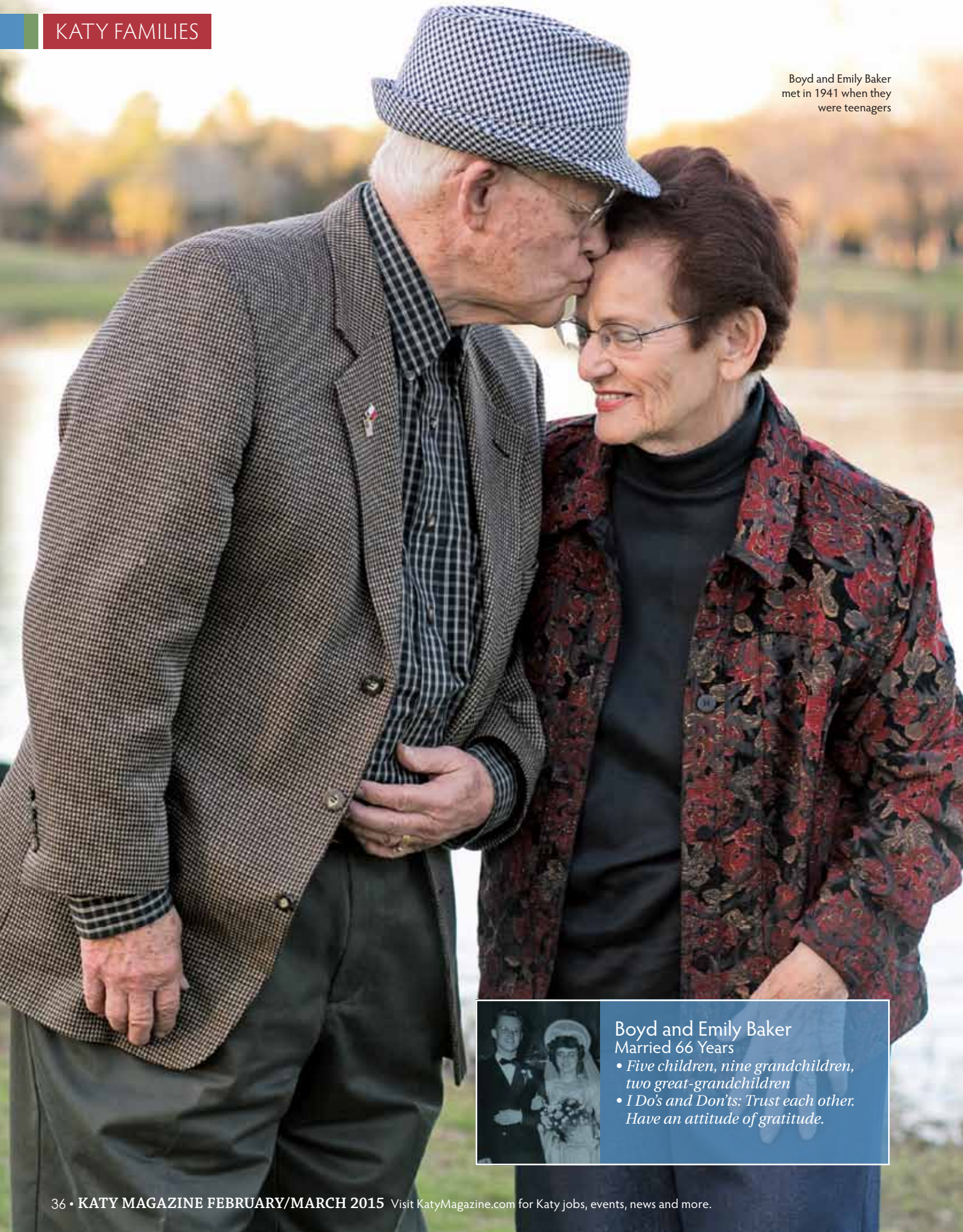


Boyd and Emily Baker met in 1941 when they were teenagers



Boyd and Emily Baker
Married 66 Years

- *Five children, nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren*
- *I Do's and Don'ts: Trust each other. Have an attitude of gratitude.*

Marriage

Through the Ages

Katy couples whose love has withstood decades share how living happily ever after is not a fairy tale, but a choice of commitment

Written by Tassie Hewitt | Select photography by Juliana Evans

Demanding jobs, health issues, and money worries might mean the honeymoon is over for some couples, but these Katy husbands and wives have found the secret to wedded bliss. They agree that while falling in love is easy, staying in love requires commitment and hard work.

