ABOUT THESE STORIES

The Bible describes love as patient, and kind. Love is not boastful, nor is it envious. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes and perhaps most importantly, always perseveres. Much like The Cavalier — love perseveres, it survives. It is the idea from which this event was born. A celebration of love, perseverance and renewal. Just as the grand hotel on the hill has been reimagined, so too will be these love stories. Renewed, and poised to continue writing the next century of love stories.

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A HISTORIC VIRGINIA BEACH HOTEL THAT CARRIES ON A GRAND TRADITION

Some say The Cavalier is what put Virginia Beach on the map. The same people would argue after almost a century, the grand hotel on the hill is still, and always will be, the definition of luxury at the oceanfront. Wrought with rich history, construction of The Cavalier began in 1926 and continued on for 13 months. At times, there were as many as 225 men on the construction site who laid half-million bricks, still the largest amount of bricks used on a single building in the state of Virginia. With a private depot, The Cavalier was added as a nonstop train destination from Chicago that hosted mid-westerners from the Norfolk & Western Pullman Coach. With the motto “The Cavalier to The Cavalier,” the grand Virginia Beach hotel became a luxurious East Coast destination, keeping limousines to usher guests from steamer ships and rail stations.

Having earned its name as the result of a newspaper contest, originally, The Cavalier included 195 guest rooms on 350 acres of land, including a golf course stretching 290 of those acres. The construction of the 6,060 yard golf course was as grand as the hotel, with some holes modeled after the Scottish golf holes of North Berwick, St. Andrews and the Fox Chapel Golf Club in Chicago. A sunken garden graced the south side of the hotel, a naturally stunning backdrop for events, whose groves of flowers were once used to adorn rooms, dining rooms and the lobby.
My grandfather, Robert Lucas Lash, was a plumbing contractor who moved his family to Virginia Beach to work on The Cavalier Hotel as it was being constructed. They lived on 24th Street in the house next door to my mother’s family. His son, Robert, who worked with him, met my mother. They later married. My sisters and I would not exist if not for The Cavalier Hotel. I am the youngest of three girls. The Cavalier on the Hill has always been a beautiful landmark to me. When my husband and I are able to visit, we make a point of riding by. We planned to go by for lunch on our visit about a year ago, only to find it closed for renovations; we went up to the door to peek in the windows and introduced ourselves to the security guard. I was able to locate a picture of my parents in the 1930s, soon after they were married. I believe it was taken in front of my grandfather’s house on 24th Street. The Cavalier has always had a special place in our hearts.

Name
Jane & John
Dunn Stevens

Date
July 1927

My wife, Jane, was a guest with her parents when she was one year old. She actually took her first steps when learning to walk in one of the rooms at The Cavalier and walked to the bathroom. Every time we drive by The Cavalier she tells the story of walking at The Cavalier.
My grandparents, Jeanne Carter Williams and George Williams, honeymooned at The Cavalier in the 1940s. They’ve both passed away — but I wanted to share their photos in front of the hotel. My grandfather served in the Air Force for most of his career; Nana was a homemaker and teacher. She was also a gifted pianist. She always had a soft spot for The Cavalier. I’m so glad to know it will have new life soon. I hope you capture lots of good love stories.
Margaret & Jerry Lombardi

October 23, 1954

My grandpa and grandma visited the old Cavalier in 1954 during their honeymoon trip. They are no longer here and able to enjoy the chance to visit or renew their vows, but they always spoke highly of their time there. Jerry and Margaret “Peg” (McCarthy) Lombardi were married on October 23, 1954 in Binghamton, New York, where they resided until they passed. In those days, my grandma worked as a telephone operator, and my grandpa worked for IBM after leaving the Army. They met when my grandpa continually called the operator line bothering her until she would agree to a date. They were married for 49 years when my grandma passed after a long fight with pancreatic cancer in 2004. My grandpa passed in 2011; after which, I found these photos. When I moved to Virginia Beach from New York in 2005, my grandpa recalled their trip and talked of how he had borrowed a big red convertible and they drove all the way down the east coast to Florida, staying at a few of the fancy hotels along the way. My grandpa got a chance to marvel at the old Cavalier building on the hill when he came to visit in 2009 for my college graduation.

Thank you and I hope the couples participating look back at the Cavalier with the same fond memories that my grandparents did!

Nan & Art Bousquet

May 17, 1952

We were married in Washington, D.C. on May 17, 1952 after Art returned from his tour of duty in Korea. Art was a Marine Corps fighter pilot. We chose Virginia Beach for our honeymoon because neither of us had ever been there and we both love the beach. Of course, the weather did not cooperate. It was cold! But we enjoyed The Cavalier and everything it offered. What a wonderful week in a beautiful hotel.

In 1964 the Marine Corps sent us to Norfolk where we still reside, so The Cavalier was near at hand but with raising eight children we couldn’t afford a visit. Finally in 1992, I surprised Art by reserving a room for our 40th anniversary. What fun we had re-living our honeymoon. The Cavalier will always hold special memories for us.
We were married on February 27, 1953 on the popular TV program “Bride & Groom,” which aired on CBS at noon each weekday. It was during the Korean War and Frank was in the Navy. We were married by our own minister in a chapel in the studio. After the ceremony, we received many gifts, one of which was a week’s stay at The Cavalier. Another gift was the use of a brand new black Pontiac sedan for our honeymoon. Between the luxury of The Cavalier and the beauty of that car, we were two wide-eyed young newlyweds. There was not much happening during February so the manager, Sydney Banks, offered us another week free of charge. We appreciated his generous offer but needed to return home to NJ. The Cavalier always had a special place in our hearts and although it’s over 60 years since it was our good fortune to have stayed in such a wonderful place, we never forgot that grand hotel.

Fifty years later in 2003 our family, which had grown to 4 daughters, 4 sons-in-law and 11 grandchildren, treated us to a 50th anniversary celebration there but it was held at The Cavalier on the beach. During that time we had a long conversation with the Bell Captain who started at the hotel when he was 16 years old and was still there for many long years and had some stories to tell! He said because he had become so well known and had met so many celebrities, etc. he was asked to appear on the Today Show. However, it was scheduled for 9/11/01 and, of course, it was canceled and they never called him back. About two years later he passed away and his story was on the front page of The Virginian-Pilot.

Frank and I always felt that we truly had a special wedding and honeymoon. Sadly, he passed away 5 years ago. We were retired living on the NC Coast but after he died I relocated to Hertford, NC near a daughter and her family. That is about an hour from Virginia Beach so I watch everything on TV about The Cavalier and all the things happening to return it to its former glory. It is very interesting and has certainly brought back many memories.
“I remember you. You’re the one who made my dreams come true a few kisses ago.”

I never hear this song from that wonderful Big Band Era without thinking of that magical summer of 1950 when I was a kid fresh out of high school working for my piano teacher “Miss Margaret” and her husband Mr. Todd, who was the manager of The Cavalier Beach Club at the time.

For reasons I still can’t fathom, my protective parents allowed me to leave home in North Carolina, spend the summer living with the Todds at their home on Holly Road, and work in the Beach Club’s miniature shop located directly behind the bandstand.

Miss Margaret was so afraid that I’d lose interest in piano playing when I entered college that she cleverly made sure I was introduced to the piano player with every band that came through the Beach Club that summer. Johnny Long, Russ Morgan, Shep Fields — every two weeks a different band appeared at The Cavalier and played for the afternoon tea dances and again for the evening dinner dances on that romantic, breeze-swept open dance floor right at the ocean’s edge.

Not until the very last band of the summer, though, did I meet the fellow who “made my dreams come true.” Andy Wright, pianist with the Shep Fields Orchestra, won World War II for us at the Battle of the Bulge, graduated from Juilliard and Columbia, and now was on the road with a big band. And he took notice of a wet-behind-the-ears country girl from Sunbury, North Carolina, a village of 250 people! Who could believe it?

That first summer we never had a single date, but when I went back home and entered college and he continued his trek around the country, we wrote letters EVERY SINGLE DAY for two and a half years, finding the opportunity to meet when the band would zip through my college town or when it would return to The Cavalier for another summer run.

We married in December of 1952, moved to Florida where we both taught school, and lived a blessed, productive life together until he passed away in 2011. I guess you can imagine where we spent our 50th anniversary, with our son and his wife. You got it, The Cavalier. Without the Beach Club, Mr. Todd, and “Miss Margaret” I would have missed out on the most fabulous life experiences and joy that a person could ever want.

So, yes, Cavalier Beach Club, “I remember you. You’re the one who made my dreams come true a few kisses ago.”
Although Paul and I honeymooned at the Princess Anne Hotel in Virginia Beach (since destroyed), we were advised to go to dinner and dance the night away at The Cavalier Beach Club. We arrived by cab and were seated at a lovely table under the stars. Ours is a rather funny story — one which is probably unique.

As we were eating our dinners, we saw someone going from table to table, asking for what we assumed to be room numbers or keys. Worried that we might get tossed out, Paul and I fled to the dance floor and literally “danced the night away.” Definitely not dancers, we did our version of everything the band played that evening – rhumbas, cha-chas, tangoes, waltzes — you name it. By the time we returned exhausted to our table, our waiter said, “My, you two are amazing dancers. I never thought you were returning for your dinner. But I brought you dessert.”

We never did ask or find out if room numbers or keys were really being asked for, but our dancing marathon left us exhausted as well as giddy. We had the best time at that dinner dance and we will never forget it. It is a very precious memory. We have returned to The Cavalier many times since 1964 — a wonderful vacation destination for us as well as for our children. We celebrated our 45th anniversary there accompanied by all our children and our grandchildren.

We always tell whoever is at the desk upon our arrival that we were at The Cavalier during our honeymoon in 1964. They usually are way too young to even imagine the Beach Club in its prime or The Cavalier without the newer oceanfront hotel. But for us, The Cavalier will always remain as a cherished place where we spent a very unusual “dancing evening” during our honeymoon.

Grace & Jerry Hoggard

July 22, 1962

We celebrated our honeymoon night at The Cavalier on July 22, 1962. We were very young and felt like a couple of country bumpkins! At dinner we almost starved to death because we didn’t know that in those days you wrote your menu choices on a pad of paper, which the waiter took to the kitchen instead of the waiter taking your order. We sat looking at the waiters who were lined up against the wall of the restaurant like a group of penguins … they stared back at us and for the longest time no food came!

We had a similar funny experience the next morning at breakfast in our room. Breakfast arrived on a cart adorned with beautiful linen and silverware and our drinks, but no food … we waited for the food to arrive; but nothing came … when I accidentally burned my leg on the side of the cart, we realized that our breakfast was in the heated unit underneath the table! How young and naïve we were!!!

Our final memorable moment from that visit was receiving a bill in the mail for the Coke that I ordered for breakfast because it was not included on the drink offerings on the breakfast menu … the bill was for $1.00 and in those days, you could buy a whole case of Coke for $1.00!

We have been back to The Cavalier many times over the past 54 years and have laughed about our funny experiences every time! I still drink Coke for breakfast today, after all of those years!
Mr. & Mrs. MacKinlay

August 1, 1964

My romantic memory of the Cavalier Hotel began with a wedding at the nearby Presbyterian Church. The bride and the bridesmaids all wore long white gowns, and the groom and groomsmen were in tails. It was a candlelight service at 6:00pm on a late summer evening with a warm breeze smelling of the ocean. The wedding music included Claire de Lune and the Moonlight Sonata. The wedding reception after the ceremony was in the Grand Ballroom of the Cavalier Hotel, and it was indeed grand. There was an orchestra, and women in sequined cocktail dresses danced with men in white dinner jackets. The guests drank champagne and ate from long tables laden with delicious foods like tiny sandwiches, petit fours and a lacy wedding cake. There were bouquets of flowers and potted palms everywhere. It was an exquisitely beautiful and elegant evening.

