

# Professing their love

Love is in the air on campus, but not just between students

By Brooke Ross  
Oregon Daily Emerald

To profess her love on Valentine's Day, a woman burst in on the object of her affection during his Humanities 102 class about 10 years ago and serenaded him with a romantic love song. But she wasn't a lovesick student — she was Louise Bishop, adjunct assistant professor of literature in the Honors College, and she was singing to her husband, the teacher of the class, English professor James Earl.



Photo courtesy of James Earl and Louise Bishop  
Assistant professor of literature Louise Bishop first met her husband, English professor James Earl, when she took a class taught by him at Fordham University in 1978.

This is just one of many stories shared by University professors and graduate teaching fellows about the ups and downs of working in the same place as their significant other. While committed to education and research, faculty members can also be romantics who have had to make sacrifices for love.

Earl and Bishop weren't always academic equals. The two met in 1978 when Bishop, then a graduate student, took a class taught by Earl at Fordham University in New York City.

"I fell in love with my professor," Bishop said.

She said after meeting Earl she knew she wanted a different kind of relationship with him, so she made sure she never took a class taught by him again. By 1979, the two were dating. They married in 1982, and now have two children in high school and will celebrate their 19th wedding anniversary in March.

"The thing about love is you can't even define it, but when it happens you just know it," Bishop said.

Earl said he is lucky to be working in the same place as his wife, because it's rare to find teaching positions in the same place. He said many couples end up working at different universities in different towns, and have to travel to see each other.

However, Earl said he believes his students often have misconceptions about what his home life is like, especially those students who take a class from both Earl and Bishop.

"I think most students imagine a strange home life where we talk

about literature over the dinner table," he said. "We do talk about our work a lot, not because we obsess, but because we like what we do."

Bishop said although they do like reading poetry to each other, they also share interests outside of academics, such as traveling.

She said one trip the couple made to India in 1998 was one of the best times she has ever had with her husband.

"That was the most exotic trip the two of us made together, and I wouldn't want to do it with anyone other than him," she said.

But while relationships are challenging for everyone, some couples have had to make great sacrifices to be with the one they love. English graduate teaching fellows Linda and Bianca Tredennick shared such a story.

The two met as undergraduates at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash., in 1989, and were a couple by 1991.

"We were both in the English department. We became friends, and the rest is history," Bianca Tredennick said. "I was willing to give up everything to be together."

Linda Tredennick said because Oregon law doesn't recognize same-sex marriages, both women took the name Tredennick from Linda's great-grandmother so they could have the same last name.

Bianca said her family was less than accepting when she told them she was gay, so she was forced to make one of the biggest choices of her life: She had to choose between her

family or Linda, who was on her way to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for graduate school.

"I had to decide whether I would stay home to pursue graduate school and do the 'good child' thing, or be with Linda," Bianca said.

She made her choice less than two weeks after Linda left town.

"I told my parents I was leaving, and I walked out, never to return," she said.

Bianca Tredennick said she has not talked with her family since then, but she said being with Linda has been more than worth it.

"Nothing else seemed as important as being with her," she said.

She said they moved to Eugene in 1997 to begin working at the University as GTFs while pursuing their doctorate degrees. They share an office at the University, and each teaches one class per term.

Linda Tredennick said she enjoys working in close proximity to her partner.

"We get an unbelievable amount of time together," she said.

Next year, the two will be in the job market for professor positions, which means there will probably be a lot of challenges and negotiations to try and work in the same area, Linda said.

But despite the challenges of their careers, Linda is not worried about the future of their relationship.

"Our relationship is the priority, and we're not going to let a career get in the way of that," she said.

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