

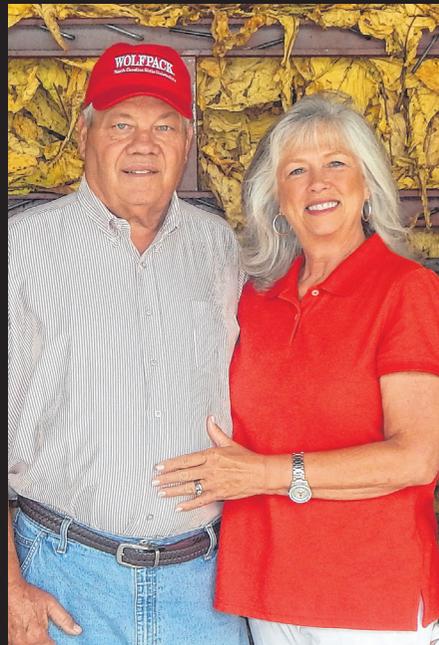
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# STRICKLANDS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF MARRIAGE

By Kristy D. Carter  
kcarter@clintonnc.com

**S**herrill and Rhonda Strickland were featured in the very first edition of The Sampson Independent's Spring Bridal publication. They married May 6, 1979 at Grove Park Baptist Church.

Sherrill was a rising senior at N.C. State University and Rhonda was a junior at Campbell University when the two met. Rhonda was working as a lifeguard at Kirtwood Pool and Sherrill on the family farm in Salemburg. Rhonda says Sherrill asked her out on a date for almost a year before she finally accepted. Their first date was at the movies.

"We went out that Friday, again on Saturday and Sunday night," Rhonda recalled. "We continued to go out every weekend together until we got married two years later. It was then, I learned to 'never say never'. When I was a senior in high school, I said I 'would never be a teacher, marry a farmer or live in Sampson County'. Well, I ended up doing all three and wouldn't change a thing."

Rhonda and Sherrill have two sons, Brandon and Clint. Brandon is married to Megan Burroughs from Wallace and they have two sons, Burroughs and Wallace. Clint is married to Allison Markham of Apex and they have two daughters, Carter and Murray Miles. Both boys graduated from N.C. State University and now work alongside their father on the family farm.

**SI: What is the secret to 40 years of marriage?**

**Rhonda and Sherrill:** One obvious secret to a happy marriage is "give and take" and a lot of it! Some days it is not always equal. Unlike the old saying — marriage is 50/50 — because it is not always true. We all go through bad days, weeks etc. from different aspects of our lives, so we might need to take more from our spouse than we give and vice versa.

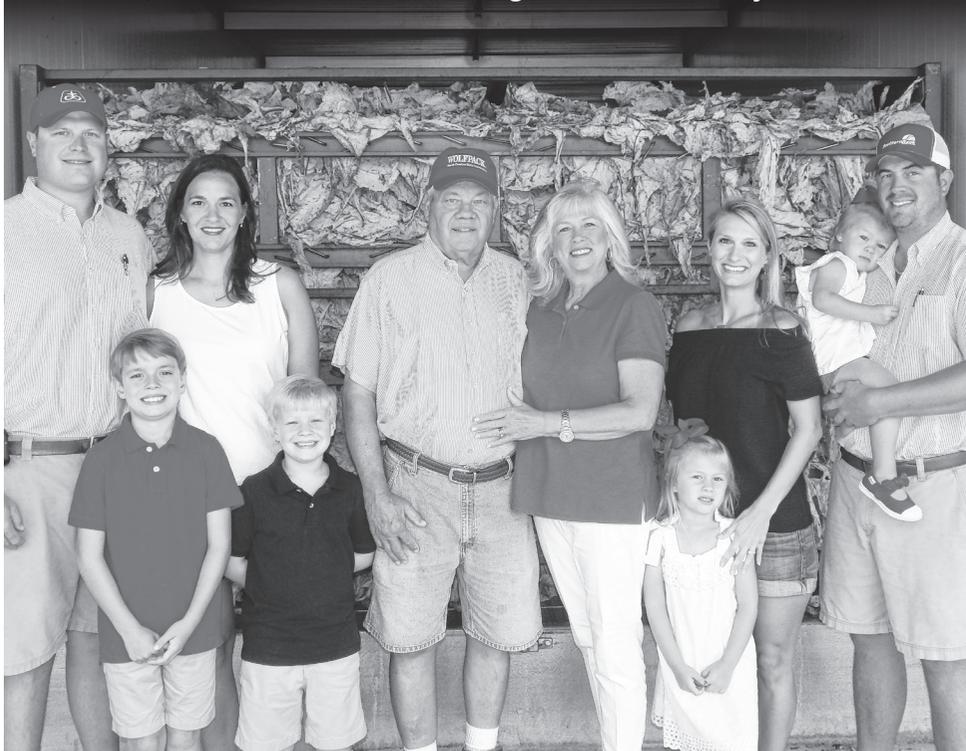
A second secret is "complete honesty". The secret is never give your spouse a reason not to trust you. Trust is a must.