At last it came time for the young couple to change into traveling clothes to leave for their honeymoon. The bride changed into a dress and matching hat in one of the hotel’s rooms, and the groom into a suit in an adjoining room that had been engaged by his family. Hearing of a plot by his groomsmen to waylay him and cause him mischief, the groom made an escape from his room by climbing across the hotel roof into a window of the bride’s room. Escape they did together down to in front of the Cavalier’s handsome facade to be driven off in a Volkswagen Beetle amid a shower of rice. Rice is supposed to bring the new couple lasting prosperity and luck. It must work because that magical evening was on August 1, 1964, 54 years ago. I was the bride and my husband was the groom, and we have lived very, very happily ever after.

Cary & Stan Ingram

November 22, 1969

My wife and I grew up in Virginia Beach. We met on the 21st day of August in 1968. My future father-in-law caught a record Blue Marlin off of Virginia Beach. From that point forward, we would go to The Cavalier Bar for drinks and then dinner at the hotel. We have spent many good times there and at the Yacht Club. We are looking forward to seeing the newly renovated hotel. Best Wishes on your reopening.

Mr. and Mrs. Stan M. Ingram Jr.
Virginia Beach
November 22, 1969

Mr. and Mrs. Stan M. Ingram Jr.
Greenville South Carolina
2016
We are writing this on July 1st, 2015, our 54th wedding anniversary. The Cavalier is so special to us because we spent our honeymoon there checking in on July 2, 1961. Don was on leave from the Ohio National Guard for two weeks at the time of the Bay of Pigs Cuban crisis. We met and were married in Cleveland, Ohio. We chose The Cavalier as it was a frequent family vacation destination of the bride’s family. We actually had the copy of our bill, but unfortunately it was destroyed with other mementos during Superstorm Sandy, as was much of our property. We did receive a welcoming fruit plate, which we kept, seen here on this page. The enchanting gardens, pristine beach, and elegance of The Cavalier are part of our special memories. It’s so wonderful that this beautiful hotel is being restored back to its grand stature.

When I asked my parents how they wanted to celebrate their upcoming 50th anniversary, they both immediately said “Dinner with family at The Cavalier.” It was on August 19, 1967, that my parents held their wedding reception on the South Porch of the hotel. After an hour-long wedding ceremony held without air-conditioning in the peak of summer, a highlight for both was the cool air that greeted them as they entered their reception room. Mom said it only got better though. “The food was superb, the atmosphere was elegant and everyone had an amazing afternoon. It was the perfect setting and a day I will never forget.” Mom and Dad’s bill for that reception? $700.
For two star-struck kids from working class families in Syracuse, NY, the first college graduates in either family, spending our honeymoon at The Cavalier was a definite WOW!!!

We had our own table by the big window for every meal and were awed by our own personal waiter, Nathaniel—this was a once in our short lifetime experience.

Returning after 56 years to Virginia Beach this May 21, 2016, we found The Cavalier in the process of major renovations. Even surrounded by cranes, scaffolding, and workmen, it looked just like The Cavalier we pictured from that time long ago. We will surely return when it reopens!

Thanks for the memories!!!
My husband Greg and I have such beautiful memories of our stays at the old Cavalier. We spent our honeymoon there, and 25 years later went back for a week to celebrate our special wedding anniversary. Greg and I met in 1969 while living in Virginia Beach. I was an elementary school teacher who had just graduated from college, and he was a young Navy corpsman who had just returned from serving in Vietnam stationed at Dam Neck. We both lived with friends who spent a lot of time together on the weekends playing volleyball on the beach and going to our favorite bar, Joe’s Fish Market, to enjoy the music of the Paper Glass Band and dancing. As time went on Greg and I realized how attracted we were to one another and our love blossomed. We got married on July 3, 1970 by a Justice of the Peace in Norfolk, VA. We celebrated our love of being in old places continued in our life. Our marriage by going out to eat at Henry’s Seafood Restaurant a Justice of the Peace in Norfolk, VA. We celebrated our special wedding anniversary. Greg and I are still enjoying our job as a Dean of General Studies at Ohio, a small suburb north of Columbus, a historical village founded in 1803. Our Victorian style home where educational and career pursuits took us to Worthington, Ohio, a small suburb north of Columbus, a historical village founded in 1803. Our Victorian style home where we have lived for over 30 years was built in 1853. Greg is retired from a career in sports and fitness management, but I am still enjoying my job as a Dean of General Studies and Liberal Arts at a community college. When a friend from Virginia Beach alerted us to the renovation of The Cavalier and your invitation to send our story, we were so excited about the possibility of returning for another memorable stay at your grand opening. In 2016 we will celebrate 46 years of marriage and would love to return and enjoy the renovation of the hotel. We have even taken dance lessons and particularly love dancing to big band music!

Becky & Greg Ament

July 3, 1970

Bill and I met during his First Class cruise in Hawaii. It was his senior year at the Naval Academy and during the summer he had the opportunity to spend time on a ship, which was stationed in Hawaii. I was living with my parents on Hickam Air Force base, and about to transfer to the University of Hawaii. It was July 1978 and I was twenty years old. I had this dream of meeting my knight in shining white armor and falling in love by my twenty-first birthday. Sounds funny, almost like a Cinderella, but my story really happened. I ended up going to a Midshipman reception on Pearl Harbor just as a favor for my sister. I didn’t want to be there but I had promised, so off I went in a beautiful foam green dress and a Hawaiian lei around my neck. There he stood, dressed in his choker whites, more elegant than a coat of armor and handsome beyond imagination. He asked me for a ride back to the ship with his friend. Once he was out of my Volkswagen bug, he leaned into the passenger window and asked me for a favor. He wanted to know if he could give my lei to a friend on ship, who was disappointed that there were no hula girls waiting with leis when he arrived on the military transport to the island. I said yes, sheepishly, but added, “I get to give it to you Hawaiian style.” He asked me what that meant and I said, “I get to kiss you.” He stepped back from the vehicle and said, “I don’t know you and you are not kissing me.” I took the lei off my neck and gave it to him with my mouth open. Never had I experienced such a gentleman. I was smitten and fell in love with him at that moment. Since we did not have lap top computers, cell phones and long distance calls where extremely expensive, we started a long distance relationship over the military Mars station system. The Mars operators called us the “Love Birds of the Pacific.”

I came to the states that winter to meet his parents and moved to Annapolis, Maryland to get to know him better. We had an old-fashioned courting relationship and were married three days after he graduated from the Academy. He had made special plans for our honeymoon and it was a surprise. I had never been to Virginia. I heard it was beautiful and a place for lovers. He knew I missed my island home and the ocean, so he brought me to The Cavalier. It was a dream come true. The Cavalier was rich in heritage and this was the beginning of our love story being written in the sands of time. Our last military tour brought us back to the Virginia Beach area where we began our love story. We are about to have our 39th anniversary on June 2nd of this year.

Mr & Mrs. William Grider, Jr.

July 3, 1970

June 2, 1979
**Kim & Stephen King**

**April 1, 1978**

The year was 1976... I had decided to skip out of my night class at VCU and head back to the dorm. As fate would have it, it was a last minute decision that would change my life forever. As the dorm elevator opened, there he was ... all 6’5” of him! Steve was with his roommate, who was a friend of mine from Norfolk. They were headed out to meet some friends and invited me to tag along ... and the rest, my friends, is history.

I grew up in Virginia Beach and Steve was from Newport News. We were both athletes at VCU. He played baseball and I played field hockey. I was in art school at the time and Steve was pursuing a science degree. We shared a love of the water and music. We were magnets ... opposites but drawn together!

We became engaged when Steve proposed to me on a bench in the backyard of his parents’ home overlooking the James River. As planning for our wedding began, I wanted to be married at Nimmo Church and have the reception at The Cavalier ... who could resist the WOW factor of that beautiful grand entrance?

The Cavalier was no stranger to me. As a teenager I took my Red Cross Lifesaving certification and Synchronized swimming classes in the indoor pool. We played tennis on the courts in the summer and used to ride our bikes through the grounds to Holly Road. I have memories of Cotillion dances and the sounds of band music by the ocean on summer nights at the Beach Club across the street.

We were married in a candlelight ceremony on April 1, 1978 on a beautiful day surrounded by our friends and family (yes, April Fool’s Day!). My father was of Italian descent, so we did the traditional sit-down dinner reception in the ballroom. There was plenty of food, music, and lots of dancing!!! We celebrated all night until my father suggested at midnight that it was time for the bride and groom to make our exit. Many of our guests, especially those from out of town, had never experienced anything like it. Everyone was having so much fun that no one wanted to leave!!

This April marks our 40-year anniversary, and to think it all began at The Cavalier!!. In our journey together, Stephen & I have gathered enough material to fill a bookshelf. We have seen good and bad in this life, laughed and cried together. We are like a bottle of red wine that gets better with age. I am so thrilled that someone has given The Cavalier new life so that a new generation can experience her elegance and charm, and create their own memories. She is forever part of our history.

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**Cathy & Al Lott**

**February 20, 1970**

Forty-six years ago, a Norfolk girl met a handsome sailor who was returning from Vietnam. They fell in love and six months later, they eloped. The young girl was me.

We had nothing, no money. We only had each other. We saved every every last penny we could find and once we had saved just enough, we finally could go on our honey-moon to the one place that we had always admired from afar: The Cavalier Hotel.

We spent one night there as he was being deployed. It was beautiful. We had a steak dinner delivered by room service. I felt like Cinderella. One night at The Cavalier Hotel — I felt like a princess, in a castle, with my Prince Charming.

Forty-six years later, my one night honey-moon is still one of my fondest memories.
I was 20 and my husband 21. We only had two days that we could afford and it wasn’t the honeymoon suite. I had to get back to college to finish up the summer session to graduate and my husband was starting his new position. It was our dream to stay at The Cavalier because we both loved Virginia Beach. Our fondest memory was the white gloved waiters who were so kind to us and could tell we were newlyweds.

Our honeymoon there was a very special time because of the date. Both of our fathers were part of the D-Day invasion. So every year when we celebrate our anniversary we also remember our fathers and what they did for our country.

Our 50th will be coming up and we are hoping to stay there. We have been back since our wedding to visit the old Cavalier and have stayed at the one on the beach, but it did not compare to the Grand Lady.
We were married at the old Cavalier Hotel October 21, 1979, on an unseasonably warm, sunny day with clear blue skies. Our history with and love of Virginia Beach began six decades ago when my husband’s family moved there; mine a bit later from several family vacations. My husband, Bob, was raised in Linkhorn Park; he went to school with Walter Banks, son of the then-Cavalier general manager, Sydney Banks, and his parents were members of The Cavalier Yacht and Country Club. We both love “The Beach” and when considering venues for our wedding, where else than the beautiful old hotel on the “hill,” the most iconic setting at the Beach?

As a precursor to life’s “ups and downs” and a lesson to roll with the punches, the wedding plans did not go as expected. We booked the sunken garden (now townhomes) for the ceremony and the grand hall (off the lobby) for the reception. A phone call a few weeks later revealed the grand hall was double booked. I was heartbroken but with a noon wedding, we are likely one of the few couples that had our reception at Orion’s Roof (with the caveat to vacate by 5:00 pm for the dinner crowd). It was a breathtaking venue, especially appreciated by our out-of-town guests. One additional glitch: the wedding cake top went missing; we assume it was cut and consumed instead of being saved for the one-year anniversary. Oh well! We have come full circle, The Cavalier and me. I am a 27-year Marriott associate and The Cavalier is joining The Autograph Collection. Serendipitous!

PS — I kept a memento of our wedding night stay; the room key. Let me know if you want it back.
Tracy & Samuel Estep
August 27, 1988

The Cavalier On-the-Hill Hotel holds a very special place in my heart. Having lived in Virginia Beach my entire life, I have enjoyed following all of the attention that The Cavalier has received in recent months. I will miss the beautiful lawn and the grand entrance that led up to the front doors, but with any aging building and beautiful grounds, it was just a matter of time before a change would occur. The article in the paper announcing the contest to win a night’s stay in the renovated building especially sparked my interest. My husband, Sam, and I held our wedding reception in the Pocahontas Room on August 27, 1988. There was never a doubt in my mind that if I were fortunate enough to get married, I wanted my reception at The Cavalier. This special place played a major part of my formative years and the person that I am today. During my teen years and college breaks, I spent many hours working at The Cavalier. I waitressed, worked in the kitchens, assisted with the night audits and, my favorite assignment, working as a front desk clerk. I had the opportunity to work with many great people including Mr. Joe Walton and Mr. Carlos Wilson, life-time employees of The Cavalier, who were full of history and taught me many life lessons. Mr. Walton was able to educate his wife and eight children through his career working at The Cavalier. When I worked late nights with Mr. Walton he would often buy the college students dinner and emphasize the importance of a college education. He would also entertain us with stories of his adventures with the ghosts that resided within The Cavalier. I also met many famous people like Johnny Cash, Victoria Principal, Roger Mudd, Muhammed Ali and many politicians. I spent many of my off hours exploring the old Cavalier and even walking around in the basement and climbing into the bell tower to personally witness the best view at the beach.

