

Gerry and Laine Francis take wedding pictures in front of Fonville Fountain after a ceremony in Whitley Auditorium.

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say

A bride prepares in the back rooms of Whitley Auditorium for her big day. A groomsman waits anxiously in Holt Chapel for a glimpse of his future wife. Wedding ceremonies may not seem like events one would expect to see on the campus grounds of Elon University, but according to Associate Chaplain Phil Smith, they happen about two or three times in a year.

During his four years at Elon, Smith has officiated three weddings in Holt Chapel.

"Some people have a minister they will invite to do the wedding, but if they don't, then it falls to our office," Smith said. "I usually meet with them to get to know them and work with them on those plans and on their life together."

Most weddings at Elon take place at either Holt Chapel or Whitley Auditorium. According to Smith, both locations serve as the perfect choice for couples seeking the comfort of a quiet ceremony.

"Most of the weddings at Elon have been more family oriented, as opposed to grand," he said. "They're more intimate and dignified."

Gerry and Laine Francis

Married: Aug. 10, 2002

Location: Whitley Auditorium

Reception: McKinnon Hall

Fun Fact: Senior Vice President for Business, Finance and Technology Gerald Whittington sang at their wedding.

Executive Vice President Gerry Francis met his wife through a mutual friend. "I have a good friend who used to work at this institution by the name of Joanne Soliday," Gerry said. "She was always having me over for dinner to meet someone. So it just so happened she had me over for a Friday dinner and that's when I met my wife. The interesting part of that is Joanne Soliday married us. She's an ordained minister also. She ended up marrying us and my daughter was my best man."

Gerry and Laine decided to get married at Elon because of the many friends they had in the area.

"We had a nice ceremony, short and sweet, with lots of friends on both sides who never thought either one of us would ever get married," Gerry said. "It was kind of funny because after the minister pronounced us man and wife, the gentleman at the organ played 'Hallelujah.'"

DJ and Nicole Cummings

Married: Oct. 6, 2007

Location: Holt Chapel

Reception: Basement of Holt Chapel

Fun Fact: Because of technical difficulties, there was no music played at their reception.

The Cummings have a long-standing connection with Elon University. DJ grew up in the Town of Elon, attended Elon College for one semester in 1993 and later worked for the campus as a police officer. Nicole's mother, Kathy Whitt, works on campus as a faculty mail clerk.

"On our very first date, we went out to dinner and after our date, we went and walked around the campus," Nicole said. "It was beautiful that night with the pond, the swans, the ducks. We sat beside the pond and talked for hours. When DJ proposed to me, he took me back there, to the same exact spot where we talked for hours."

Since it was a second marriage for both of them, they knew they wanted their wedding to be a modest affair with just close family and friends.

"Being in the area as long as I had, I'd always noticed Holt Chapel there," DJ said. "I just thought it was a nice, quaint, beautiful place to get married for a small wedding and thought it would be the perfect spot."

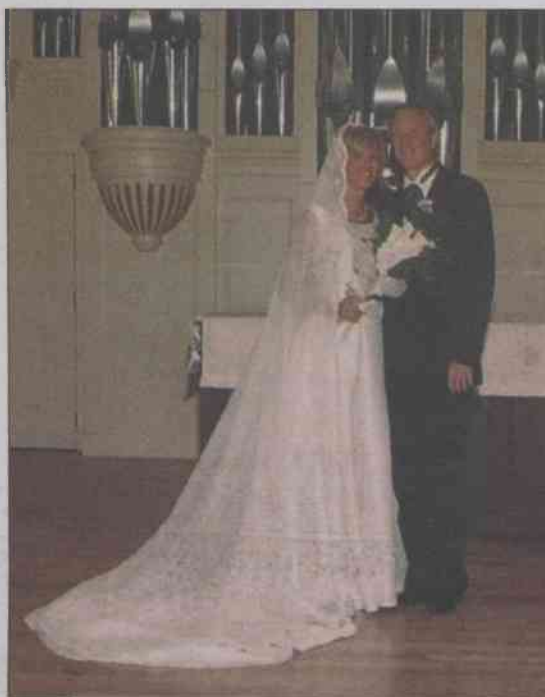


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The Francis' wedding in Whitley in 2002 inspired the university to build steps that would give future couples easier access to the stage.



DJ and Nicole Cummings exit Holt Chapel after their wedding ceremony as close

Use and reservation policy for weddings held in Holt Chapel

Rene Summers, the secretary for the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, is the scheduler for this space. She can be reached at 336 278 7729 and will schedule the wedding, rehearsal and/or reception, as well as assist the person planning the wedding in making necessary logistical arrangements with other university departments (i.e. setup of tables, chairs, etc.).

Rice/Balloons: Do not throw rice in the sanctuary or any other part of the building. No confetti. Birdseed may be thrown outside of the building. Releasing balloons is discouraged for environmental reasons.

Fees for use of Holt Chapel for Weddings:
 \$300 for Elon students, alumni, faculty-staff and their children, trustees and their children, and alumni of Elon Homes for Children.
 \$500 for friends of Elon and children of alumni (fees include housekeeping, facility rental and services of a facility manager).