

# Weddings



TELL US ABOUT YOUR WEDDING: Each week the *Times* selects Tampa Bay couples to interview for stories that highlight how they met, courted or planned their ceremony. To be considered, go to [www.tampabay.com/weddings](http://www.tampabay.com/weddings).

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## Wary divorce lawyer ties knot

She's seen plenty of unions unravel. So when love comes her way she knows what to do — and what not to do.

BY AMY SCHERZER  
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA  
That scene in the movie *The War of the Roses*, when the crazed divorcing couple hang from a loose chandelier, didn't strike Caroline Black as all that farfetched.

The dark comedy about a desperate dissolution was made the year the Stetson law school grad left the state prosecutor's office to become a divorce attorney. Lovebirds turning into vultures were part of the daily office drama.

She'd share some of the horror stories, "but my clients might recognize themselves," said Black.

After her own divorce in 2008, she grew wiser about marriage, yet warier.

Meanwhile, South Tampa mortgage broker Jeff Sikorske, 45, never doubted for a minute he'd remarry. He just didn't think he'd fall so hard, so fast.

Sikorske had been single about four months when a friend of his sister's helped him find a date to take to a Broadway play touring in Tampa in October 2010.

That she was an avid tennis player like him upped the ante. Then Googling the well-respected lawyer before picking her up for dinner lowered his expectations.

"Way out of my league," he recalls thinking after reading about Black. "I was swinging for the fences."

To her recollection, says Black, 51, a night of lighthearted theater was just the diversion she needed. She would be catching a flight to Washington, D.C., the next day to run the Marine Corps marathon. She said yes to take her mind off the race.

Both were surprised at how much they enjoyed the evening.

The play was silly, but their discussion of single-parent challenges was serious. Black has two young sons; Sikorske helps his widowed sister raise his twin nephews, now 18.

The second date, a doubles match at Tampa Yacht and Country Club, went even better. They lost, but found they were a formidable team on the tennis court.

Within a few weeks, Black's father and her three brothers, all lawyers, were interrogating the new man in her life.

Not the least bit intimidated, Sikorske quickly won them over. Case closed. Still, Black counseled a slowdown.

"I told him what I tell all my clients," she said, "You shouldn't get serious with anyone for a year. Divorcees need that time to recover from such a traumatic event."

With that in mind, Black left for Italy with a girlfriend for a long-planned walking tour in spring 2011. By day two, Sikorske was texting about diamonds.

In July, the couple and her two sons



Caroline and Jeff Sikorske married at the Tampa Yacht & Country Club. The couple had planned a wedding for next month, but moved it up because the groom just couldn't wait.

STEVE POISALL | The Gallery Studios

flew to California for a family reunion. Two weeks of traveling together erased any lingering doubts about staying single.

Sikorske's wedding proposal was pretty low key. Arriving at home after a charity auction in late August 2011, he simply took out a jewelry box and grinned.

Earlier that night, said Black, some girlfriends had teased her about her naked ring finger.

With a resounding yes, she grabbed her cell phone, snapped a photo and sent off the sparkling image.

Planning for a March 2012 wedding

and househunting began simultaneously. Sikorske's mother, Realtor Carol Schindler, showed them 84 houses in seven months. They made offers on three of those.

The third one was the charm.

But at Thanksgiving dinner, Sikorske told everyone he was getting impatient. He polled family members to see who would be in town between Christmas and New Year's.

Turns out, all 16 wedding attendants, as well as the photographer, florist, pastry chef and officiant, Judge Susan Bucklew, were available Dec. 30.

The timetable accelerated. Black booked the Tampa yacht club. The bridal shop put a rush order on her wedding gown.

On Dec. 28, the moving van arrived at their new home off Bayshore Boulevard. The next day, amid the boxes, the couple hosted the rehearsal dinner. The day after that, they married.

"It all came together beautifully," said the bride.

No warfare, just red roses.

Amy Scherzer can be reached at [ascherzer@tampabay.com](mailto:ascherzer@tampabay.com) or (813) 226-3332.

### Love Notes

by Sabrina Rocco



Kamila Cudzilo, 22, and Joel Feliciano, 23, of Oldsmar. Married Nov. 12, 2011.

The magic started in a T

get aisle about four years ago. Kamila and Joel were roommates at the Land of Red Khaki, trying to make a little money over the summer. He helped her straighten the shelves, and they got to know each other. She had just started her first year at the University of Central Florida; he was attending Eastern University in Lakeland.

Her attraction to him was immediate. He was handsome, funny, especially polite. But when he talked up about his love for Jesus Christ, how he wanted to live preaching Jesus' mission, Kamila knew it was something different. She met him in college, and sure, they were curious, but they weren't interested, but they weren't that perfect package.

Joel saw that same light in her. He knew he liked Kamila, who was equally passionate about Jesus. Things didn't progress for a while, but they nurtured their newfound friendship.

The summer of 2008 passed, and they had to part ways. Kamila transferred to St. Petersburg College to finish her nursing degree. Joel went to school, but they stayed close. The next summer, they gave in to their feelings and made it official. Joel moved to Clearwater to do an internship with Clearwater Community Church and to be close to Kamila.

The day after Christmas 2010, Kamila took Kamila to the Magic Kingdom. She had only been a couple of months, and always talked about how much she loved the place. The fireworks show was "aamazing" hour before the fireworks started. Kamila took her to a little garden that was nestled in front of the castle. He discreetly told the Disney photographer he was about to propose and to take pictures. He knelt down in front of Cinderella's Castle and asked her to marry him.

"We both have the same love for Jesus Christ," Kamila said. "That's been the center of our relationship and we're making that the focus of our marriage. Because we're able to deal with anything

## Celebrations

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## Tradition signed, sealed, delivered

BY JENNIFER DOBNER  
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The task assigned by the minister ahead of our May 1999 wedding seemed simple: a letter from each of us telling her why — out of all the

possible people in the world — we had chosen to marry each other.

The answer, too, seemed simple: love, of course.

"But you can't use the word love," the Rev. Constance Redding Sidebottom said. "That

makes it too easy."

Sidebottom, 68, a retired United Methodist minister and my aunt, always asks couples for wedding letters, and she is certain they have transformative power.

"Often weddings are for show," said Sidebottom, of Polson, Mont. "The sacredness is removed by

own sermon about life, I think their expectations for marriage. Sidebottom said.

They add a personal to ceremony much like self vows, a trend that began in the 1960s as some couples moved away from religious traditions, said Diane Warner, au