It was 1941 when Boyd and Emily Baker met at a Christmas party in Flint, Michigan. "I was asked to sing 'White Christmas,'" says Boyd, who was 15 at the time. "About the middle of the song, I looked down and there was a pretty young lady in a blue flowered dress. It was love at first sight."

Emily, age 13 at the time, grew up as the oldest of 17 children in her family. The couple courted for seven years, during which time Boyd went away to college and was drafted into the Navy. "Every time I returned, she was there," says Boyd, who grew up during the Great Depression. "I never had anyone as faithful in my life. I was lucky."

The couple, now married 66 years, started out living in a 500-square-foot trailer at a time when \$13 bought a week's worth of groceries. Boyd, pastor emeritus at Grace Fellowship United Methodist Church, believes couples today need an "attitude of gratitude" and mutual trust to keep their marriages strong. He recently authored a book titled, *A Pocket Full of Prayers*.

"I think they start out getting too much," says Boyd. "In Katy, we're economically in good condition. I don't think people appreciate what comes too easy."

Five children, nine grandchildren, and two great grandchildren later, Boyd says even at ages 88 and 86, he and his wife still enjoy being together. "I see her asleep, and I thank God," says Boyd. "I have a heartfelt feeling of love today and in a different way than before. I think God had his hand in all of this."

To Love and to Cherish

"Putting one another first before anyone or anything has been the success of our marriage," says Dusti Luna, a kindergarten teacher at Morton Ranch Elementary who has been married to her husband, Pete, who works for the Department of Public Safety, for 20 years. "We do sweet little gestures to keep the romance alive."

"I know it sounds crazy, but I saw her in class and I just knew she was the one," says Pete, who met Dusti in college. "It was just something in my heart." Three years later he snuck into her apartment while she was in the bathroom, placed a ring on her dresser, and hid in her closet. When she found the ring, he jumped out of the closet, got down on one knee, and popped the question.

"He's my rock," says Dusti, who didn't know anyone when she first moved to Katy. "The minute I met him he started protecting me. He took care of me then, and he still does."

Dusti says good communication and respect for each other are the keys to a successful marriage. The Lunas learned when they were newly married and facing the challenge of having opposite work schedules that it is important for couples to have quality time to share conversation and focus on each other.

"We would make date nights, and his mom would watch the kids," she says. "There are a lot of people who stay married for comfort, but we truly want to be together. We want to travel; we love to go dancing."

The Lunas have two children who attend Katy High School - Austin, 18, and Cheyenne, 15. "We're constantly teaching our son to treat his girlfriend with respect, and we're modeling for our daughter how she should be shown respect," says Dusti.

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When Pete Luna met Dusti in college in 1991, he knew she was the one

28, and Stephen, 31, have grown. They make it a point to have dinner with each other every night. They stay connected with phone calls during the day. “The secret to a good marriage is wanting it to succeed and not throwing it away when it gets hard,” says Nancy. “We were really challenged, and it brought us so much closer. It made our marriage stronger.”

Steve’s advice to young married couples is to be committed to common goals and to remember what they loved about each other at the beginning of their relationship. “It’s a growing thing,” says Steve. “Nobody gets where we are the first five, 10, or 15 years.”

