

DOWN HOME: Watching our kids change our world

October 31, 2009

Ruth, Lynne, Joanna and I probably looked like a tiny band of collegiate pranksters. We crouched behind bushes in front of Pat Neff Hall, the gold-domed jewel of the Baylor University campus.

(OK, maybe we didn't look like collegiate pranksters, since we're decades past our college prime. But there we were, sneaking around the perimeter of Pat Neff, peering from behind shrubs, just like a bunch of kids.)

We were waiting for our children to stroll up the sidewalk. Waiting for a moment that would change all our lives.

David—Ruth's and Lynne's youngest son—and Molly—Jo's and my youngest daughter—met almost five years ago during a visit to Baylor before they graduated from high school. Once they moved to campus, they hung out with the same group and became good friends.

Last fall, during their senior year, something changed. David asked Molly out for a "real" date, and friendship blossomed into love. With graduation approaching, they figured out how she could go to grad school in Fort Worth, and he could attend med school in Dallas, and they could see each other a couple times a week.

Soon, they decided mid-distance dating wasn't enough. And that's why David took Jo and me out to dinner. He told us he loved our daughter with all of his heart and asked for our blessing because he intended to ask Molly to be his bride.

Since we love Molly more than our next breaths and had grown to love

David, too, our eyes filled with tears when we said, yes, of course, we would bless their marriage.

And so David bought a ring and orchestrated all the arrangements to walk Molly to the steps of Pat Neff Hall at 8:15 on Saturday night of homecoming weekend. We watched him drop to one knee, and we heard her delighted laughter. We saw him stand up, and they hugged and kissed for a loooooong time.

As they stood there together, Molly's life passed before my eyes. I remembered her birth, how she snuggled in her "foot pajamas" and the way she used to make past-tense by adding a "D" to every verb. I recalled reading books together, playing softball in the yard and Indian Princesses' campouts. I thought about standing beside her as I baptized her, long talks about faith and life, and listening to her sing her version of pop songs. In about two minutes, she fast-forwarded into a remarkable woman, whom I admire enormously and whom I'm grateful to call my dear friend as well as my lovely daughter.

And I thought about how I almost felt as if I knew David as a boy and teenager. We never had met, but I had been praying for him, asking God to give him good days, a happy family. Pleading with God to turn him into a kind, gentle, faithful, funny and sensitive man who would love Molly as a husband as deeply as I love her as a daddy.

God answers prayer, and we are blessed.