

My unforgettable WEDDING

It was a perfect day for a wedding and the 30 years I waited for it! On a balmy fall evening, in a romantic garden with 50,000 twinkling lights, an ensemble of lighted trees, blooming fall foliage flowers, waterfalls, fire pit, gazebo, singing birds, fresh white roses and hydrangeas set the tone for a very romantic, dreamy, Cinderella-like wedding for a mature-aged couple. It was there that Malcolm Hunt 60, and I, 59, reflected our love for family, friends, nature, spirituality, beauty and a moment in time to remember.

The wedding was held at The Ruthe Jackson Center in Grand Prairie, under the management of Cheryl Allgood. The 18,000-square-foot facility owned by The City of Grand Prairie features an 8,500 square-foot ballroom with beautiful chandeliers. It was beautifully decorated with fresh flowers, white linen, candles, white flowering trees and white hand-tied satin chair decorations. The facility features a beautiful outdoor garden, and the interior's rustic Texas Hill Country design is both beautiful and spacious – it's a hidden treasure in Grand Prairie for weddings and events. It is fully equipped with a beautiful bridal suite, extensive menu of food, services, dancing area – it is an ideal way to help brides bring their dreams into reality.

Although it was my dream to have a wedding that was princess-like, it was important to Malcolm and I to incorporate our strong values of family, God, community, music and entertainment that moves the soul to create an evening of incredible happiness, energy and beauty for not just us but also for our guests and to make it most memorable for kids and those that have waited years and want to marry or remarry again, even at an advanced age.

The day started with our 28-member wedding party all wearing personalized spa robes (monogrammed in pink for the ladies to celebrate and support Breast Cancer Awareness Month), as I believe in spa and all the benefits it creates for the body, mind, soul and beauty and to connect to positive energy. It's why I began my business, Great Skin Spa & Skin Care. Onsite massage therapist Christopher Thomas gave complimentary massages to the bridal party. Makeup artists Marcus Valdez of "Marcus Valdez Artistry" and Tavia of "For Beauty Sake" and onsite hair dressers treated us royally while the air was scented with Chi candles – all this took place prior to the wedding.

Malcolm and I come from huge families; we both had seven siblings, and we incorporated family members from multiple generations to represent our families. Standing in to represent our parents (both deceased), was my aunt Thelma Griffin, and Ms. Autury Jackson, who was my mom's care giver during her stay in Texas with me. Malcolm's sisters, Velma Tinsely and Vernice Gipson, stood in to represent his mother. I was given away by my great nephew, Cody (12). The matron of honor was my niece, Meme Bennett, and the best man was Malcolm's brother-in-law, Dymond Williams. We carefully selected our entertainment company for the evening and went with the well known Next Level Entertainment, music by Leonardo – an entertainment, music and event lighting company. We also wanted to share the experience of a photographer that creates magical moments, so we chose Santos Paris Photography. The dinner was prepared by the chefs of the Ruthe Jackson Center and consisted of chicken breast topped with a champagne cream sauce, garlic mashers, honey glazed carrots, a fresh garden salad and fresh rolls. My cake was an 8-tier wedding cake by Cake a Holics, and Malcolm's had gold hand weights to reflect his interest in good health and exercise. The elegant evening concluded with the two of us being swept away in a 1936 Vintage car by Blue Diamond Limousines.

It was a magical, fun filled and memorable evening. We will celebrate our marriage with a dual honeymoon trip – first on a road trip to Santa Fe New Mexico, to enjoy some needed time and the fall foliage, then we'll take a warm, Caribbean cruise vacation soon after. See our story on www.zola.com/wedding/brendaandmalcolm.

– Brenda Hunt

