

Jed Vanden Dries

A long time ago in September of 1974 a young woman sat patiently in Arnold Hall awaiting a young man who was supposed to escort her to a football game. According to her roommate Jane, at Colorado Women's College, the young man played basketball and was a friend of Mark Simonitch. The young woman wasn't especially tall either and expecting a basketball player she wore her high heels; which in the '70s could be really high. After awhile a young man, who wasn't especially tall, came walking down the hallway. The young lady immediately noticed his bright blue eyes and was disappointed that this gentleman couldn't possibly be her suitor because he didn't look anything like a basketball player. Much to her surprise the young man walked right up to her and introduced himself as Jed Vanden Dries and asked if she was Cam McClelland. As this was indeed the gentleman she was waiting for they went off to the game, completely unaware that their lives had just changed forever.

That was how our parents met for the first time. By graduation in 1975 they were engaged. After UPT in 1976 they were married. By 1978 they had a son named Sean. By 1979 they had another son named Drew. On Feb. 1, 2002 their story came to an end. Cam and Jed are interned together at the Air Force Academy. A few rows to the west lies Mark Simonitsch, '75. A few plots to the north lies Mark Whalen, '76. A few feet away lies Nick Jabara, '01.

Drew and I would like to thank everyone in our Air Force Family who has come to our aid. Drew and I have been amazed at the level and amount of support that has poured in from all corners of the globe. Maj. Kevin "Fletch" Murray, USAF, came from Elmendorf to present the flag. Mrs. Laura Mills came from Lakenheath AFB to pay her respects. Lt. Col. John Thompson, USAF (Ret), came from Germany. Lt. Col. Robert Stewart, '75, USAF (Ret), also came to say a few words.

It is extremely comforting to see so many people wanting to help. I would like to thank Lt. Gen. John Dallagher, '69; and Brig. Gen. Taco Gilbert, '78, for their help. I would like to thank my AOC Maj. Sean Herr, '87, and MTL TSgt. Gorgon Fay for coordinating the lodging at USAFA for my family. I would like to thank C3C Steve McGregor, '04, for playing taps. I would like to thank my classmates and Dirty Thirty (CS-30) for their support. I would like to thank the Alaska Parents Association. And lastly I would like to thank the AOG for being so flexible, cooperative, and helpful. (C1C Sean Vanden Dries, '02)