

Weddings - Portraits - Events



Why I am passionate about weddings and wedding photography

Shoot what you love - wedding photography

There is an old saying within the photography world, shoot what you love to show your maximum creativity and passion.

I love weddings and I love photographing weddings. Below are a few reasons why I love them and what stirred up this emotional passion.

First, during a wedding the photographer gets to shoot all types of photography. At any one time during the wedding, I can be an event photographer, outdoor photographer, nature photographer, food photographer, architectural, or portrait photographer. Both formal and environmental portraits are shot during a wedding. With endless action-taking place, some state that a wedding is like a sporting event.

Portraits of children are taken during the wedding (ring bearer, flower girl, junior bridesmaids, etc). Portraits of grandma with all the grandchildren and nana with her first grandchild always move me emotionally. When I see the little girls running around with flowers and bows in their hair with beautiful dresses, I think back to when my daughters were little and all dressed up. It brings tears to my eyes (even as I type this paragraph) remembering their laughter and carefree attitudes. With little babies in the arms of grandma, bring back memories of when my mom held her first great grandchild (my granddaughter) for the first time and how precious the image will always remain in my mind. Watching the ring bearer run up to his uncle (the groom)

and jumps into his arms, reminds me when my grandson did the same to my son in law. Capturing special moments are a great joy for me as a photographer.

Shooting pictures of fancy cakes and cookies are a challenge but very fun and worth all the effort. Cakes come in all shapes and sizes. From cupcakes that form a huge tree to cakes shaped like a softball. It is my responsibility as the photographer to capture each cake's uniqueness for the bride and groom to remember. Some cakes are shiny and others full of color and shape. During the cake cutting, some time there are food fights and other times the exchange is very simple.

During a wedding, emotion overflows. Emotion flows in tears of joy to laughter during the minister's message or the Maid of Honor's toast to the couple. I doubt that I will ever forget the toast where the Matron of Honor (the bride's sister) told of a heartfelt story when the two were little girls and the bride gave her sister five dollars to buy a doll). The Matron of Honor had everyone laughing with tears of joy when she handed to repay her sister the \$5 from when they were little girls. Oh, the joys of a good heartfelt wedding toast.

Capturing the flowers, special dinnerware, and all the beauty of the decorations, table linens, and mementoes at a wedding are challenging but brings out the artist in me as a photographer. Capturing the beauty of the cake cutting utensils to the beautiful special ordered flowers is always a challenge and thrill as a wedding photographer. I look at each cake-cutting utensil and think about how much time the couple spent deciding what to purchase and use for this special day.

I doubt that I will ever forget one flower that was a very special flower to the bride. When she walked into the room that contained the flowers and saw them, she broke out in tears of joy and gave the florist a huge hug.

Nor will I will ever tire of watching the groom and photographing his look when he sees his beautiful bride (his princess) walk down the aisle all adorned and glowing. This reminds me of one groom that the minister had to keep holding his arm because he wanted to run forward to greet his bride. Oh the tears that flow when I see the father of the bride walk arm in arm with his daughter as the dad prepares to hand over his little girl to her groom. This part of the wedding ceremony always brings back the day when I walked my daughter down the aisle to give her over to her future husband. I cried all day and still cry when I think of the day. No longer will I be the most important guy in her life. As a photographer, I am able to capture for all of history, this very special moment in their life. The dad handing over his little princess to her groom that promises to love and protect his little girl.

What a thrill it is to photograph the emotion that takes place during a wedding ceremony

I never grow tired of photographing or watching grandma or papap wipe the tears from their eyes as they remember to the days when their grandchild was as little as the ring bearer and once sat in their laps. Nor do I tire of seeing the bride all dressed in her beautiful dress walk over to her great grandma or great grandfather and give them a kiss and hug that brings the crowd to tears.

I remember one time when the bride honored a couple for over seventy years of marriage. The DJ handed the elder husband the microphone and asked; what do you contribute to your long lasting marriage? His response, "I do what I am told." The crowd erupted with laughter.

As I watch the little girls dance during the reception, I remember the carefree times that I have when I dance with my granddaughter. We dance to the tune of Hanna Montana and I attempt to imitate my granddaughter's special moves to fun songs that only a grandfather dancing with his little granddaughter can understand or appreciate.

