

The Crowd: A wedding nine years in the making

April 13, 2011 | By B.W. Cook



Gary and Sharon Grimes, newlyweds Gary Grimes II and Jackie... (Courtesy B.W. Cook)

Gary Grimes II met **Jackie Rieser** while attending a fifth year of high school at Western Reserve in Dayton, Ohio, in preparation for entry into the United States Naval Academy.

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Grimes grew up on Lido Isle, the son of **Sharon and Gary Grimes**. He attended Newport Harbor High School prior to heading east.

Jackie knew almost at first sight that Gary was her guy. At 17, she told her father, Harvard-educated attorney **John Rieser**, of Dayton, "I'm going to marry this boy."

Nine years later, on Dec. 30, 2010, Gary Grimes II, a 2007 graduate of the Naval Academy assigned as the training officer on the U.S.S. Blue Ridge Command Ship for the 7th Fleet, married Jackie Rieser in an elopement on the beach in Honolulu. Jackie, a 2009 graduate of Ohio State University fluent in multiple languages, including Chinese, is an analyst working for the federal government in Washington, D.C.

They were supposed to have a formal, traditional wedding sometime later this year. Instead, during a short Christmas visit to Asia, where Gary was stationed at the time, Jackie challenged Gary's dare.

"Have you ever been to Hawaii?" Gary asked.

"No, is it as beautiful as California?" Jackie responded.

"More beautiful. Would you like to go?" Gary continued, adding, "Will you marry me in Hawaii?"

"Yes, I will," she told him, to which he replied, "You're sure?"

"I'm sure," she said without hesitation. Gary got two days' leave from the Navy and the pair flew to Honolulu without any plan.

The hotel concierge put them in touch with a wedding coordinator. Within a day and a whirlwind shopping expedition at the Ala Moana Center, Jackie had her dress from Neiman Marcus and her shoes from Nordstrom. The flowers were ordered, the setting chosen, a white limousine remained on standby and the minister with Bible in hand was at the ready.

The following day they said "I do" on the beach at sunset, sealing their vows with a kiss as the Pacific Ocean behind them turned from blue to violet and then orange.

Last week in Newport Beach, parents Sharon and Gary Grimes held a Saturday evening wedding dinner for West Coast family and friends in the gardens at Tommy Bahama Island Grille, Newport Beach. Some 100 guests converged on the gardens at dusk, tables adorned with fresh orchids and shimmering votive candles on crisp white linens, as music filled the Palm Garden.

The Grimes welcomed guests, including Jackie's family **John and Lara Rieser**, of Dayton, and **Jennifer Rieser**, in from Portland, Ore. Grimes family members included Scott and Janet McDonald, of Phoenix; **Brooke McDonald**, of Tucson; **Bryan, Jennifer, Nicole and Elizabeth Graber**, of Carlsbad; **Jeff, Sabrina, Michael, Isabella and Angelina Lamberson**, of San Marcos; and **Taylor Grimes**, of Redondo Beach.

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Also on hand for the wedding celebration were **Alex and Sabrina Chazen**, of Beverly Hills, **Jeff and Alexandra Pfeifer**, **Patti and Billy O'Desky**, **Julie, Bill and Matt Bissell**, **Diane and Jim Aust**, **Leo and La Deana Young**, **Donna and Dave Shockley**, and **Judy Wightman** with **Carter Ford**.

Mai tais were raised, toasts were made and a video of the Hawaiian elopement entertained the crowd as coconut shrimp were passed around before a dinner of filet and salmon was served.

Sharing in the moment were good friends **Joy Curtain, Gail Grabner, Sharon and Jamie McKinnon, Nancy and Barry Levy, David and Katie Levy, Jeannie Fouladi, Oscar Taylor, Kim Maxam and Bill Wakeman.**

Also spotted in the crowd were **Nancy and Jeff Lavigne and Dave and Melanie Marshall.** Friends from the Navy included **Andrew Hotchkiss, Jim Tripiano, Eric Handle, and Jay Whorley.**

An East Coast reception is planned for the summer with additional family and friends. The new Mrs. Grimes returned to Washington D.C. along with her husband, Gary, for a few days to set up residence, prior to Gary returning to duty in Asia. He currently awaits a new assignment in Washington and will rejoin his bride there.

THE CROWD runs Thursdays and Saturdays. B.W. Cook is editor of the Bay Window, the official publication of the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach.