



Bertis and Jayne Best – Fifty-year Anniversary Symmetry Delightful

[Tyler County Booster](#) (09-19-13), 3B.

Bertis and Jayne were born and reared in Woodville. Last Saturday, Sept. 14, Bertis and Jayne Best travelled to Houston to celebrate their 50th Anniversary.

This day’s love also had several “numbered” features. Psalm 37:23 says “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.”

Bertis, a banker since 1969, took special care to point out how remarkable it was that this 50th anniversary Saturday was on the second Saturday and third Sunday of the month, just as it was 50 years earlier. “Just how remarkable is that?” he asked with his characteristic magnetic smile.

Jayne’s two sisters and two brothers were all married in September, spread over a decade. Her oldest sister Billie married Alford Polk, second sister Bobbie married Henry Foy Swinney, Lloyd married Mary Ann, and Cecil married Margie. When Bertis asked Jayne, they too would marry in September – as all five couples have – on the second Saturday before the third Sunday.

Jayne cherishes her ancestry studies, working hard on their family tree.

For a woman dedicated to ancestry and a man dedicated to financial numbers, it seemed that God’s good graces have allowed – dare we say – all the universe to align itself with Bertis and Jayne’s 50th anniversary.

The five brothers and sisters were born to Oscar and Lilla Fortenberry, and Bertis gingerly held the frame holding the wedding photos of all five siblings and their spouses surrounding their beloved parents. To top off these familial coincidences, the siblings mother, Lilla, had a sister, and both sisters married brothers.

They delight to think that the symmetry of dates between the five anniversaries was all part of God’s plan that brought them together. This family “delights” in marriage longevity! God has confirmed his guidance with Bertis and Jayne not only in the symmetry of dates but also in settling them down these years in Woodville and Tyler County.

Bertis and Jayne met while in Woodville High School. Their economics teacher Marian Tidwell drove them together, but Jayne has a bit of a stubborn streak.



Fortenberry Anniversaries		
Alford Lee & Billie Polk	09-15-51	Saturday before 3rd Sunday
Henry Foy & Bobbie Swinney	09-19-53	Saturday before 3rd Sunday
Lloyd & Mary Ann Fortenberry	09-14-57	Saturday before 3rd Sunday
Cecil & Margie Fortenberry	09-16-61	Saturday before 3rd Sunday
Bertis & Jayne Best	09-14-63	Saturday before 3rd Sunday

Because of some intrigue Bertis had gotten himself into with a blind date to a very well-to-do daughter in another town, word travelling as it does, that set Jayne's determined virtue into high gear. She would only let Bertis "go steady" with her for one day.

Jayne got a scholarship for twirling and attended SFA. She would become a teacher.

"We dated for a couple years," Bertis said. Then he entered the Navy as an electrician with the Seabees (Seabee.navy.mil). He spent 18 months in Newfoundland.

"We called and talked. I got an enormous phone bill," Bertis quipped. "On August 23, 1961, I asked her to marry me, and she accepted the ring."

But he had two more years to go in the Navy, first to Guantanamo and then to Antarctica.

"We tried to stay warm as we rewired the base at South Pole Station," Bertis said, changing generators from one- to three-phase current, as the base sat upon 10,000 feet of snow, the generators ran everything (SouthPoleStation.com). In October 1962, the ice breakers came in and had to dump their cargo on the ice and skedaddle before the passage closed. Bertis and crew had to transport the fuel barrels and supplies to storage on skids.

Shortly after the Navy, they married in September 1963 and moved around a bit as Bertis changed jobs, mostly in banking.

Jayne worked as a secretary for Citizens Bank officer Lee Feagin. She still gets a kick out of her having to cut the coupons off Imperial Sugar sacks in order for him to get the silverware offered. When Bertis and Jayne got married, Lee gave them a box of silverware he had gotten from the sugar coupons.

Bertis opened Jasper Federal Savings and Loan's first branch in Woodville in the mall where Boykin's Photography resides, then they built a larger office across from the hospital, where the Tax Assessor's office now resides.

Bertis was in the thick of it when the savings and loan industry collapsed in late 1980s.

In between bank jobs, he worked briefly for a car dealer, joking about some of the sleazy tactics. Himself an expert in loans, he smiled at their attempts to make a 22% car loan rate sound like an 8% rate. He moved on to First National Bank Jasper, starting in their car loan department of all things. Then he became a supervisor over their branches.

Jayne retired with 30+ years of teaching under her belt. Bertis has had two heart attacks, in 1990 and 1997, received a pacemaker, and has since regimented his life accordingly.

What advice do they have for younger couples?

Bertis' generally jovial nature turned serious. "You have to work hard. Live right. We made plenty of mistakes." He paused to reflect, then with thankfulness in his voice and a smile, "You have got to have a loving wife."

They have been examples to their two children, too, Bryan and Janet, who followed their parents' careers – son into banking and daughter into teaching.

Bertis and Jayne bought the house in the Campground community in which she and two of her brothers were born. He occasionally works there on the weekends. But Bertis has not retired; he is a vice president of First National Bank Jasper in the Woodville Branch and still loves helping people with their bank needs.

As they returned from Houston on the third Sunday in September, they entered into their 51st year of marriage with many fond memories and several not-so-coincidental turns in the road. Confirming his guidance upon their in many ways, when God finally puts together their "Balance Sheet," doubtlessly the bottom-line will read, "The steps of this couple were ordered by the Lord," and, after all – it has been delightful.