For Richer or for Poorer

Some couples not only grow old together, they grow up together. “It was love at first sight,” says Ross Ramos, when he and Margie met at a café in the summer of 1969. The teenage sweethearts dated a short time before Ross, then 17, proposed. “I was baby-sitting,” says Margie, who was only 16 at the time. “He came to see me and said we were going to get married.” Soon after, the couple moved to Houston to start new jobs.

“I remember packing our few belongings into a Ford Mustang. Our first challenge was working toward paying our rent and bills and having money,” says Margie who is now vice president of real estate loan



Dusti and Pete Luna Married 20 Years

- Two children
- *I Do's and Don'ts: Spend quality time together. Focus on each other. Share conversations about your day.*

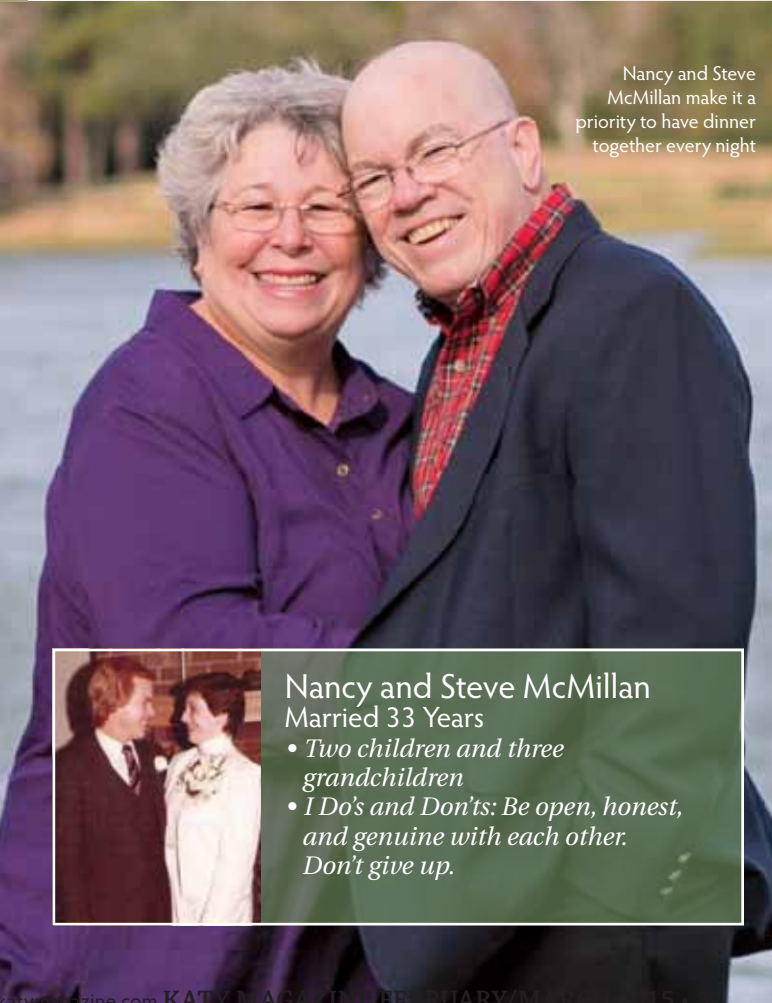
In Sickness and in Health

For some couples, it is the challenges that make their marriage stronger. When Nancy and Steve McMillan met at work over 35 years ago, they never dreamed the obstacles they would face as a married couple. “It’s one of those things where you just know,” says Steve about when the pair met. “I came around the corner, and she was about 15 feet away. All the air went out of me. I never really believed in that before, but it sure happened to me.”

“He asked me out to lunch, and the rest is history,” says Nancy, a secretary in the communications department at Katy ISD. “He still takes my breath away.”

Steve, who works for a wireless network company, is a two-time cancer survivor who battled leukemia in 1995 and colon cancer in 2008. Through the tough times, the couple relied on their faith, family, and friends to keep them strong. “Steve is a fighter. He’s a strong, godly man, and he’s very faithful,” says Nancy who believes the secret to a good marriage is putting God first. “That makes me want to be faithful.”