My goal is always to capture the moment when the girls are dancing by themselves without a care in the world. Then when their mom or dad walks on the floor to dance with them to capture the look on their face as they dance with their little girl is always a fun filled time. I doubt that I will ever forget two beautiful young girls with long flowing hair that danced and danced without a care in the world. They would flip their hair imitating some dancer they might have seen and swing each other mimicking dance partners they watched one day maybe on the television or in the movies.

Every wedding brings a special memory and challenge. For example, the time when the minister told me that once the ceremony began, we (photographers) could not move. Rather than complain, I made a last minute call to a friend (photographer) and added a third photographer to capture the ceremony from all angles. We were able to capture the ceremony from many different angles creating special images for the keepsake album.

As I photograph the couple dance for the first time as husband and wife, I remember back over thirty years ago when I had the first dance with my young bride. Oh how young we were and nothing else mattered than us dancing together. Soon after the first dance between the new couple, the father of the bride dances with his daughter. Watching this dance sends my mind to the day when I danced with my daughter at her wedding. I never wanted the dance to

end and give her back to her husband. We danced to butterfly kisses, which now stands the test of time as a very special song in my life. After this dance, I remember it like it was yesterday, when I danced with my other daughter, then later cried watching and listening to my granddaughter sing L.O.V.E to her aunt (the bride). Every wedding brings back special memories to me and no doubt many others that attend a wedding.

Each ceremony brings a new twist on the special subject of marriage given by the minister, preacher, or officiate. Some sermons make you laugh and cry as the minister reveals special insights from the couple's lives while other sermons causes the attendees to shout for joy when the message is over. Some couples enjoy a very short and sweet ceremony while others want much more. However, some sermons stick out in my mind much more than others. Why? Because the minister provided a true insight into the marriage covenant and challenges every couple faces in their lives together. This is another reason I love photographing weddings. Each ceremony I photograph, I think back to the vows I made to my bride over three decades ago. "I give you my love and fidelity!" Do I remember anything else said during the ceremony when we were married? No, I do remember that I was so nervous that I stuttered throughout my brief response.

Throughout the entire day, my mind is drawing a storyboard of the day. From the early morning when the bride and other ladies are getting ready to the last dance at the reception and everything in between. My mind is building a storybook to put together for the couple in their wedding album. Every detail is important as we photograph the couple's very special day. Photos of the rings, flowers, special medals, etc. are all important to the couple. Therefore, they are important to me. The image of the pin that was handed down for many generations of ladies to the picture of the cake cutting utensils sent to the couple from a different country. Each item is critical to tell the story and capture the beautiful memories of the wedding day.

A fun part that I enjoy photographing is when the ladies are pampered while getting their hair done and makeup put on. Some ladies elect to have their makeup done by a makeup artist at Macy's or other salon while other elect to have a family member do the makeup. Many will visit a local hair salon for an 'updo' while others do their hair by themselves. Every time I watch the ladies hustle about, I remember my youngest daughter's wedding day. We visited her at her apartment prior to the wedding and she was as calm and collect as I ever saw. In fact, she was so calm; she did the hair of all her bridesmaids and her mom too. Wow! I stood their in awe as I watched and of course, I cried while her bridesmaids chuckled. I was thinking, what happened to me, what a softy I became. Or is it that I was enjoying the fruit of our labor of love?

Some ladies love to get makeup on them and get their hair done while others would rather put a ball cap on and walk down the aisle in sneakers and sweat pants. It is amazing to watch each bride and bridesmaids get ready for this special day. While the ladies are getting ready, I hear the laughter and chatter that take place when the ladies talk about the time when they were little girls dreaming of this day. The ladies talk about their tea parties, and how they dressed up their dolls as they prepared their dolls for their wedding day. These are some of the many reasons why I love photographing weddings.

Cutting the cake is always an interesting part of every wedding. Some couples are very kind and easy with each other. They hold hands very gently, look into each other's eyes, and slowly put the cake in their mate's mouth. Others, will hold hands, cut the cake very gently, and look into their mates eyes, thinking; will they smash the cake into my face?

I remember many, just as if it was yesterday. However, a few stand far and above the others. There was one couple where the groom was taunting his bride. He had a big smirk on his face and there is no doubt he wanted to smash the cake all over her face. However, she looked back to him and without saying a word, he knew better than smash the cake. Many times, the bride doesn't want her makeup or dress covered with cake and icing. Other times, it is because the bride is very shy and would rather this simple moment end quickly.