After our wedding, Sam and I arrived at the front doors in a horse-drawn carriage and entered into the beautiful Pocahontas Room filled with family, friends and tables of delicious food. Bill Deal and the Fat Ammons Band played in the background. The night flew by so fast it was like a dream. At the end of the evening we retired to the fourth floor in room 420. This was the first time that I had slept in a king size bed. The next day we left for our honeymoon in Key West. The rest is history!

Peggy & Chris Ettel
February 6, 1988

My wife Peggy and I are life long residents of Virginia Beach and both grew up admiring The Cavalier Hotel in all its elegance and grandeur. Growing up we enjoyed going to breakfast at the Pocahontas Room and later enjoyed many good times in the Hunt Room. On what seemed to be the coldest day of the winter, February 6, 1988, we were married and enjoyed a wonderful celebration at the old Cavalier in the Raleigh Room. This special venue provided the perfect opportunity to celebrate with our friends and family. We danced the night away with the Walter Noona trio and a life long dream of celebrating our most special wedding day at the old Cavalier was fulfilled.

Over the years we have enjoyed many special occasions and events at the old Cavalier. Now that our son and daughter are getting ready to graduate from college, we are looking forward to the opportunity to carry on our tradition and to celebrate another wedding at the old Cavalier in the future.

My company, VB Homes, is honored to have been selected as one of the Guild Builders and we look forward to building some new custom homes at the old Cavalier.
My dream of a wedding in the old Cavalier started in 1979 when I moved to Virginia Beach and lived across the street at 224 Cavalier Drive. I would sit on our balcony and look at the architecture of this grand building and somehow knew it would impact my life. It started with my mother, Lenore Holsveig, wanting to own a home at the beach. So much so that she knocked on every door on Cavalier Drive asking if they were interested in selling. It just so happened there was and my parents, Sol and Lenore Holsveig, bought 224 Cavalier Drive around 1981. There was a small apartment in the back alley and, little did I know, my future in laws were renting there. At that time, my mother was an artist and began sketching portraits in the lobby of The Cavalier during season. She was asked to restore The Cavalier insignia in the old pavilion, which was on the ocean side during the eighties. I played tennis on the courts across the street from our house. As we began to meet people of Virginia Beach, we were invited to many fine celebrations there.

How fortunate I was to be asked for my hand in marriage during this time! Planning my wedding with the staff of The Cavalier under the guidance of Mr. Batchelor allowed me to be able to make a dream become reality. The wedding was out of a fairy tale with the ceremony beginning in the lobby showered by light from the windows illuminating our aisle to happiness. We sealed the ceremony with a kiss and off to the wrap around indoor porch for cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. It felt like southern renaissance. Then on to the ballroom for food, traditional dancing and festivities. One of our favorite photographs is “on the hill,” wedding dress flowing in the winds of our love. Every year since our wedding, I celebrate our anniversary by putting on my wedding dress and remembering how I felt at that exact moment. On 05/05/2017 it was the 32nd time we celebrated our anniversary and it still zipped up!

We made our grand exit in the aristocratic style of a Rolls Royce. The ride was short as we only had to go across the street to the New Cavalier and welcome our first night with an oceanfront suite. When the old Cavalier was starting restoration, we were able to obtain memories of the grand building in a sample of the wallpaper, sconce and part of a headboard. Renewing our vows there would be another dreamy memory of the Grandiose Cavalier Hotel.

Betsy & Gene Hall

October 17, 1982

I grew up on 43rd Street, 2 blocks from the Cavalier. My mom rented a beach cabana for several summers and took me to tea dances quite frequently. Winters meant hoping for an infrequent snow and running over to slide down the hills. The inside pool with its wonderful lion heads is where I passed life saving and water safety. Several summers my mom was even social director (I think 1969-70) and I'd go over to visit her. People would write her notes saying how much they appreciated her tips on fine dining and other sight seeing. Then of course there was Junior Prom at the beach club.

So, when my husband and I were married in Austin, Texas, October of 1982, and came to Virginia Beach for a reception at my mother’s home — it was only fitting that she reserved the best, the only place I wanted to be — the Penthouse at the Old Cavalier 1982 …. the room had been redone to some degree and the view was beautiful. Walking into that room was a dream come true. There was a bottle of chilled wine. However, the dream was short-lived when we discovered that we had no hot water and almost no heat. Of course management offered us another room — but THIS was the dream, the penthouse. We stayed where we were, cuddled under the lovely covers and showered at my mom’s. After all, aren’t honeymoons meant to keep one another warm? It was a special time at “the top of the world” — a world I’ve loved and enjoyed all my life.

My mom is gone now but I know she is smiling somewhere as I write this letter. Thank you for hearing my story. Thank you for bringing back to life this wonderful jewel.
It was raining and a windy day when William & I were married at the First Presbyterian church on 36th Street — a sign of good luck some said! By the time we got to The Cavalier, the skies cleared and it was a most beautiful sunset. The lighting in the grand old hotel was so beautiful! We danced the night away and felt like our union was blessed by the soul of the old Cavalier on the Hill.

28 years and two beautiful children later, we are still blessed. We are so grateful that our wonderful Cavalier will remain majestic on the hill as a reminder of that magical day.

Many thanks to all who have helped to save her!
Change impacts us physically, mentally, and emotionally and in varying degrees. It runs the gamut from arriving predictably to rushing in with blinding force. It presents opportunities for resilience to resentment, and it elicits responses from elation to despair.

Like all families, ours has experienced the many facets of change, but to say my husband’s family has witnessed their share of physical changes in and around Virginia Beach is an understatement. With our children, we ushered in the fifth generation of the Honeycutt-Wilson clan originating on my husband’s maternal side from Princess Anne County in the early 1800s. His paternal grandparents came to Virginia Beach during World War II to work on the lookout towers at the oceanfront and lived out their days on 23rd Street. His mother, born and raised in Pungo, recounts mornings collecting eggs before leaving for Oceana High School. My husband was born in the first hospital in Virginia Beach located on 25th Street, and he was raised on 62nd Street in Princess Anne Hills. Growing up he enjoyed his grandfather’s stories of a time when train cars brought “important people” to the big, fancy hotel on the hill.

Change has yet another facet. It tempts us to turn back the clock. If given the opportunity, my husband and I would set the dial for Memorial Day Weekend — May 25, 1985. We exchanged vows in a formal, evening ceremony in the Virginia Beach United Methodist Church on 19th Street. We exited the sanctuary through the grand double doors to be met with hoots and hollers from passersby “cruising the strip.” The sky was clear, and the stars were brilliant against a midnight-blue sky. Hand-in-hand we entered the back seat of our chauffer-driven ride, but the holiday weekend made for slow going as we made our way down Pacific Avenue.

In planning our celebration there was only one choice, in our minds, for a fitting location to hold our reception. We wanted to begin our entry in the family history books in a place with nostalgia and grandeur. The old Cavalier exuded the romance and splendor we imagined for our wedding day, and it lived up to every expectation. As the gentle notes of a harp and flute wafted from an alcove overlooking the indoor pool, candles floated softly on the turquoise-blue water. The huge arched windows opened to the fresh ocean breeze, and the champagne flowed. The ambiance was magical.

The physical changes time has wrought on the old Cavalier are obvious, not to mention the ones we ourselves have endured, but the memories associated with that special night remain unscathed and will be cherished for a lifetime. When we heard about plans to breathe life into the dilapidated landmark we were filled with anticipation. The renovation and restoration of the once-heralded Virginia destination represents all that is good about change. We look forward with excitement to watching its rebirth. We are thrilled future generations will have the opportunity to glimpse a bygone era. We are grateful to those who are working to preserve a significant piece of history, and we are thankful to have one more reason to take pride in our Virginia Beach heritage.
My husband and I are both Virginia Beach natives. My husband was a lifeguard for Umbrella Beach services for many summers and was a member of Ocean Beach Club. We grew up at the Oceanfront going to Sunday Beach Parties at The Cavalier Cabanas and dancing beside the pool outside the old Cavalier Beach Club. Many of our school functions such as Ring Dance and Senior Proms were held at The Cavalier on the Hill. So when we decided to be married we chose The Cavalier on the Hill for our reception. June 7th was a magical night full of fun, dancing and festivities. We made many happy memories with friends and family. The food was outstanding, the room beautiful, and the music was magical. Just what any young bride would dream her happy event to be.

When we left The Cavalier that night the facility requested that we not use rice, but bird seed. Above is a picture of us leaving that night. It has been 38 years since our reception took place. Many of our family members have since passed on but the grand old lady of Virginia Beach, The Cavalier on the Hill, still stands as a reminder of our magical night. What a beautiful place to renew our wedding vows, the newly renovated Cavalier on the Hill.

June 21, 1984

My husband is a romantic. Most of the time. In 1984 we planned our wedding while he was in and out of port with an Oceana-based A-6 squadron and while I was writing obits for The Virginian-Pilot. I chose the date of June 21 (even though it was a Thursday that year) because summer has always been my favorite season and the solstice is the longest day of the year, symbolizing (in my mind) our hopes of a long-lasting union. I still remember hearing others in the restaurant comment on it being a Thursday. As the day neared, John discovered he had to negotiate to get the day off. And it would just be one day. He would have to leave the next day to help deliver a plane to another site. Disappointed, we carried on and had a beautiful day. My dress was from The Famous in Portsmouth, when they still had a person operating the elevator. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Oceana was where friends and family witnessed the vows. We enjoyed our wedding dinner of shrimp and champagne at Blue Pete’s, a Pungo institution.

After the guests left, John mentioned that he guessed we’d head back to my house. What? My out-of-town family was at my house! Why would we go back there?!? I was sure he had gotten a room somewhere for the night. Nope. This was so hard to believe. I harkened back to the night when I was having dinner between editions with newspaper friends at Courtney’s in Norfolk. The waitress brought over a single red rose and a note saying, “You just can’t trust those aviators….” I looked up and saw him sitting at the bar. He had flown in, obviously quite unexpectedly, and chosen this opportunity to surprise me. I was delighted.

Now, on his wedding night, this romantic guy didn’t have a hotel room. I alternated between disappointment and anger as we drove up and down the oceanfront. The Cavalier sat proudly on the hill. We drove up and went in and somehow managed to get a room. Pretty good save, I thought. He then upped his game by promising me “a city a year” to make up for these last-minute glitches. I took him up on it and have since seen Paris, London, Dublin, Rome, Hong Kong, most of the Caribbean and Hawaiian islands, and many beautiful places in Canada and this country of ours. Our 31st anniversary, we stayed in Smithfield, VA, because we had little time to travel between building our dream home there and my chemo schedule. Now the house is completed, and the thought of Virginia Beach being our “city” for our 34th anniversary and the ability to really enjoy a stay at The Cavalier would be somehow symmetrical and ironic. I’ve always loved symmetry and irony, and I’ve always loved my romantic husband.
Oh What Service! We only had one night for our honeymoon and we chose to spend it at the old Cavalier. We were young and on a very fixed budget but we had always wanted to stay there. We arrived late in the evening, pulling up to this beautiful Hotel in a very old beat up 1966 Volkswagen Beetle. It had been enthusiastically decorated by our friends with shaving cream, toilet paper and even beer cans tied off the back bumper. The old Cavalier Bellman greeted us with quiet dignity and assurance that everything would be taken care of and it was.

We were treated like royalty. A beautiful room, attentive staff and a stunning view. That night was magical. We even lost power on all of the oceanfront but the old Cavalier never missed a beat. When we gathered ourselves to leave the next morning we were shocked to see our old VW Beetle washed and sparkling and waiting for us at the front entrance. She never looked so good. Thank you for a wonderful experience filled with love.

The Cavalier on the Hill has been a part of my life in so many ways. In 1965, when I was 6, I took swimming lessons there in the indoor pool. Having grown up at the oceanfront, I have had many encounters with the old hotel over the years. In 1985, my dream came true of having my wedding reception at the old Cavalier in the “Pocahontas Room.” One hundred fifty close friends and relatives enjoyed themselves that afternoon into the night. Some thirty years have gone by and my husband and I can still remember that wonderful time.

Three years later, in 1988, our cousins had their reception in the “Raleigh Room.” We attended and I was eight months pregnant with my second daughter. Some 25 years later, same daughter, Kelsey Rudiger, married Mathew Backe out front under the big live oak tree on June 15, 2013. A reception followed in the “Main Ballroom.” Many memories for all were enjoyed. Thank you for saving and restoring such a grand place. Here is hoping many more will enjoy the place as our family has over the years.
Debbi & Allen Skolnick

My wife Debbi and I were married at The Cavalier on Groundhog Day in 1986. We both grew up in Virginia Beach. We are an interfaith couple. Needless to say, we were very much in love but our parents had other arrangements in mind. One set wanted a church wedding, while the other set wanted a Synagogue wedding. Our parents got along well but deciding between a Pastor or a Rabbi was dividing the family and causing grief on what was supposed to be a special period in our lives. Multiple suggestions were made ... bringing a Rabbi to a church ... bringing a Pastor to a synagogue. Unfortunately each met with resistance. It got to the point where Debbi's father suggested that we elope ... as a matter of fact, he offered us a sum of money to elope. :-)

I was only able to put that thought into my mind for about four seconds as Debbi wanted no part of it. Obviously every little girl dreams of walking down the aisle with friends and family looking on and her daddy giving her away. A good friend of ours suggested The Cavalier "on the hill"! We had some reservations about a non-denominational setting but once we walked the grounds and toured The Cavalier, we fell in love with the idea. Now we had to decide on clergy ... well, due to the beautiful setting and our need for a large wedding, we talked to a family friend, Dr. Tollison, who happened to be a Justice of the Peace. What a great idea. Both families agreed and the rest is history. We just celebrated our 32nd wedding anniversary and drive by The Cavalier often when we are down at the Beach. Each time we pass, my heart skips a beat. The past few years have been tough. Both of us have lost our fathers. We look forward to re-live a piece of our past someday at the newly renovated Cavalier.
The Cavalier Hotel will always hold a very special place in our hearts. On November 18, 1989, the historic "hotel on the hill" was the site of our spectacular wedding reception. We celebrated with some 250 friends and family members in the grand ballroom downstairs. Live music from The Sounds of the Drifters, the huge wooden dance floor, awesome food and beverages, and most of all, the momentous setting in the celebrated Cavalier Hotel gave to us truly a night for the ages.

Today, as we look back these twenty-five years to our remarkable night at "The old Cavalier," the memories seem, in some ways, as close as yesterday. Yet, as we ponder over our pictures and gaze upon our wedding video, we realize that time does indeed, march on. Our family has now grown to include four beautiful children. Moreover, many of the faces in those pictures and many more, seen smiling and dancing on that video, are no longer with us. Moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles and several friends who were with us on that cold, crisp November night, have passed on — some, way too young.

Yet, their memories will forever live in our hearts, as they stood with us for that brief moment in time, just as the elegant, ocean hotel has stood on the shores of the mighty Atlantic, for decades. Reliving our glorious night at the incomparable Cavalier Hotel will always summon feelings of nostalgia that we keep forever. Thank you, grand lady, for our fairy-tale night within your legendary walls. We will always treasure the magical night you gave to our family and friends, and to us.

Our wedding night was spent across the street at "The New Cavalier," because the rooms upstairs from our reception were closed in 1989. We lament the fact that we never actually spent the night at the majestic Cavalier Hotel. Nonetheless, we will eternally cherish our enchanting night at the grandiose Cavalier. Even a quarter century later, looking back, we are so very grateful for our amazing evening at one of the world’s most remarkable places — The Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach.
My memories of The Cavalier go back to the ‘80s as a former employee. I worked as a bartender and server for many years. At the time I was a single parent and The Cavalier family was my family. I have very fond memories of Carlos Wilson, who worked there for many years and was sad to hear of his passing, in 2011. I also remember thinking I had the best job for the summer at the pool bar. My romantic journey began when I met my husband, Scott Arnoe. One of our first dates was at The Cavalier Beach Club, where we saw the recently departed BB King in concert. It was a wonderful evening with music, good food and friends and we were beginning to fall in love. Of course, when we decided to marry there would be no other place but the old Cavalier. We were young and didn’t have much money but the staff made sure we had a wonderful wedding and reception. We had our wedding and reception at the old Cavalier and it was beautiful. We were young and didn’t have to spend money on decorations! Our marriage was witnessed by family and friends and it was a magical night. We recently celebrated our 27th anniversary and hope to have another 27 years!

My wife Alison and I had our wedding reception at the old Cavalier on a beautiful spring evening in April 1994. I am so honored to have had the reception there. I grew up on 54th Street at the beach. My family has been at the beach since World War II. Four generations of our family have experienced The Hotel, our grand lady of the beach. My grandparents danced on the old open air dance floor at the Beach Club. My first cotillion was there in 1975. There are too many memories of The Cavalier to list them all — but I’ll name a few: sleigh riding down the big hill as a kid, swimming in the indoor pool, riding card board boxes down the huge hills in the back, sneaking into the hotel when it was closed for a while, meeting the Redskins when they used to come down for Redskins Remember Lombardi golf tournament, going to my first debutante ball, the Hunt Room and the beach’s biggest fire place, Nixon, taking the children on a tour before the sale — somewhere we have pictures from the roof of the Beach Club, seeing the Blue Angels roar over with my then-10-year-old daughter from the hotel grounds. We love the hotel and have for years and will forever be ambassadors.
The Unforgettable Wedding: This day was as magical as we envisioned!

We met in the summer of 1992 while Pete was training with our local Virginia Beach Navy SEAL Unit. We fell in love during our first dance and one year later, with my father’s blessings, we had chosen a fairy tale wedding and The Hotel Cavalier was the perfect fit. We had a whirlwind romance during his deployments and so grateful he made it home with only a few days to spare and now my dreams can come true.

Witnessed by 120 guests, in the Grand Ballroom we were married by the late Commissioner Dewey Simmons and flowers and decor were created by the late Gale Arnold of “Topiaries.” The local band “Hot Cakes” made our night full of dancing and singing on stage with accents of lavender-lighted ice sculptures, chasing bouquets of flowers, to having wedding caked smashed on my face seemed to go along with our theme.

We believe in our hearts that the 24 year commitment as a U.S Navy SEAL and the commitment we made to each other on the evening of November 12, 1994 at The Cavalier Hotel are part of two beautiful historical stories that have become one and has touched each other’s lives and resulted in two beautiful children who can now potentially have the honor to marry on the historical hill where we once stood 24 years ago.

My wife Cid and I were born and raised in Lima, Ohio. We did not discover Virginia Beach until we had been married for many years. On our 25th anniversary we spent our first night at The Cavalier on the Hill. At this time the on-site Pocahontas restaurant was still open for breakfast along with a limited menu for dinner. Since this was a milestone anniversary we had decided we would both treat ourselves to a steak dinner. To my amazement when we told the front desk manager that we were slightly disappointed that steak was not offered at Pocahontas he took it upon himself to reach out to the chef at the Orion Room restaurant at the oceanfront Cavalier for a solution. Within minutes of our conversation we were delighted to learn that the chef would prepare the meal for us and have it brought to the Pocahontas for our dining pleasure. That night we shared the restaurant with only one other group of people. A couple had been married on the grounds that evening in a full dress military wedding. Watching them celebrate their new marriage with family and friends made our personal celebration even more magical!

We had such a delightful experience we decided that since my occupation made it difficult to travel in the summer we would spend one night celebrating our marriage each June 22nd at The Cavalier on the Hill. It was a great decision. Year after year we would check in on June 21st or 22nd and enjoy a wonderful evening devoted to remembering how lucky and blessed we both are to still be in love and enjoying each other’s company within the setting of the historical and elegant Cavalier.

One of my favorite anniversaries involved some setup the day before we checked in. When we travel we often run into people that know Cid but not me. It is a fun and quirky thing that happens in the most unusual places. I decided that on this particular year I would make sure a whole lot of people would know Cid as we walked the grounds and relaxed at the hotel. I dropped off homemade flyers at key locations and asked the staff to share the flyers with guests too! It worked like a charm!! Wherever we went staff and guests alike would smile and say, “Happy Anniversary Cid!” After awhile and numerous anniversary wishes Cid connected the dots and called me out for the prank. When I showed her the flyer I could tell she was deeply moved by my effort. How wonderful it is to still be able to surprise the one you love after 40 years. More Cavalier magic, indeed!

We are looking forward to returning to The Cavalier in the future to celebrate our anniversaries to come!
Carey & Malcolm Hollensteiner

Date
October 14, 1995

My husband, Ken, and I share a love of history and beautiful historical buildings, so when we started planning our wedding back in 1989, we knew that we would have to have it at the old Cavalier. Nothing compared to its splendor and rich history in our city and it didn’t matter when our wedding was to take place, we just knew it had to be there. Our date was set for October 26, 1991. The staff were wonderful to work with and our wedding day was absolutely perfect. We had the reception in the Raleigh Room overlooking both the front porches and the balconies to the indoor pool. To be able to celebrate a monumental event as your own wedding in such a grand old building was surreal and wonderful.

We feel like our wedding day is forever tied to that beautiful building, so when we learned that there was talk of tearing it down to make way for a new hotel, we were devastated. Thanks to the fine people in our city who share the love of this building, we did not have to worry about its longevity. It makes us so proud to know our city shares a vision in preserving such a fine piece of history, and when I drive by the hotel every day (since we live in the neighborhood behind it), I smile and marvel at the progress of the renovation. My husband and I cannot wait to see the old Cavalier on its grand re-opening day!

Nancy & Ken Hunt

October 26, 1991
Amy & Rob Joynt

August 19, 1995

My husband grew up in Virginia Beach and always wanted to get married there so that he could have his reception at the old Cavalier. I was from Northern Virginia and struggled with the decision, but ultimately decided that it was too beautiful not to have it there.

Everything was going smoothly preparing for our big day until hurricane Felix threatened to hit the area. Two days before our wedding we had to evacuate our hotel because of the hurricane. We stayed in Norfolk for one night. Needless to say I was freaking out and worried my wedding wasn’t going to happen or that people wouldn’t show up. Thankfully it did not do too much damage and we were able to have our special day! It was in the 70s and there was not a cloud in the sky. A little wind, but just an absolutely beautiful day to get married. Our reception was so much fun and so beautiful. We danced the night away and ended up paying extra to stay later. Our reception ended at 1 AM and we spent our first night as man and wife in the hotel. My only regret is that I didn’t take the photographer outside to get a picture by The Cavalier sign! I have never forgiven myself for that!! But it truly was a magical day! I am forever grateful I listened to my husband and decided to get married in Virginia Beach and have our reception at the old Cavalier.

One funny story about our wedding night was that during the reception I looked around and almost everyone was gone! There was a big Mike Tyson fight that night and everyone went to go watch it. Thankfully it was one of the quickest fights in history and everyone was back a few minutes later! Haha!

Thank you for letting me share our story. We have been married for 21 years we have four children, and every time we go to Virginia Beach we point out The Cavalier sign to our children and they roll their eyes and say “yes we know you had your reception there.”

