

# LOVE ON THE QUAD

From the Storied Cloisters to the altar, these couples have gone from high school to happily ever after.

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**I DO TIMES TWO**  
After dating for eight years, Sarah Jane Lasley and James Redding (shown at their rehearsal dinner) tied the knot in November.

**INSTANT CHEMISTRY**  
Sarah Jane Lasley and James Redding met in their freshman biology class.

Photo by Sarah Jane Lasley



When Sarah Jane Lasley and James Redding (both '20) entered Antone's for their first date, the last person they expected to see was Upper School English teacher Clay Guinn ('92), who walked in to grab a takeout sandwich for lunch.

When Guinn was a student at St. John's, he was classmates with Lasley's parents, Mary Hamill and Stephen Lasley (both '92). In the senior survey of their graduating yearbook, Stephen was deemed most likely to be "found with Mary."

Guinn recognized Sarah Jane but did not initially connect the dots.

"We watched his face as he realized it was a date, and he immediately got flustered. It was so funny," Sarah Jane said. "We were both in his class together as juniors, which was the best full circle moment."

After dating for eight years, they got married in Asheville, North Carolina, in November.

Sarah Jane met Redding in her freshman-year biology class, taught by former science teacher Graham Hegeman. Sarah Jane often cracked "dumb jokes," and she noticed that Redding would almost always laugh.

"My relationship with James never would have started if I wasn't in a class where I was comfortable and relaxed. Mr. Hegeman was actually one of the first people we told about our engagement," Sarah Jane said.

Since Sarah Jane was under the impression that Redding was introverted in class, she was surprised to discover he would be performing in the One Acts play later that semester. Intrigued, Sarah Jane attended the show. A few days after the performance, Sarah Jane sent Redding a congratulatory email, apologizing for not staying afterwards to talk more. Although she cited her mom as the culprit for having to leave early, Sarah

Jane simply "got nervous and left."

"We then started emailing on our school accounts, which was hilarious. We transitioned to GroupMe and finally went on our first date," Sarah Jane said.

As teenage sweethearts, the pair partook in all the classic high school tropes. Sarah Jane wore Redding's sweatshirt, even when it was 97 degrees, and Redding made a "promposal" in Guinn's junior English class with a batch of home-baked treats.

"Our relationship has always been realistic – we don't really do grand gestures, so I kept telling him he didn't have to propose," Sarah Jane said. "But somehow he figured out that I did want a promposal, and he rolled up with some cupcakes."

According to Sarah Jane, staying grounded has been integral to keeping their relationship steady, even when they attended different colleges.

"We don't need to show our relationship off, but when we have the opportunities to showcase our love and celebrate each other, we still take them."

While providing friendship and support, Redding has allowed Sarah Jane to realize her authentic self. When the couple first met, their personalities seemed to be polar opposites – Sarah Jane was talkative; Redding was reserved.

"We both thought that we were so different, but what our relationship has shown is that we're much more similar than we thought," Sarah Jane said. "He has given me a space where I don't have to be super loud and

talkative, and I have broken him out of his shell a lot."

When the couple graduated St. John's, they decided to tackle a long-distance relationship, with Sarah Jane attending Clemson University in South Carolina and Redding at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, over 600 miles away.

"Long distance was awful.

I hated it, but I knew it was worth it. That's what I kept telling myself every day," Sarah Jane said. "I wore his varsity soccer sweatshirt all the time to let the college boys know I had a boyfriend. That was my way of keeping him with me."

Sarah Jane also credits their relationship's strength to mutual communication and maturity. "We put a lot of effort into maintaining our relationship and keeping it healthy," she said. "We are just really lucky to have each other."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average age of marriage for Americans is around 31 years old for

men and 29 for women. Yet getting married so young should not have been a surprise to anybody who knew Sarah Jane's parents.

## LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

Mary and Stephen Lasley dated throughout Upper School. When they graduated, Mary attended Rice University and Stephen went to Texas A&M. Technological restraints made maintaining their relationship a challenge.

"At the time, calling from College Station to Houston was more expensive than calling to New York. We really had to work hard at communication – we wrote a few letters and visited back and forth," Mary said.

According to Mary, her relationship largely differs from her daughter's despite their similar romances. "We get told a lot that our relationships must be so similar. In a way, that's true, but the situations surrounding our relationships and the way that we ended up being together were wildly different."

While Sarah Jane credits her mother with invaluable

### YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Mary and Stephen Lasley met at SJS (seen here at their senior prom) and wrote letters to stay in touch during college.

Photo courtesy of Mary Lasley



### STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Upper School math teacher Caroline Kerr ('01) now has three kids with husband Andy Lusk ('99).

