

Columns

Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman



25 years of technology and the arts



This month marks the 25th wedding anniversary of my wife, Carina, and me. A little over 25 years ago, a young engineering student met a fine arts major, and my life has never been the same.

We met while we were first-year university students; I was studying engineering at the University of Waterloo and Carina was studying fine arts at the new campus of Redeemer College. We met through a mutual friend, an engineering student I got to know at Waterloo. He introduced me to Carina while we were visiting Redeemer, and we got to know each other better while attending a college hockey game later that evening. I can still recall meeting Carina for the first time: at the intersection of three hallways at Redeemer – a spot I now walk by every day on my way up to my office.

I wasn't certain what Carina thought about our meeting, but a long-time friend of mine who attended Redeemer had inside information for me: he had heard from one of Carina's roommates that she liked me. After hearing this, I had the courage to give her a call. I asked her on an outing with some other students from the University of Waterloo Christian Reformed fellowship group. We traveled to Blyth to take part in a barn dance, a setting more familiar to my wife (who grew up on a dairy farm) than to myself, a boy who had grown up in the suburbs of Toronto. After that weekend we began to see each other regularly.

Eventually the time came to meet Carina's family. She invited me to her family farm one Easter weekend. I was anxious about meeting her parents and family; what would these farmers think of this city boy she was bringing home? I entered her parental home and made my first mistake: I proceeded to sit in the most comfortable chair at the kitchen table. Carina's father's first words to me were a request to get out of his chair. Nevertheless, trips to her family farm in Peterborough became frequent, and I quickly grew to feel at home with her family.

Left and right

After several years of dating we got engaged (in a gravel pit down the road from her family farm – it was more romantic than it sounds). We married at the age of 21, young by today's standards, and while we were both still university students. Our wedding took place on a perfect summer day on August 19, 1989. The wedding pictures depict us and all our friends in the vintage fashions of the 1980s (thankfully, I was not sporting a mullet). We started out our married lives in a modest one-bedroom apartment at the University of Waterloo. We both continued our studies and somehow managed to keep financially afloat. Carina eventually became a Christian school teacher, earning her teaching degree as one of the pioneering students in Redeemer's new Christian education program.

Engineers tend to be "left-brained" and more logical, whereas artists tend to be more "right-brained" and creative. As an engineer paired with a fine arts major we seemed to complement each other well. I spent many weekends visiting Carina and her friends at Redeemer in those early years, a campus that had a very different feel than Waterloo. The culture at this liberal-arts college was very different than an engineering school, and I enjoyed the difference. This was the beginning of a long personal connection

to Redeemer College (perhaps my eventual tenure working as a professor at Redeemer was motivated in part by the warm memories I had developed during those years).

In time we were entrusted with four children. It's strange how life sometimes moves in circles – our two oldest children are now attending Redeemer, living on the same campus near the same places where we first met and where I now work. I have always appreciated a Redeemer education – how it can bring computers and the arts together in a liberal arts education. But I am also grateful for how it brought technology and the arts together in another way – in the life of a particular engineer and a fine arts major 25 years ago. ➤

Derek Schuurman is professor of computer science at Redeemer University College. He and his wife, Carina, will be married 25 years this August.



A happy day in 1989.

WAYNE RIDLEY