Kara & Joe McDermott

January 2, 1994

My husband and I met in seventh grade and started dating our junior year in high school. We dated through college even though I went south to Elon and he went north to Indiana University of Pa. When we graduated we decided to move to Virginia Beach because of our love for the area. Joe lived with his aunt and uncle off of Little Neck Road while I stayed with a college friend in Kempsville. We worked odd jobs because there was a hiring freeze for teachers and police officers at the time. I substituted and worked at Lynnhaven Mall while Joe worked for FedEx and security until we landed our full time jobs — my first teaching job was at Point O’ View teaching fifth grade and Joe at Allstate Insurance.

We got engaged in March of 1993 and were so excited to start our lives together. To celebrate our engagement Joe’s aunt and uncle took us to the restaurant at the top of the “new” Cavalier, where we toasted with champagne and had a delicious dinner. That is when we decided that we were going to get married at the “old” Cavalier, but worried that our guests would not make the trip down in January and everyone was out of town, from Maryland and north of Maryland.

We invited over 150 guests and everyone came, even though there was a major snow storm that week and made a long weekend out of it. We all stayed in the “new” Cavalier in different suites and rooms and had our reception at the “old” Cavalier. The hotel was closed in the winter so we had the entire hotel to ourselves and it was magical. The hotel was still decorated for Christmas and all of the flowers made the reception look like a fairy land. The party never really ended because when the van came to carpool us all back to the “new” Cavalier everyone was staying there and it went well into the night before Joe and I headed to the honeymoon suite.

Even though it was over 20 years ago we still have people tell us it was the best wedding they had ever been to. In some of the pictures on the beach it looks like waves but it was actually snow on the sand.
I grew up in Virginia Beach, the daughter of a Navy pilot, and still consider it home, even though I married a Navy officer myself and have not lived there again since. The romance and grandeur of The Cavalier was always intriguing. As a college student and young woman it was always part of my tour of Virginia Beach, along with the “pyramid” behind Edgar Cayce and the Duck Inn on Shore Drive. Dinner in the winter at the Hunt Club was a family treat. Other girls talked about planning out their whole weddings and acting them out, the perfect dress, ring or proposal. The only reference I ever made to my wedding was a fantasy wedding reception “up on the hill.”

Lucky girl that I was, my husband proposed in May in a picture-perfect setting, and after some guessing as to where he was in his career and when he would be transferring again, we planned a November wedding. My childhood church was under major renovation, and getting any reception venue at five months out was going to be a challenge, but lucky for me all the puzzle pieces fit into place. Old Donation Episcopal Church allowed us to use their chapel with our minister officiating, who had known me since childhood. It was a lovely traditional venue and a perfect size for our wedding. And in a fortunate stroke of serendipity the room at the old Cavalier was available with the beautiful arched windows. We planned out the wedding so the reception would be at sunset over the beach.

It was a gorgeous fall day, crystal clear after a rain that morning, unseasonably warm but typical of Virginia Beach, with a beautiful carpet of fall leaves. Some weddings have drama, but ours was picture perfect. I remember a sense of awe that I was really there dancing with my husband in The Cavalier. The beautiful architecture, the hum of our friends and family, and the incredible views were a stunning backdrop to a perfect day. On such a momentous day in your own life, it was amazing to include yourself with the long list of brides and grooms who had celebrated in such a beautiful place. Friends and family made the day complete, and many commented afterwards that my husband and I were both were constantly smiling.

Twenty five years together and we are enjoying life, watching our kids grow up, and looking to what comes next. My family always sends me news of The Cavalier, and every time we are there we drive by and look up the hill. We recently pulled out the pictures at our anniversary and I still remember our best man saying “here’s a toast to great beginnings.”

In September 1994, my now-husband proposed to me when we stayed in the old Cavalier. In 1996 we had our wedding reception at the old Cavalier Ballroom, and this year we are celebrating 22 happy years of marriage. It was a night that no one in attendance will ever forget. Shortly after the wedding ceremony it began to lightly snow and before we knew it Virginia Beach was covered in snow. We have the most beautiful pictures and memories of that night at The Cavalier. Both of us still remember sitting in our suite at the new Cavalier looking out over the North End watching the snow fall. The Cavalier will always hold a special place in our hearts.
It was officially the summer of 1989. Public schools and colleges had held their graduations and The Cavalier was in full hire mode. It was my sixth year working for the “Grand Dame” and had started this year in my new capacity as Beverage Manager. It was going to be a busy night for the Beverage Department with tourists, weddings and banquets.

As soon as I arrived at work all my female bartenders were excited about the new bartender hired for the Beverage Department. “Have you seen him yet?” “He’s so handsome!” “He’s setting up over in the Pocohantas Room, you should go check him out.”

I get all the bartenders set up for the evenings’ functions in the Oceanfront Hotel and head over to the Original. I walk into the Pocohantas Room to see this new “Adonis” and there he is setting up a bar on the porch. As the ladies had mentioned, yes he was handsome with olive skin and dark hair, and it was obvious he worked out or lifted weights. After introductions and pleasantries our conversations flowed without effort. We seemed to be finishing each others sentences. It was one of those instantaneous friendships that was easy and effortless.

Who would have thought that three years later we would vow our love for one another in the “Grand Dame,” where we met, and be married on the South Porch with the reception in the Raleigh Room. It was a wonderful wedding with friends, family and “Cavalier Family.”

Twenty three years and two daughters later, I still have people come up to me and say how much fun they had at our wedding. The “Cavalier on the Hill” will always have a special place in our hearts.
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1990s WEDDING

Joan & Tom Wagner

May 16, 1992

As a lifelong resident of Virginia Beach it was always my dream to be married at the old Cavalier in the Raleigh Room overlooking the swimming pool. My dream had a twist, as I married my parent’s ‘best friend’s’ son. He was at my homecoming from the hospital. (I had to stay a little extra time because I was premature and only weighed 2 1/2 lbs.) Although I was not looking my best at 40 days old, was it love at first sight? Over the years we shared family vacations, dinners and celebrations. Fast forward 18 years and we began dating exclusively. The wedding was a wonderful celebration of two families. Many guests didn’t know whether to sit on the bride’s side or the groom’s. After our ceremony on a foggy May night in 1992, we took a trolley to The Cavalier. Posing for pictures in the grand lobby, elegant food stations out on the porches, overlooking swan decoys in the pool, and dancing to Ernie LaBeau and The Beach Beach Blasters in the Raleigh Room were just a few of the highlights. Ernie even stepped aside to let my husband’s band play a song or two. (Swan decoys were a must-have according to my mother.) After five hours my father declared it a huge success and the tab would give him enough credit card points to fly to Europe, so our reception had to end. As we pulled away and looked back at all our family and friends gathered on the steps of The Cavalier, it was the perfect backdrop for a perfect night. Almost 24 years later, we still live in Virginia Beach and drive by The Cavalier every day. It is so wonderful that Gold Key | PHR is taking the time and resources to restore this amazing building and site. Almost 24 years later, we still live in Virginia Beach and drive by The Cavalier every day. It is so wonderful that Gold Key | PHR is taking the time and resources to restore this amazing building and site.

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1990s WEDDING

Lane & Joe Walsh

August 15, 1992

We had our wedding reception at The Cavalier Hotel and it was perfect. We belong to a club in the area but I had my heart set on having the reception at a landmark I’ve loved my entire life.

Thank you for restoring this beauty and I look forward to seeing all of the magnificent improvements.

PS: My father, Jimmy Sadler, was King Neptune I and he would be delighted if he were alive to see the restoration of this amazing building and site.
When I turned 23, my husband proposed to me. We were thrilled to be able to build our first home together at the end of the driveway of the old Cavalier. When it was time to plan our wedding, the only place that we could have imagined such a symbolic ceremony to take place was there on the hill.

The venue was nothing short of wonderful and the memories that the old Cavalier gave us that night will always be cherished. One of my favorite memories was being perched on the handlebars of my pink Workman Beach-cruiser in my wedding dress while my groom peddled me to our new home at the bottom of the hill. Our guests were lined up on both sides of the hill tossing birdseed at us as we peddled between them.
I grew up in Florida and have always loved The Cavalier Hotel. It was my dream to spend my honeymoon there. As a young girl, I used to go to the pool there and pretend that I was in that movie with Jane Seymour and Christopher Reeve, “Somewhere In Time.” My sister told me that F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda vacationed there in the 1920s. I always felt there was something special and magical walking around the grounds and in the hotel. The Cavalier literally took me back in time, and to this day it is my favorite hotel for its history, location, and beauty.

I met the man who would become my husband in California. He returned to Virginia to be married here with all our friends and family. We had our honeymoon at The Cavalier and stayed in the honeymoon suite. It was as wonderful as I’d always dreamed it would be. All our guests stayed at the hotel, and we got to spend time with them there and on the beach the weekend we were married. The Cavalier will always be a special place for me and my family and I look forward to bringing our two children here when it reopens!

Beth & John Bangley

August 13, 2005

My personal “fairy tale” came true when I married my husband at The Cavalier Hotel on the Hill on Saturday, August 13, 2005. Having grown up in Pungo in Princess Anne County, as generations of my family had before me, I had always dreamed that some day I would marry and celebrate in the venerable old beauty on the hill. I taught social studies in Virginia Beach and retired in Chesapeake as a high school counselor, but local history always captured my attention. Growing up my mother would often take me to the Oceanfront for shopping and medical care. As a teenager, I would cruise the Oceanfront on the weekends and go to the amusement park. But nothing was more spectacular than seeing the stately historic old hotel towering above the skyline. My mother would relate how she had gone dancing at the old Cavalier and Cabana Beach Club when she was young. I could not imagine Virginia Beach without The Cavalier.

As an adult I would attend social gatherings at the hotel or go to the Hunt Room on the weekends when it was open. In December of 2004 when the “man of my dreams” proposed I knew immediately where I would be married — because nothing other than a ceremony and celebration at The Cavalier would do!! The staff was wonderful in helping with the planning. We had a marriage ceremony with family only in a small room off the ballroom at 6:00pm and a fabulous reception immediately following in the grand ballroom for all our family and friends. The bar was stocked, the buffet was scrumptious, and then we danced the night away to the music of the “Janitors.” My wedding was my own personal fairy tale come true thanks to The Cavalier staff and the incomparable charm of the old Southern gem. This fairy tale lives on with the newest version of The Cavalier. Our love lives on as she does too.
Wendy & Kevin Chlan

September 13, 2003

Kevin and I met back in 2000 during our mutual friends’ engagement party — we had an instant connection and a night full of music and dancing. He was getting ready to head off to flight school to become a fighter pilot, and I was finishing up my time at college, so we did not keep in touch at that point, but he was always in the back of my mind. Exactly a year later at those same friends’ wedding, we met back up and reconnected, this time with intent to stay in touch. Within a year, despite living on opposite sides of the country, we dated, were engaged, and then married! The old Cavalier was a grand, timeless backdrop for our wedding reception, where we were surrounded by friends and family for an incredible evening of festivities before heading overseas for three years.

Upon return from Japan, Kevin attended TOPGUN and returned to Virginia Beach as a Weapons School instructor. During his time teaching tactical maneuvers as a Naval Aviator, some dangerous circumstances forced him to eject at 500 miles an hour, breaking a countless number of bones and rendering him incapacitated and hospitalized for two months, where he fought for his life. At that time, I was expecting our second child, and Kevin’s prognosis was uncertain. Through the expertise of his doctors, the support of our friends & family, and by the grace of God, Kevin not only recovered, but defied all odds and was able to once again fly jets for the Navy. He has continued to have a successful flying career, and we now have three children whom we adore. On our wedding day back at the old Cavalier, we couldn’t have anticipated what challenging circumstances lay ahead, but more importantly, we never could have imagined what depth of joy would follow. We’ve learned to never take our lives for granted, and we celebrate each new day we have together as if it were the first!

