

spouse first.”

Lorraine said she believes her and Jim are happily married after all these years because of flexibility. Jim said that flexibility includes respect and giving each other space. “Each needs quiet time,” he said.

Overall Lorraine said her and Jim have had a great life together.

“Every day is another page in the book of our life,” she said. “Pages become chapters full of memories of love that bloomed, birth of children, good health, working as a team through good times and a few lean times and last, but not least, that we will have each other to say I love you each day.”

Don and Grace Diede

May 23, 1950

61 years of marriage

Don is a retired farmer and masonry contractor and Grace is a housewife and retired nurses aide.

The couple has six children, 20 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

Don and Grace met at a little rural country school near Lesterville. Grace was a second grader and Don was a seventh grader.

Grace said her and Don knew each other for many years but their courtship started when Grace was a teenager.

“Living in a small town the kids would get together on Saturday night,” she said. “One night Don asked me to go out and we dated for a while. We went to movies and rollerskating. Don didn’t dance, I tried to teach him for our wedding dance because my family danced and his didn’t.”

Don and Grace were married when he was 21 and she was 16.

“I was a young, young bride,” Grace said. “I wouldn’t advise girls these days to marry that young.”

In the early years of their marriage, Don and Grace moved around a bit before finally settling in Springfield.

“We lived in the Lesterville area until 1958, then we moved to Springfield for about 10 years. Don’s dad was ready to retire from

farming so we moved back to Lesterville so Don could take over the farming,” Grace said. “In about 1985-86 we moved to California and were there for 1-1/2 years then we moved back to Springfield and have been here ever since.”

The secret to their marital success is two-fold, Grace said.

“We never went to sleep in an argument,” she said. “We always settled it before we went to sleep and we also always kept Christ as the head of our household.”

Grace said she remembers as a young couple preparing to marry, the pastor of the Congregational Church in Lesterville gave them some very valuable advice.

“He told us that life is no bed of roses and our marriage isn’t going to be roses all the time,” she said. “He told us to expect ups and downs and that was really true. He said we need to talk through the down times and settle our differences. I’ve always remembered that and that’s what we’ve done and here we are 61 years later. We’ve had a good life.”

Recently, life has gotten more complicated for Don and Grace. About two years ago, Don had a stroke and he has been diagnosed with Parkinsons.

“He was in a nursing home but now he’s been home for a year,” Grace said. “He’s done real well recovering and made a big improvement. Now we’re just taking each day as it comes.”

Grace said she enjoyed the busy years of their life together when they had kids at home.

“During the early years you just enjoy everything more,” she said. “Later in life you slow down and you wish you could have those earlier years back.”

Without a doubt, Don and Grace still cherish each other.

When asked if he wanted to say anything about being married to Grace for 61 years, Don replied, “It was the greatest experience of my life.”

■ by Tera Schmidt

Expert Care for Your Eyes

From routine eye exams to the latest surgical procedures.
We are your best line of defense against eye disease or vision problems.

*primary eye care & exams • pediatric eye care • cataract care & surgery • full-service optical shop
glaucoma treatment & surgery • diabetic eye treatment • cosmetic eye procedures • laser eye surgery*



**Willcockson Eye
Associates, P.C.**

Call 665-9638 Today!

415 W. 3rd, Yankton, South Dakota

Greg A. Kouri, OD, Patrick H. King, MD, Paula A. Hicks, MD

