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Sweethearts in the Arts

This Valentine's Day edition of What Your \$ Does features three Milwaukee theater couples whose love shines on and off the stage. Each has a unique love story, but share similar feelings about what it's like to make a living in the theater.

Read on to find out how these couples met and what it's like being married in the theater...



A Built-In Trust

Carrie Hitchcock and Norman Moses

Norman and Carrie were friends for several years before they started dating after their first marriages ended. Carrie's first husband was the best man for Norman's first wedding, and Norman was the best man at Carrie's first wedding. According to Carrie, there are a couple of wedding photos that are just too full of foreshadowing. The couple has been in the same production quite a few times and finds that being married helps build trust and chemistry onstage...

"It helps to have a spouse who understands your job. We each have a built-in coach, supporter and critic," said Carrie. "When we work together, we have an automatic trust – a kind of short hand. The

majority of the time, we've supported ourselves as actors: on stage, in commercials and doing voice-over work. We do fill in from time to time with odd jobs. In 2003 I went back to school and got a degree in nursing. Norman has a tax preparation business and has done his share of painting houses and the like. Right now he is working part-time at Lakefront Brewery as a tour guide alongside our 26 year old daughter, Kelsey."





Are You Going to Ask Her Out or What?

Laura Gray and Jonathan Wainwright



Laura and Jonathan met in 2000, hanging out in the greenroom during Playwrights' Studio Theatre's "Ten Minute Play Festival." Laura had just completed an acting internship at Milwaukee Rep, and this was her first professional gig in Milwaukee. Jonathan had been making his way as a non-equity actor doing good work with local companies. The greenroom tended to be a pretty social place at these festivals, and one evening a friend of both Laura and Jonathan's noticed them being particularly chatty and said, "Hey Jonathan, are you going to ask her out or what?" So he did.

"We'll never forget the time we had to ad-lib on stage for at least five minutes when an actor failed to make an entrance," said Laura. "Even though there were about eight other people onstage, we being the pivotal characters in the moment as well as an actual couple, sort of took over with our own improvised narrative and wouldn't let anyone else get a word in edgewise until our prodigal coworker appeared. The audience was never the wiser."

Picture: "The Good Father" by Milwaukee Chamber Theater. Photo by John Nienhuis.

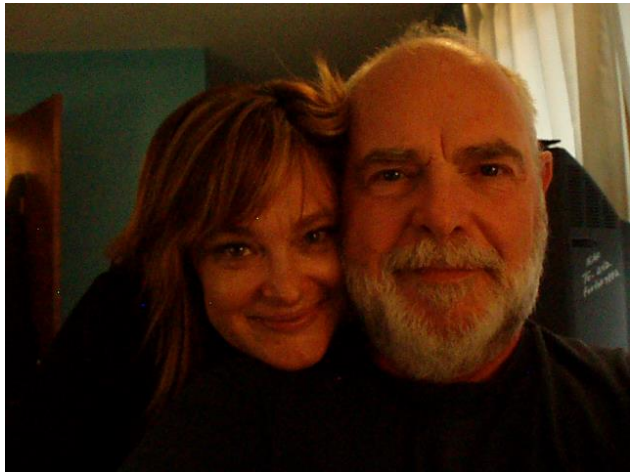


Second Time Around

Tami Workentin and Jim Pickering

"Jim and I met while doing *Exonerated* at Next Act Theatre," Tami begins. "We became instant friends as we were drawn together by two tragedies: I was going through a painful divorce after 18 years of marriage, and Jim was caring for his beloved Rose in her final months of a courageous battle with cancer. As he was a constant caretaker of Rose and I was now a single mother of two sons, there was really only the time at the theatre to know that someone else 'got it.' Soon, we fell in love. It was a glorious fall into love that surprised the both of us and continues to surprise us to this day. One year later Jim asked me to marry him, and quite frankly, I couldn't imagine my life without him."

"We married on February 18, 2013, at the Hubbard Park Lodge surrounded by our friends and family. Love needed an audience and we got one. We are both grateful every day for our 'second time around.' Love is ... *pretty great.*"



Laura and Jonathan recently performed together in Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's *The Good Father*. Carrie and Norman will be performing together in Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's 2015-16 season, as will Tami and Jim.

To read each couple's full story
(including more funny stories from the stage)
[click here.](#)

Happy Valentine's Day!



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