Melissa & Seth Coker

October 12, 2002

My husband Seth and I were married on October 12, 2002 in Virginia Beach and we had our rehearsal dinner and wedding reception at the old Cavalier on the Hill hotel. Ever since I was a little girl, I passed this beautiful historical hotel as I ventured off to the oceanfront. It was always such a magical looking place to me. When my husband and I first got engaged, I knew I wanted a wedding back in my hometown of Virginia Beach. The first place that came to mind for both of us was The Cavalier on the Hill for our reception. My husband also visited Virginia Beach as a child and knew it was a perfect place for our destination wedding. My husband’s great aunt Mellie Rose Coker, who would lunch at The Cavalier on the Hill throughout her life, put in a good word for us to the management at the hotel. Mellie Rose would tell us of the days when the big bands would play and she, her husband, and friends would go to dance and have fun at the beach club. The Cavalier on the Hill was the perfect destination spot for all our guests who came from all over the country. They came from Greensboro, Atlanta, Miami, Washington DC and internationally from the Philippines. We started our reception during the day so we could open the bay doors that overlooked the hill. Every room of the hotel was absolutely beautiful and the beauty of the hotel became the backdrop to a perfect wedding day!

My husband and I have been married for twelve years and have four children, eleven and under. We cannot wait to show them the newly updated and renovated hotel! What a great excuse to come back to my hometown that I have not visited in many years!
My wife Christina and I got married June 30, 2007 at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. I surprised my wife with our first night together as Mr. and Mrs. Dixon at the historic Cavalier hotel on the hill. I started that special day by checking in early and setting up the room with flowers. We had a great room, front of the hotel center window 5th or 6th floor looking directly at the beach/ocean. I remember being nervous and excited all at the same time. The room had a window that opened up just over a small ledge. The sea breeze that rolled in off the ocean was perfect. Looking back and remembering it, setting up the room with the ocean breeze and getting dressed there helped me to relax. Carrying my bride over the threshold was an awesome experience, seeing her face light up with joy made me realize The Cavalier was the right choice. After a great night of rest/excitement we enjoyed The Cavalier grounds. Especially sitting in the hammock/chairs underneath the trees overlooking Virginia Beach. We talked about how impressive the landscape looked at The Cavalier/VB and the historical importance of the hotel/beach club in the 30s and 40s. Our experience at your hotel was special and to this day, after a day at the beach we drive by the hotel and smile about those special memories. We look forward to the opportunity to create new memories at The Cavalier.

When I moved to Virginia Beach in 1998, I immediately fell in love with the beauty and charm of the old Cavalier on the Hill. It was Virginia Beach’s most beautiful hotel and landscape I had ever seen. I knew one day I would have my wedding there. In 2001, can you believe I fell in love with a man who had strong ties to The Cavalier and its history, John Duffy? I knew it was meant to be. John’s grandmother, Jeannie (Duffy) Harris, lived and grew up at the end of Cavalier Walk on 45th Street. She told us magnificent stories of her dancing at The Cavalier, enjoying the beach cabanas on the beach and raising her three sons, who swam on The Cavalier Swim Team. John and I would take walks up and down Cavalier Walk on a beautiful warm day or on a chilly night! We love the holiday lights! John and I fell in love while enjoying the hotel and its historic neighborhood and loved hearing stories from Jeannie. Although she has passed, Jeannie was able to enjoy her grandson, John, proposing to me on The Cavalier Hill and our beautiful wedding reception in the magnificent Grand Ballroom of The Cavalier. We had the most wonderful wedding on May 11, 2002. It was a glorious day and night filled with love, laughter and lots of dancing! Our family and friends celebrated with us from all over the country. We now frequently take our girls, Kayleigh (11) and Dara (9) over to The Cavalier to share our wonderful memories and it seems fitting we celebrate with its future success. We will carry on our love of The Cavalier as it enters a new era in 2018!
Maggie & Jacob Freshman

April 27, 2008

Jake and I met in Scottsdale, AZ in 2005 at a speed-dating event and became engaged there two years later. He is from Utah and I grew up in Norfolk and Sandbridge. Fortunately, Jake agreed to move us to Virginia in 2007 mostly because it was just too dry out there! Truthfully though, I wanted to be closer to my mother who was facing the end of her battle with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. My mother and father had their wedding reception in the ballroom at The Cavalier on April 11th, 1981 and I really loved the idea of having our wedding at the same spot. I need to mention that my brother and his fiancée were also planning their wedding — in Sandbridge. We scouted out The Cavalier in October 2007 and it immediately became first on our list. We had to let my brother and his fiancée choose first and of course, be open to our creative plan — and — it was decided there would be an April wedding weekend! We lost our mother on March 11th so it became more important than ever to create more memories in Sandbridge and at The Cavalier. They had a church ceremony and outdoor reception in Sandbridge on April 26th, and we wed at The Cavalier on April 27th! We shared guests, some vendors, and were in each others’ weddings but had our own venues, music, food and it was just as perfect as it could be.

We chose the Pocahontas Room for our ceremony and then used it along with the Raleigh Lounge for our Reception. Our shared photographers for both weddings took photos inside and out, and we treasure the images and memories. The cake was set in front of the fireplace and a chocolate fountain along the middle of the room was a hit to the young and old. The lounge areas were welcomed beautiful spots for guests to sit with some dips and sips and we had placed candles in glass containers that my mom and I decorated with stained glass paint and they became wedding favors. We are very excited for its reopening and have been following the “Save The Cavalier” group on facebook — what a wonderful spot for sharing historical images. Thank you for this opportunity and it must be exciting to hear all of the love stories! Our twin boys (turning two soon) will certainly be seeing The Cavalier in their future. Thank you for keeping it alive!

Katie & Edward Hand

After both being widowed, unexpectedly, after each being happily married for 32 years, Katie and Ted Hand met, fell in love and were married in 2005. They celebrated their honeymoon dinner at The Cavalier Hotel. Their whole family, including 8 grandchildren enjoy happy times living in Virginia Beach.
The year was 1995, and Hampden-Sydney College found it appropriate to truck their entire freshman class over to Sweet Briar College during the first week of school. It might have been an awkward and forced introduction, but it was the night that a 6'2" football player from North Carolina out looking for a party stumbled into a 5'2" bookworm from Michigan who was only a little nervous about the college social scene. She thought he was intimidating at first, but then it turned out he was really great at making her laugh. Three years of friendship later, it turned out they had much more in common than they'd realized at first, and one night in 1998, she set her sights on kissing him at a party. Turns out he was more than willing to let her do just that.

Their early twenties were exactly what early twenties are supposed to be. She was in law school in North Carolina and he was working a help desk, trying to start a career in IT. They lived in a cheap apartment, sat on beanbag chairs, and ate frozen pizzas. They got a kitten. Living in a college town, their big night out was trivia night at the local Irish pub. But they stayed close with their college friends, and every year attended his fraternity's formal. It was their big chance to get dressed up, go on a road trip, and stay somewhere romantic — The Cavalier, as it turns out. Their first night there was in 2001, and several followed. They were some of the best times they had.

Time went by. He got a job at Langley AFB in 2003. She kept coming to visit, and they loved the Hampton Roads area — partially remembering how much fun they’d had at formals at The Cavalier. They didn’t stay apart long. She quit her job in North Carolina and they bought a house in Isle of Wight, where they settled with their cat and their new dog. In 2005, on their 7th anniversary, he caught her off guard by pulling a ring out of his pocket in the backyard of their house one morning. There was really no question as to where they’d have their wedding reception. On a rainy April 22, 2006, they married in Norfolk and brought those friends, and their families, back to The Cavalier. There were romance and happiness, but there were also kids and grandparents doing the Electric Slide, bridesmaids line dancing, and grown-up fraternity boys serenading the bride with “You’ve Lost that Loving Feeling.” It was one of the best nights of their life. They went home to Isle of Wight to live happily ever after.

I grew up in Virginia Beach and until I moved away from home, lived just four blocks up from it on 46th Street. My mother still lived there until she passed in May 2015. When I was young, after the old Cavalier reopened, I remember celebrating special occasions by having brunch at the old Cavalier. The kids would always go down to the pool area while the adults were still eating. Then later, one of my favorite restaurants, next to Steinhilber’s, was the Hunt Room. I loved those big, deep, leather chairs. Even after I moved away and would come home to visit, Mom and I would always take the dog for a walk along the old brick walkway that starts at 45th street and runs up to The Cavalier.

So when it came time for me to get married to James McCalla, the love of my life and the man I had been with for 10 years, having the reception at the old Cavalier was only natural. The ceremony was at First Presbyterian on 36th Street and we wanted a reception location that was elegant, but that would be fun and be representative of the beach. It was everything we wanted and hoped for. The food was wonderful, the staff was so easy to work with and it was just an enjoyable event. I still have people who comment on what a great time they had. I am not the kind of girl who dreamed of getting married when I was young. I tend to be fairly pragmatic and am the kind of girl who prefers flip flops to high heels. But our wedding was as close to a fairy tale as I could image. It is a night we will never forget.
Mary & Aaron
Morris
January 15, 2005

We were married at our church nearby and had our reception in the old Cavalier building after the ceremony at the church. It was lovely and something that made my wife happier than you know. The nostalgic feel of the building was perfect for the type of reception she wanted while having the more modern luxury of a modern reception hall. My wife deserves more than I can give her. It’s as true now as it was back then. Our marriage began as most do, full of hope, of blinding love, of devotion and magic. Fortunes were never a burden we suffered from. The day of our wedding had to be planned with both frugality and fantasy in mind. Our lives may not be a fairy tale, but to us that day was certainly worthy of a once upon a time.

I arrived at the reception hall before she did. I greeted our guests and enjoyed the facilities. The food was plentiful and well suited for our slightly-more-discriminating-than-normal guests. Alcohol and music entertained us while we awaited the arrival of my bride.

And suddenly she was there. Standing against the backdrop of that magnificent doorway to a room filled with the chorus of the laughter of everyone we both held close. I knew beyond reason that in that moment I would feel a great fullness in my chest. I knew that love and hope and euphoria would fill my heart and I would forever enjoy the blissful weight of it. But in that moment standing there, gazing at her in all of her subtle charm and efflorescent beauty it was levity that overwhelmed me.

I never knew until that moment, in that room, that she was the keystone that would hold my entire world high into the heavens. I never knew the weight I held until she lifted it. She held together my entire universe, my entire life, unintentionally by doing little more than standing there, a cynosure of beauty, in that room of your hotel. Your hotel didn’t make that happen, but it did serve as the stage for the greatest scene in the story of my life.

I still remember the way her hair fell when she walked in, slightly tousled from the length of the day. I remember how her makeup had run ever so slightly from her joyful tears fallen since she first walked down the aisle. I still remember how the blue of her eyes seemed to radiate a little more luminous during our first dance. They say the journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step. We began our journey that day. And our first footprints were left in our memories of The Cavalier Hotel.

My husband and I both have always had a special place in our heart for the old Cavalier. It started on May 14, 2005 when we were able to celebrate our honeymoon there; it was love at first sight. What a weekend! It wasn’t open for the season yet and we were able to stay because people attending an historic re-enactment at the Pungo Aviation Museum were there. Lucky for us :) Their coming and goings in their WWII costumes just added that special touch to our weekend. While they were out for the evening we had the “Old Dame” to ourselves and enjoyed our delivered meal on the patio near the pool overlooking the Chesapeake Bay as a storm approach. Well that just set the mood because after dinner we spent the evening exploring … Exploring became a ritual for us and at times management allowed us to view the old parlors in the basement and look through old guest registered books. What a beauty inside and out. We have spent every anniversary at the old Cavalier in the same room, at times enjoying the weddings taking place on the grounds or across the street at the Old Beach Club. It wasn’t until our 8th anniversary, when we were given The Cavalier Suite as a special treat for our anniversary from management, that we found out that she was being sold. What an experience and honor to have been able to spend a night in that beautiful suite. Our honeymoon and anniversaries were not the only special dates in our lives that we shared with her — Valentine’s Day dinners in the Hunt Room too. But our love for her didn’t stop there, our living room has many old pictures of her throughout along with hand sketches from local artists; our Christmas tree has old Cavalier ornaments as well. When the items went up for sale we were some of the first people inside just so we could continue to collect “our treasures” from a place that we both love and hold dear to us. The Old Dame reminds me of a “romantic period” of life and whenever I’m near her or when we stayed it takes me back to that time period.

