

# Life



## HARVARD-WESTLAKE

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*Some students graduate not just with a diploma, but also with a lifelong romance. Others reconnect with classmates years later at a reunion (or even on a dating app)! No matter how they got together, congratulations to these dozen couples on their HW mergers—and happy Valentine's Day!*

Cheers,

Ed Hu, Head of External Relations

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# LOVE 101



## Robert Van Dusen '72 and Mary Sheldon '73

I was at Westlake and interested in theater, so I got involved in a Tuesday night drama group at Harvard School. Bob was one of the star actors in the group, and we became friends. We dated briefly but then went off to different colleges. We both married other people and lived a thousand miles apart, but we never forgot each other. Eventually, we both found ourselves single and back in Los Angeles. We reconnected, to the joy of my seven-year-old daughter, Lizy [Dastin '01], who adored Bob on sight, and were married in 1992.

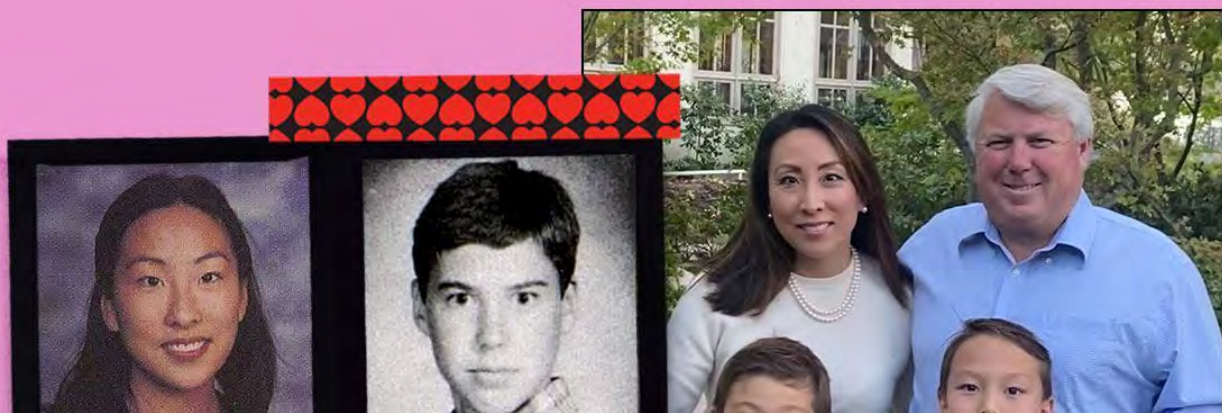
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## Steve Rader '73 and Anne Wilson Rader '74

We met in November 1971. My brother Clark [Wilson '72] had befriended Steve, who was new to Harvard School. I was taking Clark to a dance recital at Westlake and said he should bring a friend, so he brought Steve. Our first date was February 28, 1972, my 16th birthday (I was not allowed to ride in a boy's car on a date until I had my own license—and I was successful at the DMV)! We went to dinner in Westwood at Mario's, which was owned by the family of Vivian Angelini '72 and Marina Angelini Case '74. We were married at St. Saviour's Chapel by Father Gill on June 25, 1977, with Bobbin Ladd '74 serving as maid of honor and Chuck Luke '72 as best man. We have two daughters [Katelyn Rader Fisher '02 and Haley Rader Weidenbaum '05].

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## David Peterson '88 and Sarah Seo Peterson '98

We were both at our brothers' [Brian Peterson '96 and Danny Seo '96] graduation party, but we don't recall meeting until May 2006 at a beach party, and we didn't start dating until after a New Year's Eve party thrown by several HW alums later that year. David made sure to kiss Sarah at midnight. David: "I thought she was cute." Sarah: "David was funny and so easy to talk to." Our first date was dinner a week later at Cafe Portofino in the Palisades. Sarah's 20th and David's 30th HW reunions were on the same evening, so we bounced between both!

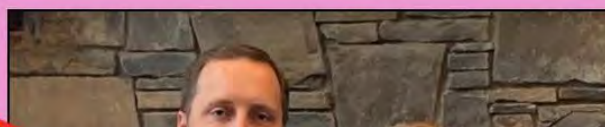
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## Erik Horacek '95 and Angel James Horacek '95

We first met as ninth graders in the fall of 1991, the first year of Harvard-Westlake (two years earlier, Erik had started at Harvard and Angel at Westlake). We were not in the same friend group, but we had AP Latin together. After graduation we didn't see each other until 1999 at our classmate Melissa Kravetz's memorial service. Both of us had grown up a little. We kind of remembered each other. After chatting, we learned that we worked across the street from one another in the same office complex in Westwood. We started to get some friendly work lunches and really grew to enjoy each other's company. As the lunches got more frequent, we discussed the idea that maybe we wanted to take the next step ... and have dinner. We've been having dinner together since June 2000. We got married in 2007 and now have two kids.

