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Love story: Earl + Virginia = forever

By [Kimberly Benedict](#) Journal Staff Writer



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Journal/Sam Green

Virginia and Earl McCutcheon celebrate their 72nd wedding anniversary at Madison House on Thursday, May 24.

On May 24, 1940, Earl and Virginia McCutcheon stood in a tiny church in California and said “I do.”

Seventy-two years later, on Thursday, May 24, the two held hands over a table at Madison House assisted living center and cut a cake celebrating the longevity of their marriage, and lives.

“I was only 17 at the time,” Virginia said. “We just fell in love. It was as simple as that.”

Of course, nothing is really that simple, and both Earl, 90, and Virginia, 89, said plenty of effort has been put into their marriage along the way.

“At the time, he could do no wrong,” Virginia said, laughing. “Of course, now it’s different.”

“We’ve had to work at (the marriage),” Earl said. “There’s an old saying that poker players have, that says you have to know when to bid and know when to fold. I guess we knew when to bid.”

Shortly after their marriage, Earl went off to war for three years flying a bomber in the South Pacific during World War II. During that time, Virginia managed things on the home front, waiting for the day her husband would return and their life together would resume.

Once Earl returned from war, the couple settled into a comfortable pattern with Earl working in the agriculture industry in Heritage Valley, Calif., and Virginia as an employee of Union Oil in Santa Paula, Calif. They raised their children, lived their lives, and continued to love one another.

“We had a family and we were a family and we were happy,” Virginia said.

Over the past 72 years, the couple has experienced the highs and lows that accompany life. They’ve welcomed two children into their family, a son and a daughter. Together they’ve celebrated the births of five grandchildren, a “whole lot” of great-grandchildren, and six great-great-grandchildren. Together they’ve mourned the loss of loved ones. Together they’ve watched the world change.

“Everything is different now than it was when we were married,” Virginia said. “Even our lives have changed.”

The couple’s daughter, Earleen Brock, says her parents’ marriage is worth emulating.

“All I can think, is what an example,” Brock said. “What they have is just an example of everything we need.”

Earl and Virginia maintain there is no secret to their marriage, just commitment and love.

“You have to have perseverance,” Earl said. “We’ve been fortunate.”

In terms of advice for newlyweds, Earl said there is no substitute for hard work.

“Just hang in there,” Earl said. “You have to work at it and want it. Just hang in there and love each other the best you can.”

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