The third secret is communication. Don't expect your spouse to "always" be able to read your mind. As we get older, the honeymoon will end, another exciting state of marriage will begin. This doesn't mean your love is not there, it grows deeper. So, enough said — "Tell him what you are thinking — he doesn't always know!"

Sherrill and Rhonda Strickland were married May 6, 1979 at Grove Park Baptist Church.



The Strickland Family — Brandon and Megan with their sons Burroughs and Wallace; Rhonda and Sherrill; and Clint and Allison with their daughters Carter and Murray Miles.

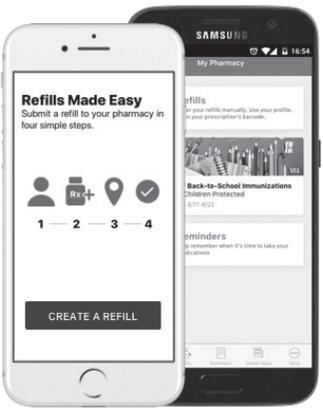




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Our biggest “secret” to a long and happy marriage is to trust your “gut and heart”. Never compare your relationship to others. Regardless of who it is. Not your best friends, movie stars and not even family members. You cannot mold your marriage like someone else’s. The two of you know what works best for you. Don’t let other people try to tell you what you should or should not do. Go with your “gut and heart”. Choose your friends carefully because emotions are contagious.

**SI: Who is someone you look up to as a couple?**

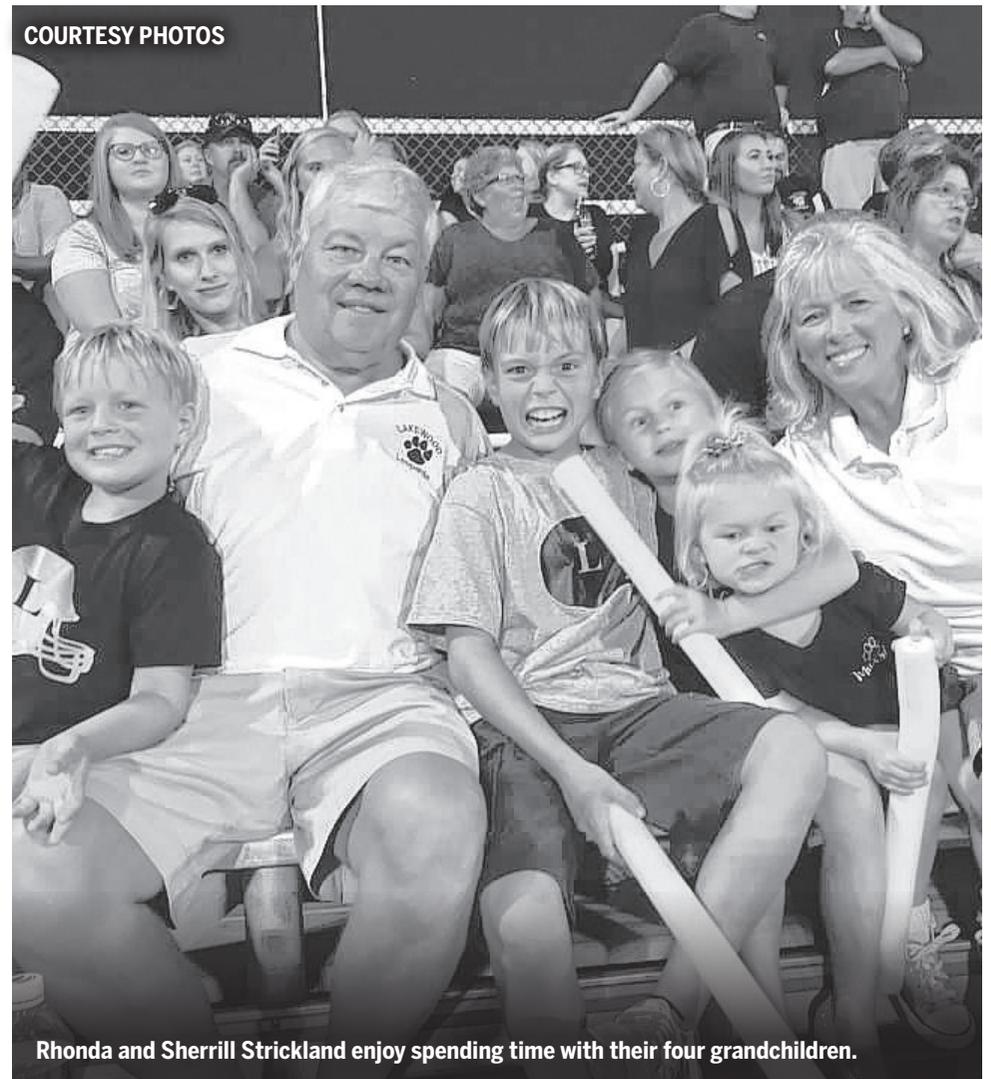
**Rhonda:** We are both so fortunate and blessed to have been born into such loving families. All four of our parents are still living. My parents are Franklin and Velva Lindsay and will celebrate their 68th wedding anniversary this summer. Sherrill’s parents are Bobby and Pauline Strickland and will celebrate their 67th wedding anniversary this summer as well. Sherrill and I were both raised in similar ways. We were taught the importance of morals, values and faith.