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## Billy Strickland '99 and Karin Harwood Strickland '99

Our lockers were near each other in ninth grade in 1995, and I first met Karin when she dropped a textbook and I picked it up for her. Besides her beauty, of course, I remember that Karin used her hands a lot when she talked. We did not have any classes together and had different friend groups, so we didn't stay in touch after HW. But we reconnected when I was with some friends at a restaurant in Manhattan Beach and spotted Karin across the room. Karin was actually on a date with someone else at the time, but we briefly chatted. I did not know who the other guy was, but Karin tracked me down on Facebook and sent me a message a day or two later, making it obvious that the guy she was with was not her forever, and I followed up! Our first date was February 15, 2011. We are forever grateful to Harvard-Westlake for bringing us together!



## Aaron Guggenheim '99 and Monica Paz Guggenheim '99

We remember each other from middle and high school, but I don't think we ever had a class together. We re-met in 2008 at a party that Scott Messer '99 used to host every year as a mini-reunion for HW friends. I remember Aaron walking up to me as if we were longtime friends, but I don't think I'd ever spoken to him before that night! To be honest, I kind of blew him off, but we ran into each other again a couple more times in the next month, started talking, and realized we had a lot in common. We went



out for Korean BBQ on our first date, and Aaron was very impressed with how much I could eat. Ha! We have a tradition to spend New Year's skiing with Billy Strickland '99 and Karin Harwood Strickland '99. It's really fun to see our kids make fond memories together—and they get a kick out of knowing that we also all grew up together.

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## Jeff Gross '02 and Ari Randall '02

We were in ninth grade together at the lower school. I don't remember meeting Jeff for the first time, but I do remember thinking, "Oh, that new kid is pretty cute." Much, much later on—like 15 years after graduating—we were set up by a very close mutual friend, Kristen Kurihara '02, and went for drinks at a rooftop bar. It's fun to tell people that we're high school sweethearts—a decade-plus removed ;)!

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## Andrew Swerdloff '02 and Tracy Lee '02

We reconnected in May 2022 at our 20-year high school reunion, and our first date was dinner at Cafe Stella one week later. Tracy: "We sat next to each other in Spanish class, and I always admired Andrew's vocab studying technique. He was always pulling stacks of note cards out of his backpack." Andrew: "I had a crush on Tracy in high school. Twenty years later, we reconnected and found out we were pretty perfect for each other. You never know what magical things life will bring when you're open to receiving them."

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## Brian Harwitt '11 and Lauren Seo '10

We were in different grades at HW, so we remember each other's siblings and knew each other existed in high school, but we met in NYC via a dating app! In 2016, we went to two cocktail bars in the East Village on our first date and spent five-plus hours talking. Over six years later, we're still together and getting married in September!

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## Alec Zwaneveld '12 and Halle Levitt '12

We met our freshman year. Alec played in the symphony and Halle was in the choir, so we got to know each other during long choir rehearsals and hanging out in the new freshman locker area. While we never dated in high school, we did attend school semifinals together. Senior year of college, in 2016, we reconnected at a Lakers Game, and we got engaged in March 2022! We are getting married this August and Father J. Young (Harvard-Westlake's chaplain when we were students) will be officiating :).

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## Joshua Swanson '13 and Rebecca Van Dusen '13

We met freshman year in Mr. O'Leary's eighth-period history class. I spent an extra hour every night studying the class material so I could impress him the next day with my knowledge of the Middle Ages. The first time we connected after high school was our five-year reunion in 2018. In January 2020, we met up on Ventura Boulevard to take a short walk and reconnect. Five hours (and a stop for coffee) later, we decided to take weekly walks, and two months later, we were dating!

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## Garrett Ingman '21 and Sophia Nuñez '20

We met my freshman year and Garrett's eighth grade year in the middle school art room. We were both taking painting classes, and I thought his painting was amazing. One day I taught him how to clean his brushes, and after that I always dragged him to the art room to paint together. In January 2020, we went to the Getty Museum on our first date. We have known each other for so long now, but we really bonded over classes we took together and painting in the art rooms. We recently celebrated three years together.

**Are you part of an alumni couple?**  
**We would love to hear from you!**

## **Check out past issues of HW Life!**

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