, Mark and Sue's attraction for nature is why we are all here today, in this beautiful place. Jeanna Ozyck, will you recite this poem?

Two Trees, by Janet Miles

*A portion of your soul has been entwined with mine.
A gentle kind of togetherness, while separately we stand
As two trees deeply rooted in separate plots of ground
While their topmost branches come together,
Forming a miracle of lace against the heavens.*

From the Jewish-Christian perspective, marriage is God's idea, designed and instituted by the Creator Himself. Doesn't the first book of the Bible say something like this,

The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' ... and while the man was sleeping, God took one of the man's ribs And God made a woman from the rib ..., and God brought the woman to the man. ... For this reason, a man and a woman will leave their father and mother and be united, and they will become one flesh.



That is what the Bible says. Of course, women may perceive the situation differently. In engineering and computer programming, the first design, the first model, is created just to gain experience, and then the real designing begins. In the same way, God found out that his first design, man, was lacking. So God went back to the drawing board and made a second, new and improved, model: woman!



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A Hopi Tradition

Here is a Hopi Indian tradition. Early on the morning of the wedding, the female relatives of the bride —that would be Elaine and her sister, Norene— wash the couple's hair in a single basin and then interweave their hair to signify their lifelong union. With their hair interwoven, the bride and groom walk to the edge of the mesa to witness and pray to the rising sun.

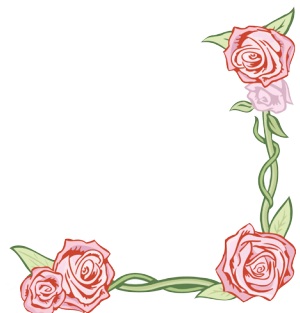
Well, we don't have a mesa. And we see the sun setting, not rising, so it would have to be an evening ceremony, which is OK because I couldn't get them up in the morning anyway. But, looking at Mark, I knew we would have problems with the weaving-of-the-hair bit.

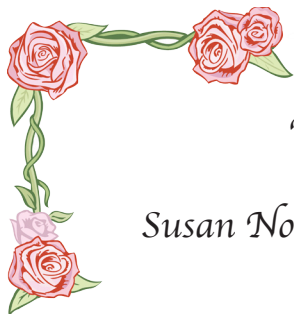
Then I thought of Sue's twin, Paul. Have a look! So, I asked him to stand in for Mark, but he would have none of it. And we had to forego this tradition.

To Love is not to Possess, by James Kavanaugh

One of the themes found in many cultures is that the love shared by a couple grows from physical attraction and attachment into a deeper love that is more accepting and understanding. James Kavanaugh, once a Catholic Priest, has written a poem that expresses this kind of love. Rick Huddle will you read it?

*To love is not to possess,
To own or imprison,
Nor to lose one's self in another.
Love is to join and separate,
To walk alone and together,
To find a laughing freedom
That lonely isolation does not permit.
It is finally to be able
To be who we really are,
No longer clinging in childish dependency
Nor docilely living separate lives in silence.*





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*It is to be perfectly one's self
And perfectly joined in permanent commitment
To another —and to one's inner self.
Love endures only when it moves like waves,
Receding and returning gently or passionately,
Or moving lovingly like the tide
In the moon's own predictable harmony,
Because finally, despite a child's scars
Or an adult's deepest wounds,
They are openly free to be
Who they really are—and always secretly were—
In the very core of their being,
Where true and lasting love can alone abide.*

A Buddhist Marriage Homily

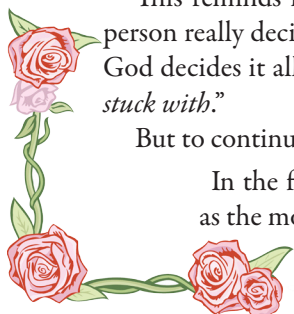
The Buddhists say that,

“Nothing happens without a cause. The union (of Mark and Sue) has not come about accidentally but is the foreordained result of many past lives. This tie can therefore not be broken or dissolved.

This reminds me what a 10-year old girl, Kirsten, once said: “No person really decides before they grow up who they’re going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later *who you’re stuck with.*”

But to continue the Buddhist homily:

In the future, happy occasions will come as surely as the morning, and difficult times as surely as night.