**SI: What are your favorite things to do together?**

**Sherrill:** We enjoy cooking together. Especially cooking on the grill and



Sherrill and Rhonda Strickland



Rhonda and Sherrill Strickland enjoy spending time with their four grandchildren.

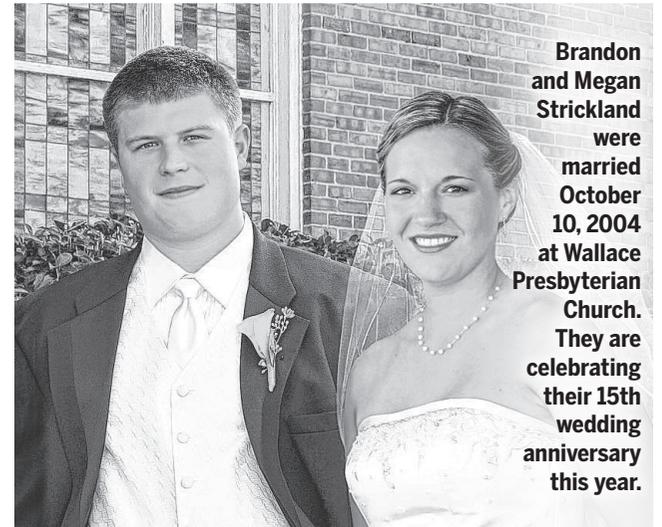
sitting on the deck on late Sunday afternoons listening to beach music. Myself, and our sons, and many other family members are all graduates of NC State and we love attending NCSU football games with our children and grandchildren. We enjoy going to White Lake, the beach and spending time with family. And of course, one of our most favorite things to do together is spending quality time with our grandchildren.

**SI: What changes have you seen in marriage over the last 40 years?**

**Rhonda:** Forty years ago, when we got married, most people had their rehearsal dinner at a local restaurant and got married at the bride’s home church and then held the reception there at the church or at the bride’s home. We had our rehearsal dinner at The Farm House. The next day we got married at Grove Park Baptist Church and had our reception at my parents’ home.

Now, destination weddings seem to be popular. Also, the overall cost of weddings today has increased drastically because of different venues being chosen. Unfortunately, it also seems that marriages don’t last as long as they used to. Couples don’t stay in it for the long haul — they just don’t try hard enough and end up giving up, resulting in divorce.

# BRANDON & MEGAN STRICKLAND



Brandon and Megan Strickland were married October 10, 2004 at Wallace Presbyterian Church. They are celebrating their 15th wedding anniversary this year.

**B**randon Strickland and Megan Burroughs were featured as a bridal couple in the 25th anniversary edition of The Sampson Independent's Spring Bridal Edition.

