



Bob and Birdell Butson first met while attending school together in Iowa



The couple married in 1941 when Bob was 21 and Birdell was 20

Cy-Fair Couple Celebrates 70 Years Together

Bob and Birdell Butson reveal their secrets to everlasting love

Written by Liza Winkler | Select Photography by Travis Robertson

Cy-Fair lovebirds Bob and Birdell Butson have kept their marriage strong and flourishing for 70 years. Throughout their time together, they have shared special moments, challenges, and a mutual love and respect for one another.

Humble Beginnings

Throughout their lifetimes, Bob, 91, and Birdell, 90, have experienced several paramount events. The pair recounts memories of both World Wars, the Great Depression, the first flight to space, the civil rights movement, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Despite the complexity of the world around them, the Butsons' first encounter occurred at an Iowa grade school. "We went to class together at a one-room schoolhouse," recalls Bob. "Boys usually didn't pay much attention to girls until we got into high school."

The two then earned their diplomas and headed out into the world. Birdell began teaching home school and later taught in Ohio. "Children gain a lot from watching and listening," she says. "I know there was one thing I insisted on in the schools and our family. We did not say [the word] 'ain't.' That word, to me, is pretty crude."

Bob spent most of his life farming and welding parts onto airplanes. "I went to welding school in Hampton and then got a job in Illinois at a refrigerator factory," he says. "I was always looking for a better job, so in the paper there was an advertisement that [said] Wright-Patterson Field wanted welders. I applied and they said, 'Come on out.'"

Kindling Their Love

The couple walked down the aisle in 1941, when Birdell was only 20 and Bob was 21 years old. Weddings in the 1940s were much simpler than some of the over-the-top weddings depicted on TV shows today like *Bridezillas*. Birdell says it was fashionable back then to wear nice street clothes, instead of an expensive white dress. "Bob had bought a new suit and it was dark brown," she says. "When I bought my dress, it was tan. We had the wedding at our home, and my folks didn't even have electricity on the farm."

During World War II, the pair picked up their belongings and headed by wagon to live in Ohio and Illinois for five years. The

Butsons returned to the same Iowa township they grew up in after the war and carried lessons of hard work through their marriage. "I'd pick a thousand bushels of corn, put it in the dryer, and it would be ready in the morning," Bob says. "I'd go out and pick another thousand, so that way I could get 2,000 bushels picked a day." Birdell says a life of farming has a "variety of blessings" that allowed the duo to admire each other through the good and difficult times. "The prices on the hogs or corn could go up or down, and when it went down, we quit buying Kleenex, pop, and things you can go along without," she says. "We pinched our pennies."



Bob and Birdell enjoy relaxing together at home and traveling to different states and countries

Reflecting on Life's Blessings

The Butsons' marriage has blossomed over time, with three children, Gary, Gail, and Gloria. Although their extended family is spread across the nation, Bob and Birdell devote plenty of time to their eight grandchildren and six great-grandkids. "Our kids never caused us any trouble," Bob says. "They got the checkbook when they went to college, and they didn't spend any more than they needed."

Bob says the couple enjoys traveling and has visited a total of 22 countries and all of the 50 states. The pair was encouraged to move into a Houston retirement community five years ago after visiting their daughter Gloria at her home in Texas. Birdell says her only wishes are they had shared even more love by adopting children or volunteering more time towards children in need. "When my Gloria left for college, I felt terrible," she says. "It was the saddest time of my life, because all of my children were out of the house."

Even though the duo likes to relax together at their retirement home now, there are still personality aspects that can occasionally flatter or bother one another.

"Something that annoys me is that Bob doesn't talk much," Birdell says. "He's a silent partner." She says she enjoys that her husband does not have a temper problem. "She likes to boss me around sometimes, but I like that she's a good cook," Bob says.

Few couples are blessed with seven decades of time together, but for Bob and Birdell, each day is a new step on the path to enjoying the rest of their lives together. **CFM**

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