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When things go joyously, meditate. When things go badly, meditate. Meditation in the manner of the Compassionate Buddha will guide your life. To say the words 'love and compassion' is easy. But to accept that love and compassion are built upon patience and perseverance is not easy. Your marriage will be firm and lasting if you remember this."

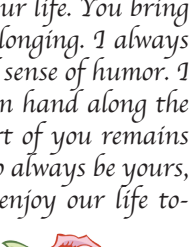
The Chupah

Finally, this wedding is taking place under a Jewish *chupah*, or bridal canopy. Sue made it for the wedding of her friends, Tara and Erin, and she is happy to reuse it. The chupah represents the home that the two have built together. Its four open sides, just as in Abraham's tent, are a symbol of hospitality to ones' guests. This initial home, this chupah, has no furniture, to remind everyone that the home is the people in it, and not the possessions.

The Vows

You have now heard about aspects of several cultures and religions. Together, they form a picture of something wonderful, but something that, as the older people here know, takes patience, perseverance, and effort to maintain and develop. Mark and Sue know this, and they are now ready to express their vows to each other, in entering into this marriage.

Mark, I appreciate your calm optimism, the way you make me laugh, and the way that you make our love a priority in your life. You bring to my life contentment, confidence, and a sense of belonging. I always dreamed of meeting someone with such integrity and sense of humor. I enjoy your company whether we are walking hand in hand along the beach or some mountain peak. Wherever I go, a part of you remains with me. I promise to be open and honest. I promise to always be yours, to share good times and challenging times, and to enjoy our life together. I promise to live these vows forever."





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Sue, From the day we first met, I have appreciated your genuineness and thoughtfulness. You are my best friend and my inspiration. You have brought joy to my life, you put a smile on my face, and you help me to be a better person. I appreciate your values and your passion for doing good things. I promise to be there for you and support you through good times and hard, to always be honest, and to share new adventures together. I will always strive to make you as happy as you make me. I promise to live these vows forever.

Tikkun Olam

The Jewish phrase *Tikken olam* is usually translated as *repairing the world*. Merm Rosenbaum, can you explain a bit more about this term and also about the Tikkun Community?

In the sixteenth century, kabbalists used *tikkun olam* to describe the true role of humanity: to restore the broken world to its divine essence. Similar concepts appear in other religions. Christ exhorted people to prepare for a better life through love, wakefulness, and charity, and, in Buddhism, the *bodhisattvas* vow to forego final liberation until all beings have been freed from suffering.

Today, *tikkun olam* means: take action, do your part to make this world whole, to make it as it should be.

There is a Tikkun Community, which calls people spiritual when their “deepest values lead them to challenge the ethos of selfishness and materialism that has led to the frantic search for money and power.” Instead, the community works for a life that places at its center: “love, kindness, generosity, peace, nonviolence, social justice, awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation, thanksgiving, humility, and joy.”





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I, Elaine, Marcia, and Wink, who is Mark's Dad but could not be here, know that Mark and Sue feel the same way as this Tikkun Community. One can see it in the way they live. Not money and power and selfishness but friendship and peace and wonder at all this nature and creation inspire their lives. and we feel so fortunate that they have found each other and will work together, with all of us here, to make this world a better place.

The Rings

Sue, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vows, and of love and joy that has neither beginning nor end, as a token of my love and faithfulness and friendship.

Mark, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vows, and of love and joy that has neither beginning nor end, as a token of my love and faithfulness and friendship.

Community Vows

Now that Sue and Mark have sealed their vows, it is time for you, their relatives and friends, to vow to support them. Earlier, I mentioned an American Indian tradition of having four sponsors to help the couple throughout their lifetime. I call upon all of you to be their sponsors.

Do you, friends and relatives, promise, from this day forward, to encourage them, to love them, to give them your guidance (when they ask for it), and to support them in the promises that they have made?

If so, please say, "we do", and let's say it loud enough for the people on the other side of this great Pacific Ocean, a symbol of Peace, to hear us. "We do".

Husband an Wife, Wife and Husband

I now pronounce you Husband and Wife, Wife and Husband.

Mark, you can kiss the bride, and Sue, you can kiss the husband!

I present to you Sue and Mark Langston!