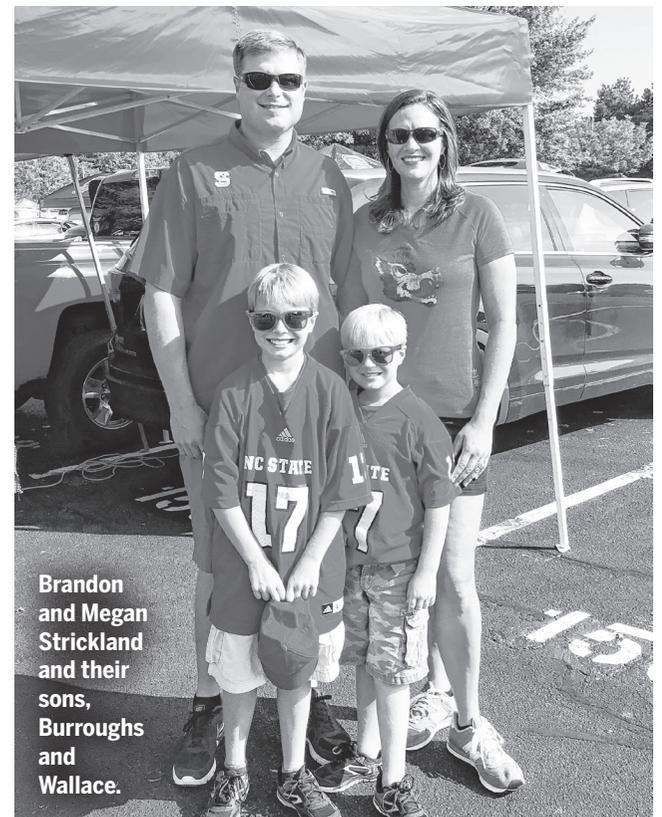
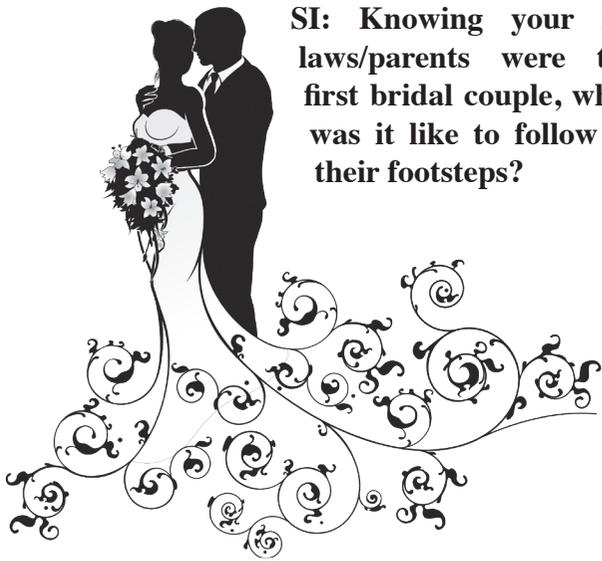
Married Oct. 10, 2004, Brandon and Megan are celebrating their 15th anniversary this year. They have two sons, Burroughs, 8, and Wallace, 6.

**Brandon and Megan:** We were honored to even be asked to participate, but proud to represent them and their marriage as well. They had been married for 25 years the year we were married, and have always demonstrated the qualities that it takes for a marriage to not only last, but to be a truly loving, solid relationship with a focus on God. We hope we have made them proud with our marriage over the last 15 years.

**SI: Have you learned anything from Rhonda and Sherrill in their 40 years of marriage?**

Brandon and Megan: We have learned lots from their example: Listen without interrupting (this is still a work in progress). Make time to spend with each other, without kids or friends or anyone else. Surprises make you feel loved. Be supportive of each other. You aren't always going to see eye-to-eye, but try to view a situation from your spouse's perspective — it can help in resolving issues more quickly.

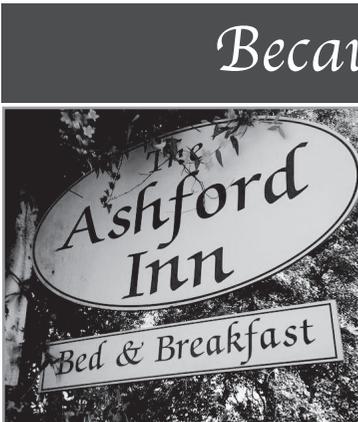
**SI: Knowing your in-laws/parents were the first bridal couple, what was it like to follow in their footsteps?**



Brandon and Megan Strickland and their sons, Burroughs and Wallace.