Christina & Bobby
Spivey
May 14, 2005
My husband Scott and I celebrated our wedding with a beautiful dinner at The Cavalier Hotel surrounded by family and friends on August 10, 2002. Even though we lived in Connecticut at that time, we chose to be married in Virginia Beach because Scott’s family spent many happy years right on Atlantic Avenue as owners of the La Playa Motel. Scott proposed to me on The Cavalier dance floor where his parents first met in 1949. Scott’s mother was ill when we married and being at The Cavalier on that day brought back her happiest days as well. Dad was a Naval officer and met his Southern Belle on The Cavalier outdoor dance floor. Mom even told us that she sang with the Guy Lombardo orchestra there! She passed away six weeks after we married.

We have returned to the beach with our sons regularly to relive those happy memories and were lucky enough to spend Scott’s 40th birthday at the old Cavalier hotel. Last week we returned for another visit and saw the changes to The Cavalier property as well as this invitation.
My wife knew she wanted to be married at The Cavalier before we even met! Her parents were married there so it became a family tradition. We were married under the trees at the front of the hotel and partied the night away in the Grand Ballroom. The hotel made our wedding that much more special.
When we were planning our wedding reception we wanted to have a location that was truly beautiful and unique. After visiting The Cavalier, we were in awe of the quiet class and sophistication reminiscent of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel The Great Gatsby. It was then that we were hooked; there was no other place in our minds.

We had the privilege of being the last wedding reception at The Cavalier before it closed for renovations. The rooms glowed with memories of past parties as our guests danced the night away. The grand old building was rightfully getting a final wedding to celebrate. As the evening ended, many pictures were taken by our photographer guests to capture the elegance one last time, but we have included one of our favorites.

Our guests still tell us to this day that our wedding reception was beautiful and so much fun. There was no other place that matched The Cavalier’s charm and we are excited to see the new changes.

10 years ago, I ran into my wife at a going-away party for a mutual friend. She was way out of my league but I knew she was the ONE. After finally building up the courage to speak to her, I quickly realized — she did not see it the same way. After many weeks of using every bit of charm and persistence in my tool bag, this woman finally gave me a shot to take to her to dinner. I don’t remember much about our first dinner conversation or what we had to eat, but I will never forget how nervous I was. To this day, I’m still not sure what I said to warrant a second date. That second date then led to three.

Many months later and after several more dates, led to meeting her large Italian Catholic family. My original nervousness about meeting her family quickly turned to fear when I saw her three large brothers and father sitting on the couch as if they were about to interview me for their only sister/daughter. The minute her mother introduced herself with her thick New York accent, hug and kiss on the cheek — my nerves went away and the rest of the family accepted me like I was a part of theirs.

Kristin and I ultimately fell in love with each other and each other’s large families.

A couple of years later after a long discussion with the family, I finally proposed using the diamond from Kristin’s great grandmother’s original 1927 Tiffany engagement ring.

Kristin’s grandfather played in a band on the weekends at the Historic Cavalier Hotel in the 1940s before the U.S. Navy commandeered the hotel in 1942.

With the history of Kristin’s grandfather performing, ornate architecture and grandiose feel of the hotel — there was simply no other place either of us wanted to take our vows to spend the rest of our life together.

Falling only short to the birth of our beautiful twin girls — this wedding day at the Historic Cavalier Hotel was the happiest day of my life.
My husband and I were originally supposed to stay at another hotel in the area for the first two nights of our honeymoon, however upon arrival we were told our room was given away. Heartbroken, we searched for a place to stay but as you can imagine that is pretty difficult in peak season of July in Virginia Beach. We were able to book a room at the old Cavalier and were treated with such kindness and generosity. It was the perfect place to spend the first two nights of our marriage. Even with the fire alarm going off at 3am and having to evacuate for a bit, the entire stay was memorable and a joy to share with my husband. We will never forget our stay and can't wait to return when it's re-opened!

Katherine & Zachary Brandau

I proposed to Katie, my now fiancée, on the lawn of The Cavalier on June 14, 2014. Katie was hosting a bridal shower at our house that afternoon and was under the assumption that we were meeting up afterwards to go to dinner with a group of friends, and then out for the evening. When she came out of our house for me to pick her up, I had her friends put her in a limo all by herself. I left a card, champagne and roses for her on her ride from 71st Street, and she quickly caught on that she wasn’t going to a regular dinner and night out. I had the limo stop right out front, where I was waiting for her to arrive. I hadn’t been nervous up until the point where I saw that white limousine pulling up, and I instantly forgot everything that I had planned on saying. Regardless, I walked her up the stairs and tried to make small talk but was pretty nervous. When we talked behind the fencing that is now up, she saw the photographer there and knew something was going to happen. I said what I could get out, and asked Katie to spend the rest of her life with me. After she got over the initial excitement, she said “Yes,” and then her family and mine ran out from around the side of the building to congratulate us. That was the one part of the engagement she had requested to have — her family there to celebrate with us afterwards. If it weren’t for the folks and our personal friends at Gold Key | PHR, The Cavalier might not have been the place we will get to enjoy for the rest of our lives to celebrate our engagement. Katie’s grandparents shared a lot of fond memories there when they were children, which is why I chose it as the perfect venue for our proposal.
Courtney & Colin Kelly

Date
September 28, 2013

When we were engaged on New Year’s Eve 2012, reality quickly set in on planning our wedding. With both of us having grown up in Virginia Beach, the offers and invites to tour different venues was overwhelming and at points exhausting. As the dust settled our hearts were set on The Cavalier Hotel for so many reasons. I grew up in Sandbridge and have family roots that go back in Virginia Beach for over 100 years. We think of The Cavalier as a Virginia Beach Landmark.

My husband’s family has a different attachment and story about The Cavalier. That story begins with his grandparents honeymooning at The Cavalier and traveling to Virginia Beach from Connecticut for years on family vacations. He grew up hearing stories of dancing at the Beach Club, vacationing in Virginia Beach and the amazing Cavalier Hotel. His father visited The Cavalier in the 1950s and early ‘60s on family vacations and has fond memories of summer trips to Virginia Beach.

In addition, one of our first dates was at the Valentine’s Day “Red Hot” ball held at The Cavalier. Colin asked me to be his “girlfriend” that night. The Cavalier Hotel was an obvious choice for our wedding venue and the event couldn’t have been more perfect.

We are very excited to see The Cavalier Hotel preserve its great history and start a new chapter. The changes allow the legacy to continue for generations to come.

Megan & Johnnie

Date
July 4, 2010

Johnnie and I first met in 1991 and were high school sweethearts. We both attended an American DoDDs school in London, England, and became closer during rehearsals for our high school production of Grease, in which I played Frenchie and Johnnie was Vince Fontaine. Johnnie was my first love, and we were together for a little over a year when life, age, and geography got in the way mid-1993.

Our paths crossed several times over the years, and each and every time the butterflies in our stomachs were drawn to each other like magnets. Despite this strong pull toward each other, and indeed, a mutual deep love and respect for one another, the timing was never quite right. We lived in different states, just settling in with a new job or deciding to go back to college, and at times were even involved in different relationships.

Finally, it was Facebook that brought us back together. Johnnie “found” me on Facebook in 2009. Somehow, life and fate had brought both of us to the Hampton Roads area. This time, nothing stood in our way. We were married on the beach in Sandbridge on July 4, 2010 — 19 years after first falling in love as silly teenagers. We enjoyed a short but wonderful honeymoon at the old Cavalier hotel. We look forward to celebrating our love and the reopening of the Cavalier hotel as we approach our 8th year of marriage!
On 10/10/10 I married my first love of 8 years (then — now we have been together for 17) and we wanted to spend our wedding night at the old Cavalier to begin our honeymoon night and life together, but during this time we had found out that The Cavalier was closed for the season. So we postponed this magical night for almost a year and called it our second honeymoon. We had a fantastic evening walking the grounds even in the rain. We had dinner then at the New Cavalier restaurant before it was demolished. The hotel was stunning even for just a short visit. We are excited for the reopening and hope to visit when it does.

Josh and I met in the Fall of 2005. For lack of better words — when I first saw him, there was something familiar in his face, as if I already knew him. We dated for many years, sometimes parting ways for a bit, but always finding our way back to each other. By the time the Summer of 2012 came around, Josh was sure he was ready. I started planning our wedding right away; we were eager to start a family. Without hesitation, we both knew the Cavalier on the Hill was the spot for us. Josh has deep family roots in Virginia Beach and Princess Anne County and it felt like the right place to secure our own little spot in history. The charm, the elegance, the grandeur, and knowing we would have one of the last weddings in all of her original glory, was special for us. It was a warm October evening in 2012, and we said our vows in front of loved ones on the lawn. The celebration continued inside with dinner and dancing. We will always look lovingly at the Cavalier, through our past photos and memories, and seeing her restored to her full glory.

Paige & Joshua LeClear

August 4, 2011

Rachael & Josh Malbon

October 13, 2012
Kate & Stephan Michaels

August 1, 2014

Like many couples planning a wedding in Virginia Beach, it was always a dream to have our reception at the old Cavalier Hotel on the Hill. Unfortunately, we shared this dream with a host of other brides who had booked well in advance of our determining a June date! We tried to find other months and dates that would work but found it far too challenging. Beguilingly, we had to consider other options. Not to be disappointed, Stephan and I were happily married on June 24, 1995 at First Presbyterian Church on 36th Street. It was followed by a lovely reception attended by family and friends at MOCA. It would be twenty years and three children later before an opportunity would present itself for us to celebrate a special night at the “Grande Dame.”

Stephan, our kids and I moved to Princess Anne Hills almost seven years ago. It became one of my favorite morning routines to jog and then walk the brick path that winds through what used to be the stables, up to the main entrance of The Cavalier. Upon reaching the top flight of steps, I would stare up at the old hotel and envision a time when it was bustling with guests arriving at the grand entrance. Her big white columns and doors open to greet arriving parties into the main hall with the grand rotunda and marble stairs leading up and into the beautifully decorated lobby. I can picture in my mind, gentlemen and their ladies dressed in their finest, dancing in the ballroom or to a big band at the Beach Club followed by a moonlit stroll back to their room. Perhaps they would visit the gallery of shops on the level below or find a nice drink by the fire in the famous Hunt Room. You can almost hear the musical notes, glasses clinking and laughter echoing in the halls.

When we heard the news that The Cavalier would be closing for renovations, I was very happy to learn that there were opportunities to stay there one last time. A family friend who used to babysit our children just so happened to be working as a receptionist at The Cavalier for the summer. She mentioned there were a few dates that had come available for the very last week the hotel would be open. I shared this news with a close friend of mine, Donna Haycox, whose husband, William, is also a good friend of ours. We would both reserve rooms at the hotel to celebrate his birthday, our anniversary and to make a toast to the Grande Dame with many close friends.

We arrived on a beautiful summer evening and it was one of the most exciting and memorable nights I can ever recall in my life. We hosted a small party on the back porch of the Pocahontas Room with photographs of our group as the sun was setting. The friendly and good-humored security guards ushered us through the halls, amusing us with great stories as we explored every inch of the grand hotel, later taking a swim and visiting with other guests on our hall who were celebrating one last night of history.

That magical night was very much like I dreamt it would be — honestly, beyond my expectations. I came home with a sense of closure and a treasured memory to share with my husband of twenty years. We are so fortunate to have a visionary to take The Cavalier into the next century and into a new era! It is now my biggest dream to stay there the first night she re-opens and begins her new story.

Rashel & Nicholas Marks

July 7, 2012

"Twas the night before Thanksgiving in 2009 that I first met my wife. It was at a dinner party and she was the most beautiful lady I had ever seen. Our first date was in January and it was followed by a second date, which just so happened to be Valentine’s Day. For our first Valentine’s Day together we attended the Red Hot Valentine’s Day Ball at The Cavalier on the Hill Hotel. From the second we took that left turn into the parking lot from Pacific Avenue, we fell in love with The Cavalier. From the history, to the architecture, to the spooky ghost stories, the hotel stole our hearts. We walked the halls that night like we were 1920s royalty. From then on, each and every time we passed The Cavalier on the Hill we were always in awe of its romance.

