



DJJ FORUM

Where DJJ employees gather to stay informed and celebrate our victories

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

April 30, 2020

Touching Thursday

You Can't Hold Love Down



With Wedding Plans Sidetracked,
Jared Miller and Sarah Johns
Exchange Vows Anyway





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Sarah Johns and I were engaged in October 2019 and had just started to make plans for a wedding in Richmond. When the virus starting ramping up we started talking a bit more about getting married or having an advanced directive in the event that something should happen to either one of us.

Then we started to think about our parents and if something were to happen to them. So on March 24 Sarah called the Circuit Court to see about getting a marriage license. They were open that day, but could give no guarantees on future openings. So we went down and got a marriage license that day and figured if we didn't use it in 60 days it would be no great loss.

We would ask our friend Dan to marry us. As fate would have it, he texted Sarah on the evening of March 26 and said he was going to be in town. She looked at me and asked if we should do it and we both said yes. Did we have a ceremony planned? No. Did we have rings? No. But we would figure those things out. Dan's only stipulation was that it be someplace where we could be socially distant. Dan said he was available the following day, March 27.

We immediately called our parents and asked if they were available at 3 p.m. the next day via video chat. This was no small feat for my parents, it being their first-ever

video chat! I had to get them set up on their laptop to do one. We then called our friend Jen who introduced us and asked if she could be our photographer. Sarah and I looked up a couple of readings ("Attics of My Life" by the Grateful Dead and the chorus of John Prine's "In Spite of Ourselves").

We had them meet us at the back end of Riverview Cemetery in Richmond. We ride our bikes through there a lot and stop to admire the James River with views of the western tip of Belle Isle. I've also told folks that having it in the cemetery gave us a captive audience! But I also think it's good symbology for the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. We also totes along sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer, just in case.

We were sad that we couldn't have all of our loved ones there to celebrate with us, but we had also earlier entertained the idea of eloping. At first we were going to keep it a secret until we could do a more formal ceremony, but after four days decided to start calling friends and family.

The one HUGE positive is the smiles this has brought to people's faces. Everyone pretty much said they were happy to get some good news during this most peculiar time. It was also better than a wedding because we got to chat for 20 minutes or more with each person as compared to the 1-2 minutes we might have gotten at a wedding.