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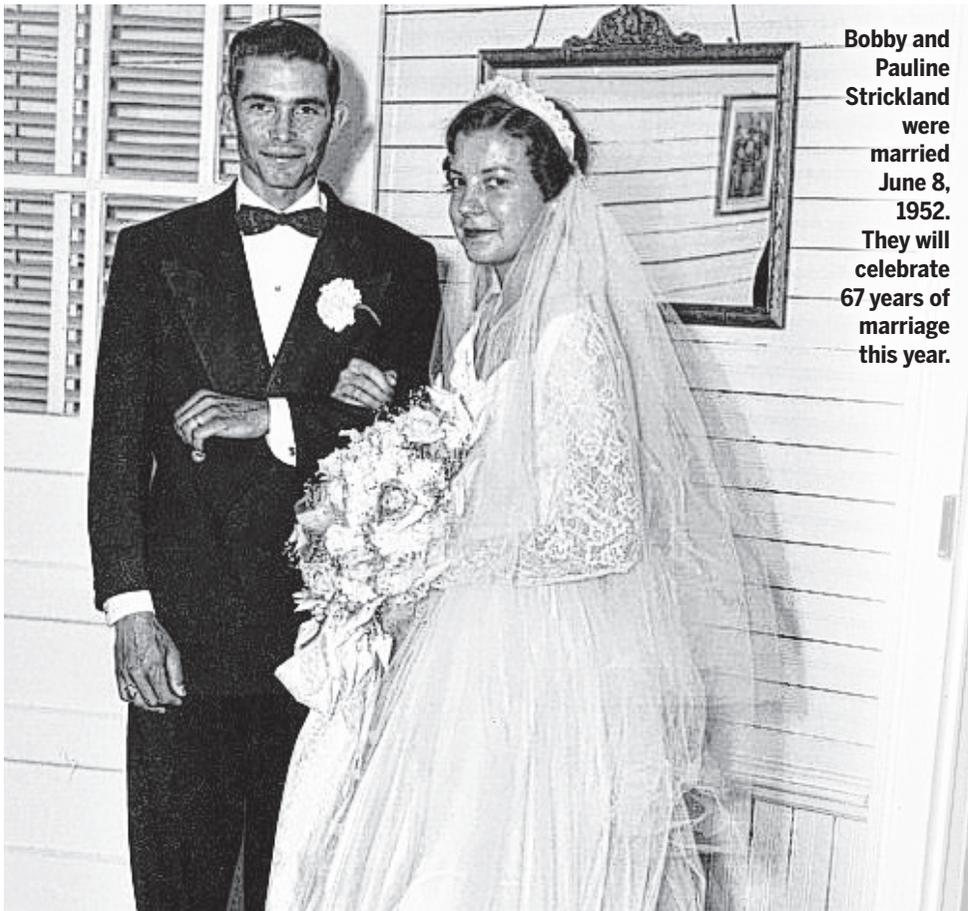
Merlin Gonzalez shows Rhonda Strickland china patterns at Annadale's Gifts and Fine China in Clinton.

PHOTO BY SHERRY MATTHEWS  
SAMPSON INDEPENDENT



Rhonda Strickland orders at Southern Style Barbecue & Fried Chicken in Clinton.

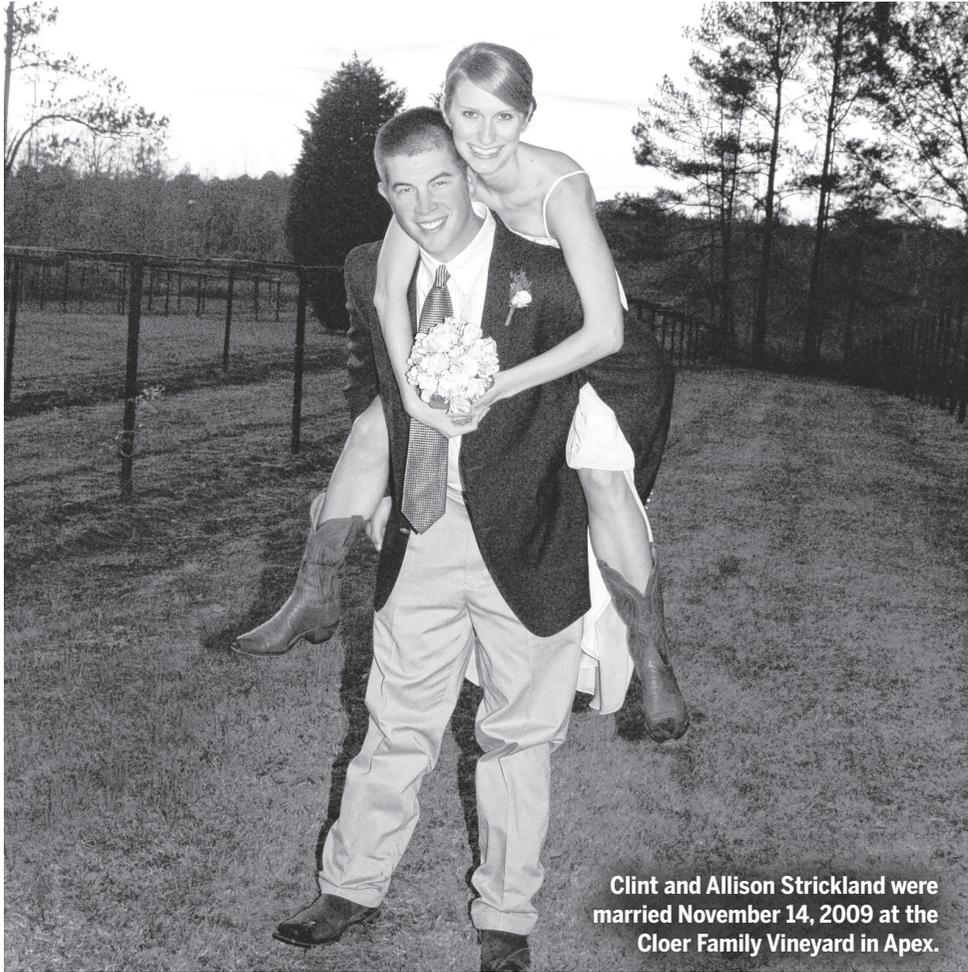
Bobby and Pauline Strickland were married June 8, 1952. They will celebrate 67 years of marriage this year.