Often the cake cutting starts very nice and civil but ends up as a food fight. Some state that the original wedding cake cutting/smashing of the cake goes back to Roman times, when the groom would smash part of the cake over his bride's head for some symbolic reason. If this is truth, then I am glad it 'evolved' to today's tradition.

Two food fights stand out in my mind. Both couples started the caked cutting very nice but you could see the look in their face that both the bride and groom had something else planned. I was attempting to watch both through the lens to see who would strike first. (My assistant was opposite me to ensure we captured as many angles of the cake cutting as possible.) In a blinding split second both the bride and groom (not to be outdone by their spouse) pushed the cake into the face of the other and then the cake started to fly. They were laughing and anyone within a few feet of the couple had cake all over them. It proved to be a fun and festive cake cutting.

Cake cutting is another reason why I am passionate about wedding photography. There is no doubt many of the couples will be showing their

wedding album to their children or grandchildren and a little smile will develop as they think about their special day and their first piece of cake together as a couple.

The bouquet and garter toss are always a funny part of the wedding waiting to happen. There are times when the fight for the bouquet or garter is similar to a jump ball during a basketball game and other times it is a civil and casual event. Many stand out in my mind but one that stands out the most is the time when the man that caught the garter did a back flip in the middle of the dance floor.

The groom tossed the garter and it was caught amongst many capable young men. After catching the garter and while the young lady was sitting on the chair waiting with nervous anticipation, the DJ asked for the young man to come forward. The DJ announced to the crowd and specifically to the young man. “Don’t be shy or . . .” while the DJ was in mid-sentence, the man that caught the garter walked forward and did a back flip in the middle of the dance floor. (He definitely was not shy nor was he afraid of being the center of attention.) This was only the beginning of a very entertaining part of the wedding. I was asked later how I captured the shot. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him jump up and I immediately turned toward him and opened my lens to its widest opening (17mm). Without bringing the camera to my eye, I fired off a few shots. I was able to capture his slip when his head was inches from the floor. I am very thankful the Lord gave me the skill and timing to capture this shot. It came from practicing shooting without looking many times before.

So why am I so passionate about weddings and wedding photography and more important, why should you hire me to be a part of your wedding (as the wedding photographer)?

First, I approach each wedding in the same manner that I would want other professionals to approach a wedding that involved my family. I do everything possible to treat each bride and groom with the same care and attention as if they were my own. With two beautiful grown daughters, three grandchildren, and a very supportive wife of over three decades, I understand the importance of family. I do whatever is within my power to treat each bride with as much kindness and respect that I would want for my family. No unflattering poses or images are intentionally shot nor are they displayed for viewing. Every portrait or close up picture receives additional attention to ensure the bride looks her best for their special day. I understand the importance of the parents of the “bride and groom” and follow this same approach with the family. I expect

this same type of respect from everyone that works with me and we approach each family and guest with respect, kindness, and professionalism.

Second, I understand the amount of stress associated with a wedding. I have been on all sides of the wedding, as the groom, father of the bride, guest, and photographer. Yes, there is plenty of stress associated to a wedding and the last thing the family needs is a wedding vendor to lack professionalism or respect for the family and guests.

Third, as part of the stress with a wedding, many families are faced with completing tasks or duties that are out of their normal day to day activities. For example, very few folks design and print wedding programs every day/week. Yes, there are many applications and online help tools to create nice wedding programs but not everyone works with this software or similar tools daily. This brings me to an example of what over twenty years experience with design and other related tools can do to assist the bride and groom. Typically, I stay in touch with each bride and groom, especially as we get closer to the wedding date. I ask if the couple needs any assistance with any task associated to the wedding. (Yes, even items that are not photography related.) It was within a week of a wedding and I called the bride to ask if there is anything she needed help completing prior to the wedding. A short answer, YES. :-D She was struggling with the wedding programs and was concerned that she would not get them done before the wedding. I told her not to worry and send me the information for the programs. I completed the programs and sent her via email a few samples to view. The couple and family were thrilled with the design. Later, I sent the files off to print and delivered them to the family prior to the wedding. Another stress item eliminated from the bride's plate.

Finally, as I stated earlier, my goal is to treat the bride, groom, family, and everyone associated to the wedding with as much care and respect as if it were my family's wedding day.