

DEBRA DISCUILLO & MATTHEW POLICHETTI

July 25, 2009, in Gilbertsville

LOVE

KELLIE PATRICK GATES

Hello, and goodbye

On Halloween night 1998, Deb and Nick Discuillo were still six months away from their wedding. They were passing out candy at their Schwenksville home when they saw Matt Polichetti and his sister, Jackie Marks, moving into the townhouse two doors down.

"He looks to be about my age, and Italian," Nick noted. "I'm going to go introduce myself."

Thus began a remarkable friendship between the two men and their families. "When Nick's family had barbecues, Matt would go with us," Deb said. "Matt's family lives in Delaware at the beach, and Nick and I used to spend weekends with Matt and his parents. That's how close we all were."

One night in October 2003, Nick, Deb's son David Ziegler, who was then 13, and a couple of David's friends went to pick up some films for a family movie night. Deb and the couple's 10-month-old son, Dominick, were waiting at home. Matt was on his deck, getting ready to join his friends.

The phone rang. An accident just around the corner had left Nick badly hurt. Deb rushed to the scene to be with her husband and to accompany him to the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center. She did not know when she would be back. But she did not hesitate to leave Dominick with Matt. "He had no kids, but he had been around Dominick so much since he was born that I knew he would know what to do."

A week after the accident, Nick died, due to a spinal-cord injury. A week after that, Deb found out she was pregnant with their second child.

Matt knew that the best thing he could do for the friend he lost was to help out Nick's still-growing family. Isabella was born in June 2004, and "Matt and his sister were my backup," Deb remembers. "I had a young teenager, a newborn, and a baby."

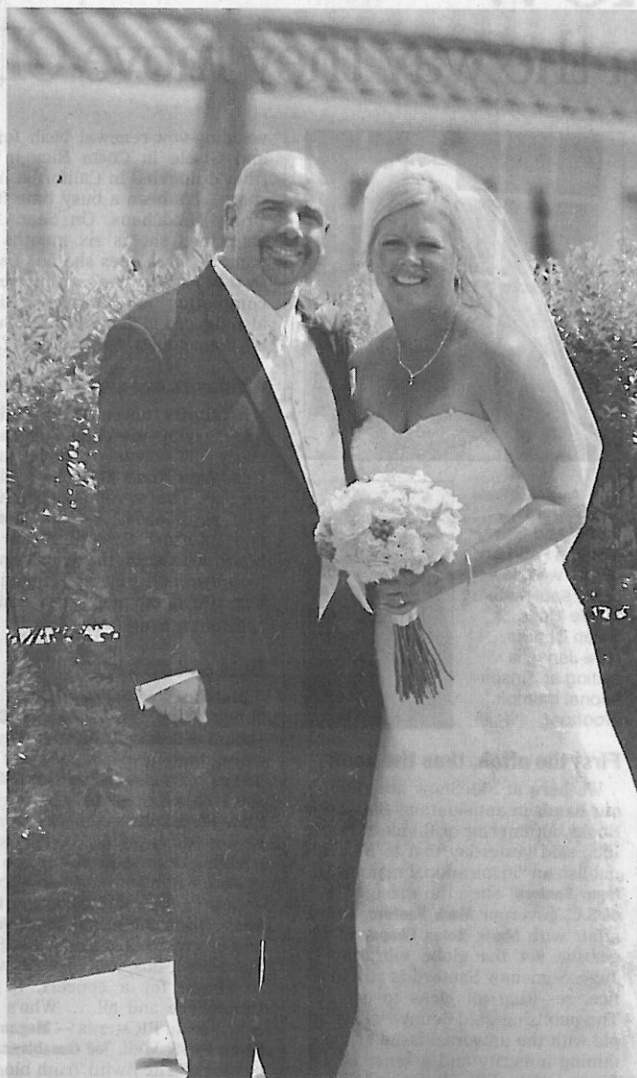
As the Christmas season rolled around that year, Matt and Deb sensed that their friendship was turning into something more. They began dating in early 2005.

It was a joyful time, with some sadness, too. The new couple understood that perfectly about each other: "When you're a widow and you start dating, a lot of times people don't understand that even though you are moving on, you still feel grief and loss," Deb said. "Matt felt grief and loss, too. He lost his best friend."

At first, Deb and Matt kept their new relationship quiet. About a month into it, the first people they told were Nick's parents. Not only were the Discuillos supportive, but they had predicted Deb and Matt would wind up together.

How does forever sound?

In May 2008, Deb had an



BRIAN PARKES



The newlyweds dance with children Dominick, Isabella, David, 19, and his girlfriend, Brenna Coyle.

inkling that Matt was up to something. "One day, he had my daughter, Isabella, with him. Fifteen seconds after she got out

Schwenksville.

At work

Matt is a senior engineering technician for Halliburton. Deb is a stay-at-home mom.

It was so them

Three sets of parents walked down the aisle, starting with Nick's: Nicholas Jr. and Edna Discuillo. "Nick's dad refers to Matt as his new son-in-law," Deb said. "We've been so blessed that all three sets of parents get along so great. I have the most amazing two sets of in-laws you could imagine."

Matt's parents, Joseph Sr. and Faye Polichetti, and Deb's, Robert M. and Dorothy Fritz, followed the Discuillos.

Deb was escorted by her oldest son, David, who is now 19 and at Pennsylvania State University studying to be a teacher.

Dominick, now 6, was ring bearer, and Isabella, 5, was flower girl.

When the officiant asked, "Who gives this woman in marriage?" David responded: "My brother, Dominick, my sister, Isabella, and I."

The ceremony also included a family blessing. In lieu of favors, the couple made a donation in Nick's memory to the Spinal Cord Injury Association. About two weeks after the wedding, on what would have been Deb and Nick's 10th anniversary, Matt told Deb: "When you go to the cemetery today, give him my love, too."

This didn't happen at rehearsal

Toward the end of the father-daughter dance, Robert Fritz, 92, told Deb he had made an arrangement with the DJ. Robert took the microphone and launched into a comedy routine about marital longevity.

Awestruck

During the ceremony, the couple acknowledged the three sets of parents by taking a rose to each. "The last set was Nick's parents. I glanced up, and every one of our guests was teary-eyed," Deb said. "It was very emotional, but good. Very good."

Discretionary spending

A bargain: Deb and Matt went with the basic flowers and table arrangements from their venue's house florist, she said. They were beautiful — and that left room in the budget for ...

The splurge: The venue itself, La Massaria at Bella Vista Golf course in Gilbertsville. The couple looked at many places, and La Massaria was probably 30 percent more expensive, Deb said. But the place was beautiful, and the food was great.

The getaway

A week in Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Officiant

Jim Rosengarten
of Journeys of the Heart

Venue

La Massaria at the Bella Vista
Golf Course, Gilbertsville, Pa.

Catering

La Massaria

Music

Ceremony music by harpist
Betsy Scott Chapman,
Boyertown, Pa. Cocktail hour
music, Dr. Ben's Backbone
Blues Band, Norristown

Dinner and reception music,
Gil Keough of Silver Sound
DJs, Phoenixville.

Photography and videography

The Pros, Huntington Valley;
Brian Parkes of Krisp
Communications of Gilbertsville

Dress

David's Bridal,
Plymouth Meeting

Invitations

Invitations by Dawn,
www.invitationsbydawn.com

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