Franklin and Velva Lindsay were married on June 9, 1951. They will celebrate 68 years of marriage this year.



# CLINT & ALLISON STRICKLAND



Clint and Allison Strickland were married November 14, 2009 at the Cloer Family Vineyard in Apex.



Clint and Allison Strickland will celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary this year. They have two daughters, Carter and Murray Miles.



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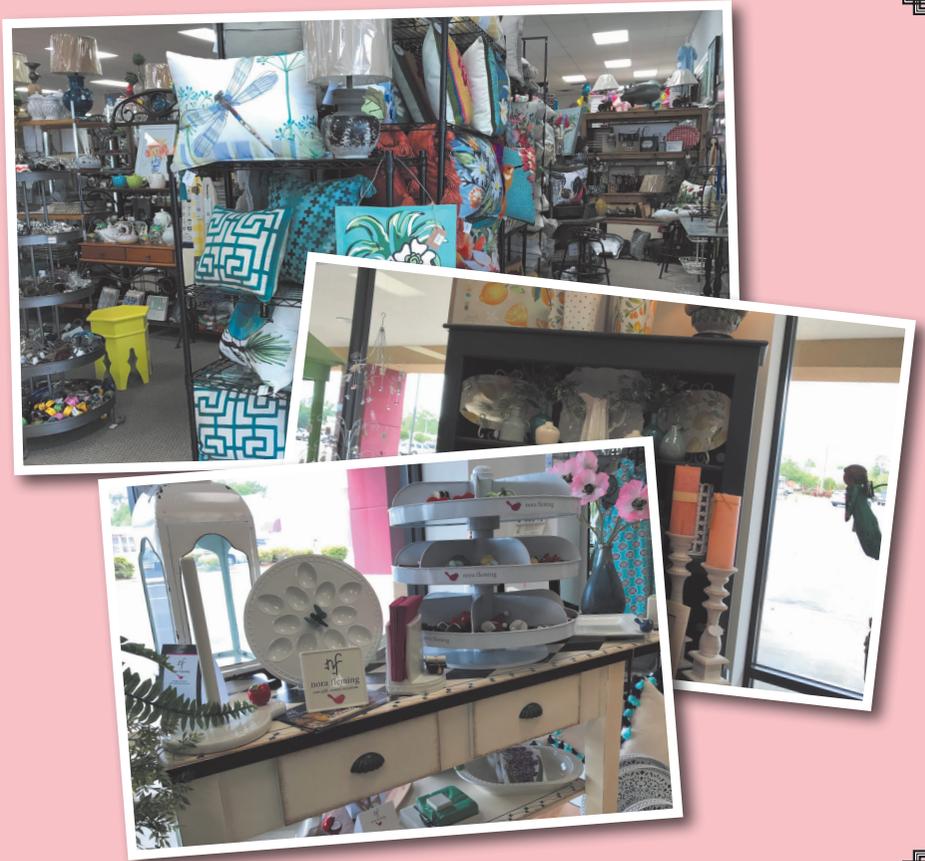
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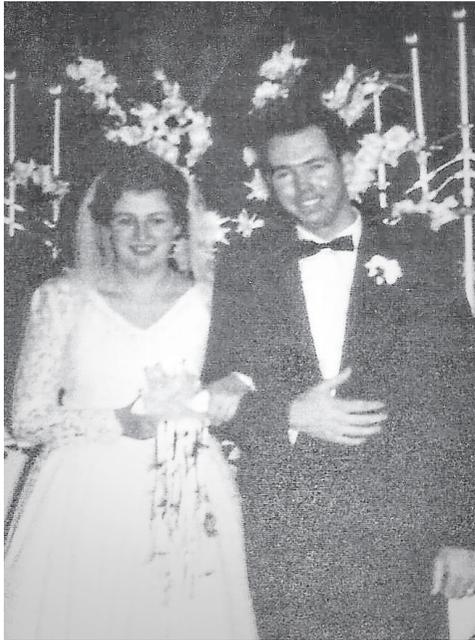