Part of what keeps the couple strong is their desire to have fun together, even long after the children, Sarah,



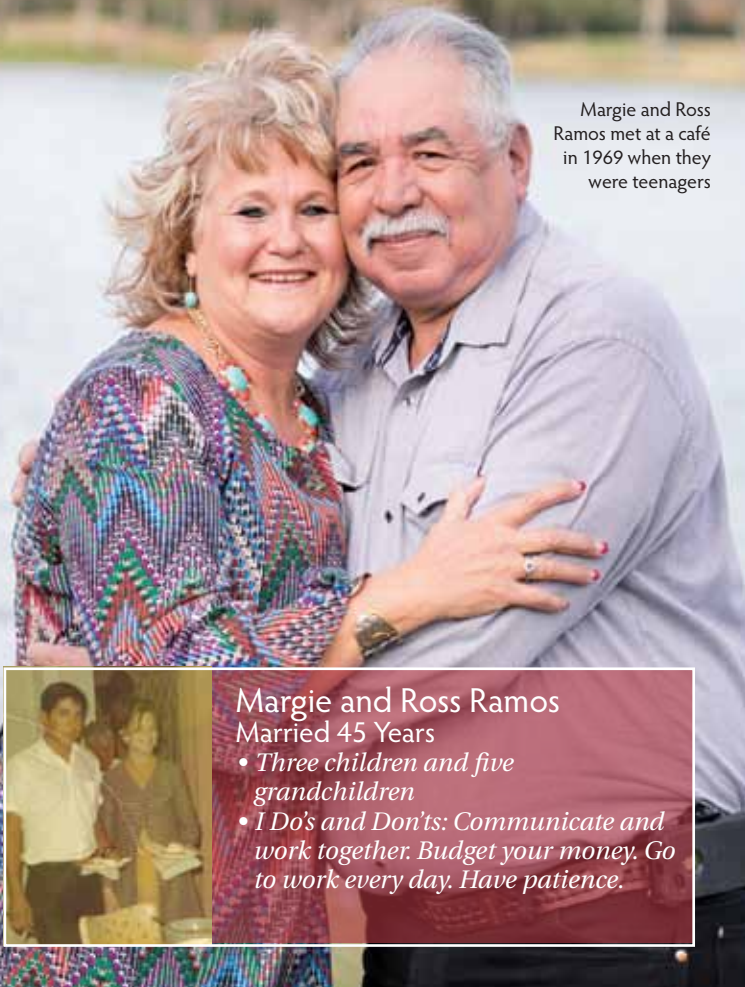
Nancy and Steve McMillan make it a priority to have dinner together every night



Nancy and Steve McMillan Married 33 Years

- Two children and three grandchildren
- *I Do's and Don'ts: Be open, honest, and genuine with each other. Don't give up.*

Margie and Ross Ramos met at a café in 1969 when they were teenagers



operations at Wallis State Bank. “We started out with nothing.”

The Ramos’, who have three daughters, all graduates from Katy High School, Laura, 44, Tammy, 40, and Melissa, 32, just celebrated their 45th anniversary and owe the success of their marriage to hard work, patience, and good communication. “We’re so much alike,” says Margie. “My husband is a very hard worker and so am I. We’re both from the same background and come from the country. Everything we have today is because of both of us working.”

When they are not working, the couple enjoys spending time at their horse ranch and traveling. Yearly weeklong cruises and vacations at resorts keep them connected. Even though it has been decades since they said “I do,” the couple looks forward to retiring together and moving into the country. Margie says, “We both feel young at heart.”

Though life can challenge any marriage, the decades these couples have spent together made them grow closer instead of apart. They respect, protect, and love each other. They never give up. KM

TASSIE HEWITT is a freelance writer who believes in true love, and is inspired by her parents who are still on their honeymoon 52 years later.



Margie and Ross Ramos
Married 45 Years

- Three children and five grandchildren
- I Do's and Don'ts: Communicate and work together. Budget your money. Go to work every day. Have patience.

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