

Our 30th Anniversary.... WOW!!

Today, July 18th, 2017, my wife Jackie and I celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary! Wow, it is hard to believe we have been married that long! I have always felt blessed to be her husband, and as I reflect back on our relationship over the years, I have always felt that I definitely got the better end of the deal. Looking at the two of us, both in our younger years as well as more recently, it is quite apparent that we share a "Beauty and the Beast" relationship. Obviously, she is the beauty!! Since the first time I saw her thirty-some years ago, she has always struck me as one of the most beautiful women I have ever known. Even as a middle-aged couple, she is still beautiful to me, and I can't help but smile every time she walks into the room or glances my way. In fact, even though Mother Nature and gravity have changed our looks and physiques over the years, knowing she has faithfully loved me, supported me, and been an amazing mother to our children makes her all the more attractive to me. A huge part of this attraction is the fact that she is even more beautiful on the inside than she is on the outside. She is from a large and wonderful family, and her Christian upbringing has blended well with my own, and we have been committed to trying to raise our four children accordingly. As I watch her interact with our four kids each day as she laughs with them, is affectionate with them, and as she demonstrates her unconditional love for them, I find myself falling in love with her all over again! She has always been a good influence on me, and I am no doubt a better man because of our relationship. Again, I truly feel blessed to be married to such a good person. Looking back on it today, I still can't believe that 30 years ago she chose me as the one with whom she would spend the rest of her life. There is seldom a day that goes by that I don't thank God that she made that decision!

I have grown to believe over the years that the best way a father can show his children he loves them is to show his children he loves their mother. A few years back I was able to do this in a unique way. I was very blessed to spend 27 years of my life as the Head Football Coach at Roncalli High School. During my tenure, we were blessed to win 7 Indiana State Football championships, and one State Runner-Up title. Including a State Runner-Up ring I received as the Head Track Coach at Lawrence Central High School before coming to Roncalli, and a couple other rings I was given when we won consecutive titles, I have a very nice collection of beautiful rings of which I am very proud. One day a few years ago my oldest son Luke asked, "Dad, of all your rings, which one means the most to you, the one you are proudest of?" As my other three children were there at the time, I thought it was a perfect opportunity for me to make a very strong point to my kids as their father. For the first time ever, I put all of the different rings on each of my fingers and flashed them around for them to see. Then I said, "I am going to take these off, one by one, until I get to the ring that means the most to me, the one that most represents hard work, loyalty, sacrifice and accomplishment." I then began to take off each ring, pausing to share what was special about each one, yet letting them know that the most important one to me was yet to come. As I got to the last ring, I quickly covered it with my other hand, removed it and put it back in its' box without them being able to see what year it was from. Luke quickly protested, "Dad, we didn't get to see which ring means the most to you, it was put in the box too fast." To this I replied, "Yes you did, because I still have it on!" I then held up my left hand, showing off my wedding ring and said, "This is the ring that means the most to me, it most represents hard work, loyalty, sacrifice and accomplishment, and it is the one I never take off!" I'm not sure this was the answer they were looking for. Regardless, I wanted them to know there is nothing in my life I am prouder of than the fact that I am married to their mother. I believe this is one of the best ways for me to show my love for them.

As we celebrate our 30th Anniversary, I want Jackie to know that she is still beautiful to me, and that I feel so blessed after all these years that I not only still love my wife very much, but I am still very much *in love*

with my wife! I look forward to spending the next 30 years of our marriage together, and Good Lord willing, and if she can put up with me that long, perhaps many years beyond that!!