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# ALFREDO & SAMANTHA DIPINTO

Alfredo and Samantha DiPinto are celebrating 30 years of marriage.

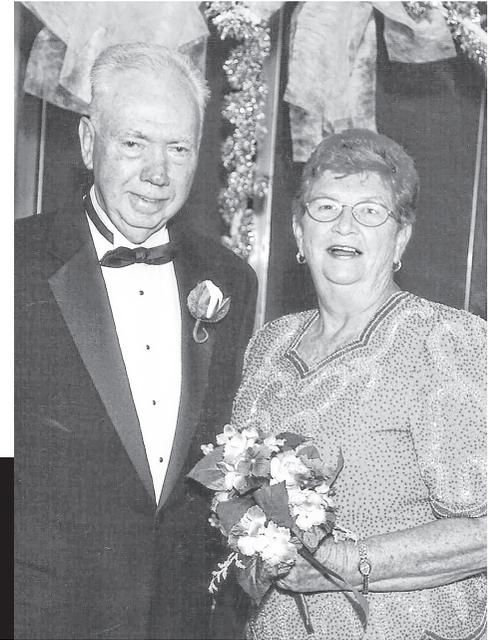




# NORWOOD & BETSY CARTER

Norwood Stanley Carter and Betsy Marshburn were married November 28, 1957 at Riverside Baptist church in Tomahawk. They recently celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary.

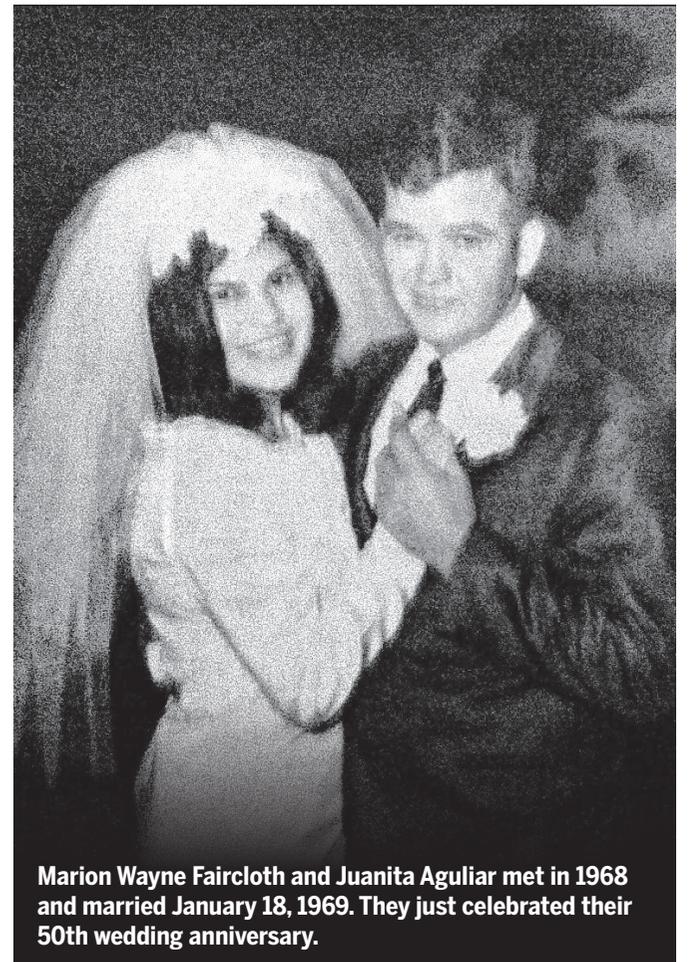
Norwood and Betsy Carter have one daughter, Janet Webber and two sons, Norwood Carter Jr. and Randall Carter. They also have one granddaughter.