Then came our second Red Hot Valentine’s Day Ball at The Cavalier on the Hill Hotel and it was more enchanting than our first. By the end of that summer we were engaged to be married and as we started looking at venues for our wedding day, it was only natural that our first choice was The Cavalier. We were married on July 7, 2012 and celebrated our wedding reception in the grand ballroom at The Cavalier on the Hill Hotel. It was a magical event.

When we first heard The Cavalier on the Hill was in terrible disrepair and was being sold, we were heartbroken; until we learned the City of Virginia Beach and Gold Key | PHR had plans to save and restore the historic hotel. It was then that we also learned that my wife’s architecture firm was hired to restore the hotel and she was going to be one of the project architects on The Cavalier team. She worked solely on The Cavalier for a year and half spending countless hours designing the new hotel. Talk about a dream come true.

Beach and Gold Key | PHR had plans to save and restore the historic hotel. When we first heard The Cavalier on the Hill was in terrible disrepair and was being sold, we were heartbroken; until we learned the City of Virginia Beach and Gold Key | PHR had plans to save and restore the historic hotel. It was then that we also learned that my wife’s architecture firm was hired to restore the hotel and she was going to be one of the project architects on The Cavalier team. She worked solely on The Cavalier for a year and half spending countless hours designing the new hotel. Talk about a dream come true.

Kate & Stephan Michaels

August 1, 2014

"Twas the night before Thanksgiving in 2009 that I first met my wife. It was at a dinner party and she was the most beautiful lady I had ever seen. Our first date was in January and it was followed by a second date, which just so happened to be Valentine’s Day. For our first Valentine’s Day together we attended the Red Hot Valentine’s Day Ball at The Cavalier on the Hill Hotel. From the second we took that left turn into the parking lot from Pacific Avenue, we fell in love with The Cavalier. From the history, to the architecture, to the spooky ghost stories, the hotel stole our hearts. We walked the halls that night like we were 1920s royalty. From then on, each and every time we passed The Cavalier on the Hill we were always in awe of its romance.

Then came our second Red Hot Valentine’s Day Ball at The Cavalier on the Hill Hotel and it was more enchanting than our first. By the end of that summer we were engaged to be married and as we started looking at venues for our wedding day, it was only natural that our first choice was The Cavalier. We were married on July 7, 2012 and celebrated our wedding reception in the grand ballroom at The Cavalier on the Hill Hotel. It was a magical event.

When we first heard The Cavalier on the Hill was in terrible disrepair and was being sold, we were heartbroken; until we learned the City of Virginia Beach and Gold Key | PHR had plans to save and restore the historic hotel. It was then that we also learned that my wife’s architecture firm was hired to restore the hotel and she was going to be one of the project architects on The Cavalier team. She worked solely on The Cavalier for a year and half spending countless hours designing the new hotel. Talk about a dream come true.

We arrived on a beautiful summer evening and it was one of the most exciting and memorable nights I can ever recall in my life. We hosted a small party on the back porch of the Pocahontas Room with photographs of our group as the sun was setting. The friendly and good-humored security guards ushered us through the halls, amusing us with great stories as we explored every inch of the grand hotel, later taking a swim and visiting with other guests on our hall who were celebrating one last night of history.

That magical night was very much like I dreamt it would be — honestly, beyond my expectations. I came home with a sense of closure and a treasured memory to share with my husband of twenty years. We are so fortunate to have a visionary to take The Cavalier into the next century and into a new era! It is now my biggest dream to stay there the first night she re-opens and begins her new story.

Rashel & Nicholas Marks

July 7, 2012

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They always say things happen for a reason. When it comes to how our love story came to be, that couldn’t be more true. There were so many circumstances that had to happen in order for us to meet it almost seems unbelievable. The most important is the fact that one of my college roommates just so happened to be dating one of his roommates and they decided it would be a great idea to play cupid. Little did we know their set up would lead to the amazing marriage we have today. Shortly after meeting we soon realized how much we had in common despite our different life experiences. We quickly became inseparable and we can honestly say we are each other’s best friend. We soon graduated college and started our careers and within a year Jack was ready to propose. The proposal was intimate and sweet, not some grand gesture or something you see in a movie because that just wouldn’t be “us.” After a short couple weeks of engagement bliss, it was time to get down to business and start wedding planning!

We began looking at venues and narrowed it down to two options. After looking at the first one, we were all pretty pleased but still had an appointment to see The Cavalier. I was already in love with the hotel simply from pictures and reading about the history so I just needed Jack and my mom to fall in love with me. From the moment we pulled up in front of the famous brick building to the moment we toured the Grand Ballroom, we knew we’d say our vows in those hallowed halls. What we didn’t see coming was the eventual court case and sale of the grand hotel. It happened right in the middle of our planning and the panic quickly set in for the both of us. There was no guarantee the buyers would honor existing contracts and our dream of getting married at The Cavalier appeared to be in danger. After a few months of uncertainty, we were relieved to find out the new owners were honoring existing contracts and our big day would go just as planned. A few short months later on October 12, 2013 we arrived at The Cavalier on a beautiful sunny morning. After a full week of rain the skies were finally blue and we were ready to say “I Do.” It was as if all the stress and worry about the sale and the weather just melted away as we said our vows and became husband and wife. Our wedding night seemed to fly by as we spent the evening eating, drinking, and dancing with our closest friends and family, but those memories will last a lifetime.

Keith and I dated for five years before we got engaged. We spent many summers and afternoons on the beach as we love the relaxation and surf. He proposed to me in the lifeguard stand on 40th Street — the ocean on one side and the old Cavalier on the other. When we were looking at wedding venues we both knew we wanted to be near the beach because we love the scenery and have had so many memories there. Keith was the head lifeguard at the old Cavalier for three years during college. When I visited the hotel I instantly fell in love with the majestic setting and historic significance of the property. We got married outside with the large columns and glass doors set as our backdrop while surrounded by family and friends. The Cavalier Hotel will forever be a significant place in our lives. It was on that hill that our family became one. We currently live right behind The Cavalier Hotel. We constantly open our blinds to watch the progress of the renovation and are excited to see how this historical landmark will be transformed to a modern day masterpiece with an elegant touch of history.
Our wedding day was always going to be special to us — a ceremony and reception dedicated to our past, our future and the family and friends that support us. What made this moment even more special was the honor of being the last event ever held at The Cavalier Beach Club! We were married in October 2014, and shortly thereafter The Cavalier Beach Club began the demolition process. Today, we commemorate our history and The Cavalier’s history with matching, framed black and white photos of a Beach Club celebration in 1940 and our celebration in 2014. These photos, shot from the same angle, hang in our home’s hallway.

Our wedding could not have been more perfect, from our guests, to the weather and the location. We traveled to The Cavalier in style by parading three short blocks from Galilee Church (our ceremony location) to the Beach Club. Chris and I rode in a 1957 Thunderbird, followed by a jazz band and all of our guests with streamers! The old beach charm of The Cavalier provided an easy, elegant ambiance for our guests during cocktail hour. Dolphins leapt in the ocean as a steel drum band played in the background. After oysters and cocktails, our guests entered the Beach Club ballroom to a Frank Sinatra singer serenading them. The room glowed from gold linens, spotlights and added chandeliers — each table topped with beautiful, bountiful fall florals. Our personal touches brought The Cavalier to life by blending the old with the new. As the toasts, laughter, and evening progressed we danced the night away to a seven piece band. Our guests capped the night off with milkshakes while they waved us goodbye as we hopped on decorated beach cruisers and rode off down the boardwalk in the moonlight!
We were married on April 6, 2013 at Galilee Episcopal Church and celebrated with a wonderful reception next door at the old Cavalier on the Hill. What a special night! I grew up in Virginia Beach so The Cavalier has always been a monument of splendor and grandeur at the Oceanfront. After the ceremony, we (and our guests too!) walked up the hill to celebrate at The Cavalier. The ceremony was at 6:00pm so the sun was setting below the horizon as we walked up the hill to the reception and the evening was beautiful. Our guests entered through the main entrance and wove down the hall and to the left into the gorgeous “black and white tiled” room. The room was dotted with cozy chairs and sofas and the band was at the end of the room. The porches were open dimly lit by small trees lit up with strands of simple lights. Our guests enjoyed meandering from porch to room and outside. Though the pool was not filled with water, the guests enjoyed food down on the pool deck and this created a real sense of comfort and fun. On the far porch (bordering Cavalier Drive) we had a big canoe set up on blocks from which we served oysters on ice. It was truly an amazing night. At the conclusion of the evening, we left amidst a crowd of sparklers through the front entrance. Our guests spent the weekend staying at The Cavalier Beach Club and loved being able to walk everywhere. Everything about the weekend was amazing and I wouldn’t change a thing! I'd do it 100 times over if I could!

My wife and I were married on a hot July evening on my parent’s farm. We drove three hours to The Cavalier because of its “old school” beauty. We spent three days being pampered and enjoying all The Cavalier had to offer. It was our first time ever getting room service and it was so fast and the staff always so polite. We were heartbroken to hear that it changed hands and have been so pleased with how things have gone for The Cavalier and the whole area. We would love to come back and experience it all again for the first time.
Kelle & Dylan Townsend

October 5, 2013

Dylan and I grew up in Virginia Beach and met as young children. Our relationship started as friends and grew into a wonderful partnership. He swept me off my feet one summer evening and I still don’t think they’ve touched the ground. Together we have a beautiful son whose almost five and a little girl who’s five months old. He asked me for my hand in marriage August 21, 2012 and we married the following fall at Virginia Beach United Methodist, both in which our parents wed. We had a 1939 Cadillac bring us to The Cavalier and had all our closest family and friends danced the night away to Hot Cakes in the Raleigh Room. We decorated it with vintage tablecloths, lace and burlap but most importantly love. After the Wedding Party was announced we had our first dance as husband and wife to Old Crow Medicine Show’s “Wagon Wheel.” We had a rather large wedding party, I wore a floor length ivory lace gown and flowered halo, The Groomsmen all wore light tan suits, with pink gingham shirts, taupe suspenders, and different flowered bow ties. The ladies all wore floor length dusty pink gowns with flowered halos. Our son, who was three at the time, had on a taupe vest and knickers with a paper boy hat on. It was the most beautiful romantic evening of our lives. We loved all the imperfections which gave it its warm charm. The historic feel was the perfect touch to a perfect evening. We were one of the last weddings held at the old Cavalier before it was closed for renovations and can’t wait to see it when it’s completed.

Jacque & Jonathan Weadon

December 7, 2013

Our’s was the last wedding reception at the original Cavalier Hotel on the Hill on December 7, 2013 before it closed for restoration. Jonathan and I enjoyed having that distinction and our guests enjoyed the venue’s history, charm, and its possibility of paranormal activity. We had many children at our reception, some of whom gleefully claimed to have seen ghosts in the ladies’ bathroom and in the lobby. Another guest revealed that decades earlier, his grandfather (who was a reporter at the time), met his grandmother (a hotel guest) in the lobby of the hotel. We had our Christmas-themed reception in the Pocahontas Room, which included a decorated Christmas tree, a hot chocolate bar, ice blue lighting in the enclosed porch area to create a “Winter Wonderland” dance floor, and icicle lights on the awning of the outdoor porch, carrying our theme right out the door. We also appreciated that the hotel staff made sure that every exterior window of the hotel was illuminated for the holidays with a tiny windowsill light.

Jonathan and I wanted a remarkable reception venue and being that we’re history buffs, we selected and placed a deposit for The Cavalier Hotel a few months before it was sold. We were intrigued to learn that the hotel was purchased by my father’s cousin’s husband’s brother (still with me?), and we were relieved that our date was still reserved. Enclosed is a photo from our engagement shoot on the grounds of the original Cavalier Hotel, a photo of us posing in the Raleigh Room’s enclosed porch on our wedding day, and a photo of us posing as the evening came to a close. We spent our honeymoon night in a nearby hotel on the oceanfront since neither of The Cavalier properties were accepting overnight guests at the time. We look forward to seeing the hotel after it is restored to its original glory, we are hopeful that we can spend a night in the newly restored Cavalier, and we’re delighted to be part of the legacy of brides and grooms who have danced under its roof.
THE CAVALIER

THE GREAT

Love Stories and Weddings