

A Half-Century After Getting Divorced, This Couple Is Heading Back Down The Aisle

[npr.org/2018/04/07/600176308/these-octogenarians-are-remarrying-50-years-after-divorcing-each-other](https://www.npr.org/2018/04/07/600176308/these-octogenarians-are-remarrying-50-years-after-divorcing-each-other)

April 7, 2018 8:10 AM ET

Heard on [Weekend Edition Saturday](#)

Ian Stewart

Listen · 3:02 3:02

- [Download](#)
- `<iframe src="https://www.npr.org/player/embed/600176308/600482908" width="100%" height="290" frameborder="0" scrolling="no" title="NPR embedded audio player">`
- [Transcript](#)

AP



After marrying in 1960 and divorcing in 1968, Harold Holland and Lillian Barnes are remarrying each other this year.

AP

Both Lillian Barnes' and Harold Holland's spouses died in 2015. Holland and Barnes saw each other soon after at a family reunion. As Holland put it, they "got to talking, and went to a graduation dinner, and then a Christmas dinner and one thing led to another. I said, 'Well, we should try this again.' "



The couple in 1955, posing at their first wedding. **Courtesy of Harold Holland and Lillian Barnes** **hide caption**

Courtesy of Harold Holland and Lillian Barnes

Barnes and Holland had divorced each other 50 years earlier. This month, they're remarrying each other.

"The whole flame was still there," Holland said. "We just love each other so much right now."

Barnes, 79, and Holland, 83, first met in a restaurant in the small town of Salt Lick, KY. They tied the knot not too long afterward on Christmas Eve, 1955. They were young: she was 16, he was 20.

The couple had five children in eight years, but the marriage fell apart, and the couple divorced in 1968, staying friendly with one another but didn't become close again until after that family reunion about three years ago.

Holland said his hectic work schedule was a source of strife in their original union. "It was 100 percent my fault," Holland said. "She did nothing."

Barnes said she loves the way that Holland shows his love to everybody. "He's got a good sense of humor," she said. "We're older now, and you live and learn ... you live and learn."



The couple in the early 1960s, during their first marriage to each other. **Courtesy of Harold Holland and Lillian Barnes** [hide caption](#)

Holland said he's always loved Barnes since they first got married — "She's always been a great person and a great mother ... I don't think you can ask for anything better."

The couple finds joy knowing that their shared family will get to celebrate their wedding, including five children they had together, and two from Barnes' second marriage. "And 20-something grandkids, and 30-something great grand-kids," Holland added. "There'll be about 200 or 300 people there ... If we run out of cake or punch they'll just have to do without."

"We decided to walk the last mile together," he said.

The couple says that this time around, they'll be there for each other more often. They have some advice for newlyweds everywhere.

"Don't be a workaholic," Holland said.

"Pay attention to your spouse," Barnes said. "You got that baby on the way, and that's fine and good, but don't forget about each other, either one of you. Go out on a date."

On Aging

'Gray Divorce': Over 50, And Splitting Up

NPR's Emily Sullivan produced this story for digital.