



LIFE/TRAVEL

True Romance: Long walks drew couple together

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By **BILL MARVEL** / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

It started, as so many romances do – or once did – on a long walk.



LOUIS DeLUCA/DMN
How do you make it 60 years as a couple? It's about liking each other, as well as loving each other, say Pat and Bob Jebavy.

Perhaps couples don't go for walks anymore. Everyone has a car. Maybe couples drive to Starbucks to get acquainted. Or to a club. Or to a movie. Maybe they chat online before they meet.

But there's nothing like an old-fashioned walk, beneath tall elms and past suburban homes, lighted windows and lawn sprinklers on a mild Midwestern evening.

That's the way it was for Pat Grayson and Robert Jebavy a little more than 60 years ago in Maywood, outside of Chicago. She was 19, just out of school and working in an office. He was 21, fresh from the U.S. Marine Corps. He was her older brother's friend. With their buddy, Tom Horgan, they would hang around the house flipping through the pages of what they called the "Wolf Book," which listed high school students' names and addresses.

"Looking for the names of girls to date, like I wasn't even there," Pat says. "I was the kid sister. I was not

considered dating material."

One evening, the boys went upstairs to her brother Richard's room. Richard was a medical student, and he wanted to attempt an experiment: He wanted to hypnotize Tom. He had done it before, she says, and had somebody running frantically around the living room, convinced they were being chased by a train.

But this time Bob kept cracking up. It was impossible for Richard or Tom to assume the proper seriousness. "So they sent me downstairs," Bob says.

"And there she was."

Had she noticed him before that, a handsome Marine just back from the war?

"Not particularly," she says. "They sent him downstairs because he was being naughty. I was probably laughing."

"She was there, and I was down there," Bob says. "I didn't have anything to do. She didn't have anything to do. So we went for a walk."

Many walks followed. Walking was, in fact, one of the few things you could do in a small town after the war. He would walk the 19 blocks from his house to hers. Then they would walk some more. Every so often, they would catch the train to Chicago and go dancing at the Aragon Ballroom, with its star-painted ceiling, gold leaf and grand staircase.

He first kissed her there. "To Each His Own" was their song.

Of course, he proposed during a walk.

"Nobody got down on their knees," she says. "I don't think he planned it."

But he did, in a way. She was gone one weekend, visiting a friend in DeKalb. He was frantic. "I walked the floor," he says. "Finally I decided it was time to ask her."

They were married in Plymouth Congregational Church in Maywood and moved into his mother's house because that's what you did just after the war when there was no other housing available. His friend Tom Horgan sang at the wedding. (Years later, as Tom O'Horgan, he would direct *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* on Broadway.)

Bob attended the Illinois Institute of Technology on the GI Bill, and got a job as a gas pipeline engineer for the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois, where Pat was working in a different department. They bought their first house. They moved to Belleville, Ill., east of St. Louis. Then, in 1960, to Dallas, and finally to Richardson.

Along the way, they had five children: Linda, Barbara (who died in 2005), Robert, John and Judy.

Bob worked in Australia for part of 1967 and '68, and Pat went with him. He became active in the 1st Marine Division Association and the China Marine Association. He retired and started writing his autobiography.

Together, they plunged into community work, into Scouting (girls for her; boys for him), kids' football, Toys for Tots and volunteer work through St. Barnabas Presbyterian Church. And they traveled.

"Where *haven't* we traveled?" Pat asks, partly in amazement. She never imagined they'd travel to places such as China, Okinawa and Australia, not to mention at least 14 cruises.

They sit in their living room in Richardson the day after celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary with their children and grandchildren at a Dallas steakhouse. The children come over for dinner every Sunday. But this was special.

What keeps a couple together through six decades?

"One word," Pat says. "Respect. Putting the other person first. Being partners. We've never argued about how we were going to use the little money we had." They never had much, anyway, in the early years.

There's something else, Bob says. "To me, there's a difference between love and like. I think you have to like one another."

That's the kind of thing you can learn on a long walk.

Bill Marvel is a Dallas freelance writer. If you have a True Romance story, e-mail bmarvel@mindspring.com.

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