



A SUPER GIRL

By Monroe S. Miller

Well, here we are, Cheryl Lehmann and Monroe Miller, celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary. I can hardly believe that many years have passed.

I'd like to say I've been filled with anticipation for a long time, anxiously waiting the arrival of this enormous—by society's standards today—milestone in the lives of two people.

While some may have wondered if they'd make it as far as we have, I never had any doubt.

Fact is, I've never thought of our marriage that way. I never assumed it, and I never doubted it. How's that for typically presumptuous male thinking?

So, here it is. Twenty-five years together. Despite my lack of preparation for this splendid day, I am nevertheless proud as a peacock that it happened.

We are, it seems, a diminishing commodity these days. We are living in times when few things last, least of all marriages. Few spend their lives in the same career anymore, unlike me. Fewer still stay with the same employer, unlike me.

Life's necessities don't last long anymore. My mother's Electrolux vacuum lasted three decades; we now buy a new vacuum every few years. Furnaces, blue jeans and Ford tractors all lack the staying power of their predecessors.

For years we listened to our music from records. They lasted forever. But in the last while we have had, let's see—8-track, cassettes and CDs. Even the CDs are destined for the scrap pile from what I've read.

Nothing lasts. Not even the Cold War or the Berlin Wall.

But my relationship with the sweetheart I married has. And there is no doubt it will continue on, "til death do us part." Just like we promised 25 years ago.

As the golf season ended and my mind was clear for the first time in a while, I started thinking about how and why we've made it this far. The thought, the question would cross my

mind at odd times. I might think about it in the middle of the night or in traffic on the way home.

What's the secret? I never read any books or even an article on "How To Make A Marriage Last". We have never had counselling or even talked about that. No reason to.

Never have we had an esoteric discussion about the viability of our future together. When we took the marriage vows, the "always" meant just that—always.

Most credit for the longevity of our partnership goes to Cheryl Ann, however.

She has had the patience to live with a guy whose job consumes him. She understands and tolerates a spouse who has his hands in 15 different projects at once.

While the lawn is uncut. While the washer isn't working. When he should have been at a school concert or in church or just plain home.

It takes a special gal to put up with a man who has a job that takes too many hours a day, seven days a week for far too many weeks in a row. She has to put up with offseason vacations (or none at all) and midnight phone calls. Simply put, she has to appreciate what we appreciate about our work. And that isn't always clear to anyone.

Tolerance is what Cheryl has. She also has been the independent, take charge, make-a-decision woman who could see the bright side of a tough career her husband loved.

I know it hasn't been easy. No marriage is smooth sailing at all times, and the pressure of life itself makes the going less than fun at times. But we stumbled through those times when so many around us have thrown in the towel.

Some luck hasn't hurt, either. Talk about two hearts beating in one line! We both, miraculously, love Badger football and Garrison Keillor, Packer football and the Metropolitan Opera,

vacations in New England and reading by the fireplace at home. Cheryl as acquired a taste for genealogy and still generously helps me with *THE GRASS ROOTS*. She has worked at understanding why anyone would collect farm toys.

And when it comes to the UW, we are kindred hearts again as only two alums could be.

I respect her intelligence, envy her work ethic, appreciate her devotion to our kids and love her company.

She's a super girl. My girl. My pal. Yup—my best friend. Even after 25 years.

And how does one say this in a public place with good taste? She still catches my eye. There she is—nearing her late forties yet trim and fit and wonderfully good looking. Wish I could say the same as I look over my generous stomach at the bathroom scale and look into the mirror at my receding (but only slightly!) hairline.

Boy, am I lucky. Every night we pull the covers up together. It's still a thrill for me.

So, next month we'll do a little celebrating by ourselves, looking back over a pretty prosperous time together. I'll say a prayer of thanks for the good times I have spent with her.

And we will visit about our dreams for the next 25 years, maybe even plan a big party for our golden anniversary.

Presumptuous? Not a bit. Not any more. We have proven that the old song is right—"our love is here to stay."

Forever. ♣

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