Photo courtesy of Caroline Kerr

advice navigating a high school and college relationship, she has developed some advice of her own over the years. Her mantra is "stay realistic." Since there are many opportunities for conspicuous displays of affection, Sarah Jane says it can be easy to get caught up in a relationship that solely "performs for other people."

The school was such a special part of our relationship and so many of our friends today went to school there. It all just came together as a really unique and meaningful place to us.

HANNAH JEFFERS

"A big thing high schoolers fall into is wanting to fit in socially and keep up with everybody, and if that is how you act in your relationship, it's probably not going to go very far," Sarah Jane said. A relationship does not have to "look, feel, sound or be" any certain way.

Now that they have been married for three months, the Reddings enjoy being homebodies – they consider their couch the "third member" of their relationship. In their Houston apartment, they spend their free time watching reality TV and trying out new restaurants and recipes. They still enjoy the little moments, like running errands, listening to Chappell Roan and talking about their days.

"The more situations that I'm able to see him in, the more I'm reminded of why I want to be with him in the first place," Sarah Jane said. "I'm never going to turn down the opportunity to just hang out with him."



Photo courtesy of Hannah Jeffers

Despite the many comments regarding their youth, Sarah Jane says the age you meet your partner "doesn't matter."

"What matters more is your emotional maturity, your self-awareness, your ability to communicate and whether or not you just like being around that person."

## GETTING HITCHED AT THE CARPOOL LANE

Hannah Jeffers and Evan Davis (both '07) got married at St. John's in October 2017, holding their ceremony by the Upper School carpool lane and their reception in Flores Hall. Although they initially considered traditional venues from California to Houston, when they learned St. John's was an option, the search was over.

"We just loved the idea. The School was such a special part of our relationship, and so many of our friends today went to school there," Jeffers said. "It all just came together as a really unique and meaningful place to us."

When they announced their decision, a few friends were still skeptical.

"When we told them that we were getting married in a high school cafeteria, they were so surprised," Jeffers said. "But St. John's exceeded their expectations."

Jeffers and Davis knew of each other as underclassmen but did not officially meet until junior year in their Precalculus class. While they were in similar friend groups, the pair's first official date was junior prom.

"Prom was the first time we hung out outside of a group or in the classroom setting – but after Evan took me to the movies to see 'The Da Vinci Code,' we officially started dating," Jeffers said.

Jeffers and Davis also shared a senior elective taught by history teacher Gara Johnson-West, who often threatened to separate them.

"She didn't want us making goo-goo eyes at each other, but she did let us sit next to each other, which was very nice of her," Jeffers said. Years later, at their wedding, Johnson-West was in attendance.

After graduating, Jeffers attended the College of Wil-

liam and Mary while Davis attended the University of Virginia. Despite the challenges of maintaining contact while living two hours apart, Jeffers believes the college experience only strengthened their relationship.

"Long-distance helped us become our own people and develop interests that ended up being largely compatible," Jeffers said. "I'm glad we got a chance to be our own people and explore life on our own."

The pair lives in Houston and are parents to two kids. Some of Hannah's favorite memories with the kids include fun trips and activities, yet she still stresses how important it is to relax one-on-one with Evan.

"We have been lucky to find ways to enjoy things outside of the kids and carve out that time for ourselves," Jeffers said.

## MY BEST FRIEND'S BROTHER IS THE ONE

When Upper School math teacher Caroline Kerr ('01) was in high school, she was best friends with Lauren Lusk ('02). Kerr would even join Lauren's family on vacation, yet she did not spend much time with Lauren's brother Andy ('99).

"Andy was always the cool older boy, and I was the nerdy younger girl," Kerr said. "He thought he was too cool for me, but it turns out, he wasn't too cool after all."

After graduating from Vanderbilt, Kerr went to graduate school at New York University, where she kept in touch with Lauren. Once Andy moved to SoHo in 2008, they began dating six months later. At first, Kerr was concerned that their relationship might interfere with her and Lauren's friendship.

When Kerr broke the news to Lauren, her friend replied, "Why would I be mad?" Kerr observes that when you marry someone whose sister is your best friend, you get to spend time together.

They have been married for 12 years and have three children, ranging from 4 to 10 years old, and multiple pets, including a pig named Zelda.

As the couple navigates parenting and family life, Kerr emphasizes the importance of maintaining close contact with Lauren and her other relatives.

"The family that we've created is very important to us," Kerr said. "It's our glue."



### BFB

After graduating from college, Caroline Kerr started dating her best friend's older brother.

Photo courtesy of Caroline Kerr ('01)



DO YOU TAKE THIS MAVERICK?  
Hannah Jeffers and Evan Davis held their wedding ceremony at SJS.

Photo courtesy of Hannah Jeffers