# MARION & JUANITA FAIRCLOTH



Marion and Juanita Faircloth met while he was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. He was diagnosed with Lewy-Body Dementia with Parkinson's Disease in 2011 and Juanita stays by his side everyday caring for him and feeding him his meals at least once a day.



Marion Wayne Faircloth and Juanita Aguliar met in 1968 and married January 18, 1969. They just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

# MICHAEL & CATHY

# HONEYCUTT



Michael Earl Honeycutt and Cathy Lynn Lee were married February 5, 1979. They just celebrated 40 years of marriage.



# JIMMY & MARGARET NORTON

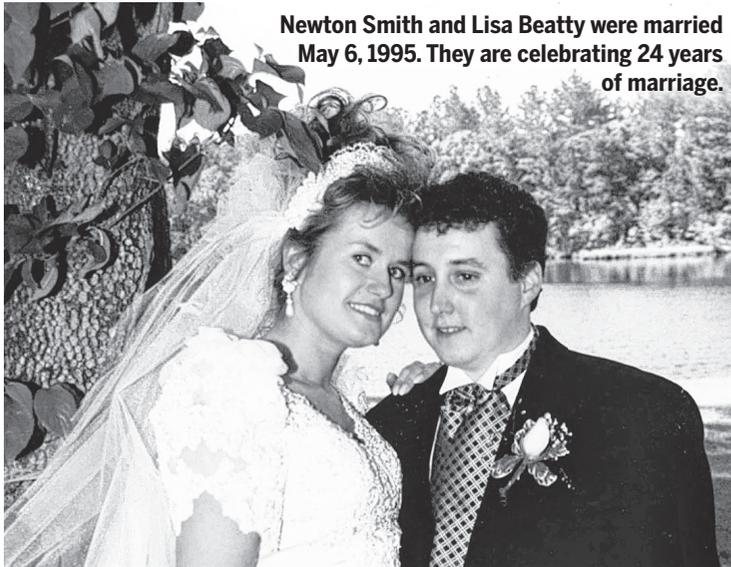


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Marion Wayne Faircloth and Juanita Aguliar met in 1968 and married January 18, 1969. They just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

# NEWTON & LISA SMITH



Newton Smith and Lisa Beatty were married May 6, 1995. They are celebrating 24 years of marriage.

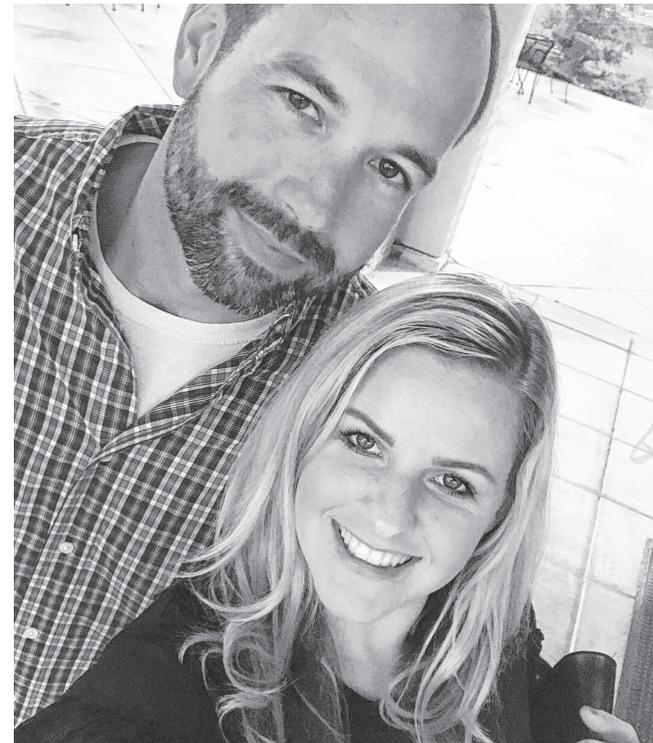


Newton and Lisa Smith were married at Roseboro United Methodist Church. They now live in Farmville, N.C. with their dog Gage.

# JONATHAN & ASHLEY TEW



Jonathan and Ashley Tew were married July 22, 2006.



The Tews are about to celebrate 13 years of marriage. They have two daughters, Brooklyn and Bayleigh. Ashley works as the director of the Sampson County Board of Elections and Jonathan works with Star Communications.

# CRAWFORD & FAYE WILLIAMS



Mr. and Mrs. Williams have one son and two grandchildren and say they accept each new day as a blessing and a gift from God.



W. Crawford Williams and Faye Daniels were married December 20, 1958 in a home wedding hosted by the bride's parents. They just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.



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