

An Afternoon With The Beachy's



Hawaiian shirts and Sunday morning handshakes summed up the information we had on this infamous couple as we drove to their hidden oasis of a home. Little did Abby Huie and I know, we were in store for the story of a lifetime. One that would bring us to tears, fill us with hope for the future and inspire us to make the absolute most of the lives we have ahead of us.

Pulling up to their cheerful home, we were greeted by brightly painted yard art in a sea of spring flowers. From floor to ceiling, their home was a time capsule of memories. The refrigerator lavishly adorned by a mosaic of pictures. The bookshelves proudly presenting memorabilia from wars long fought, vacations of grand adventure, and family heirlooms. With a big teary-eyed hug from Mrs. Mary Alice and a hardy laugh from Mr. Steve, our afternoon began.

There were many stories to tell, so we decided the best place to start was when their paths crossed. Steve, a loud and proud member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of '69, caused chaos with the best of them in the Corps of Cadets. All the while, Mary Alice was on the hunt for some "senior boots". From there you could say it was history. Following his senior year, within the span of two weeks, Steve graduated from Texas A&M University, married Mary Alice and the two of them followed the war to Germany. Needless to say, the "honeymoon phase" could not have been easy for this young couple, as they were the first Americans to move to a little German town Steve described as "looking like something out of a postcard". However, in no way did that seem to stop them from having the time of their lives. Abby and I sat back in awe as we heard stories of "infamous parties", island getaways, Chaplain hymnals and worldwide friendships that would outlast the ages.

As the stories continued on through the rest of their lives, Mary Alice made sure to sugar us up with sweets. Their dinner table was almost unrecognizable under the masses of cookies, snacks and chocolate candy. We laughed until we could barely catch our breath as each story seemed to be so uniquely Beachy. They were true examples of living a beautifully wild and yet all together simple life. Despite no two stories looking alike, a couple aspects never faltered. There would always be one, two, or maybe a whole handful of quick-witted remarks from Steve in his hopes of keeping us on our toes. From Mary Alice, her words carried a level of humility unlike many either Abby or I had seen before. No matter the trials or victories of the story being told, it was remarkable how she never failed to be humbly grateful for every journey life had brought their way.

Abby and I came in for a simple interview. The afternoon would entail a few questions and some light small talk. Instead, we were welcomed into a family of mix-matched college students quilted together by love, just like so many students before us. It seemed to not take more than a moment to transition from strangers to old friends. And then it did not take more than an afternoon for us to become officially "adopted" into the Beachy family.

Stepping back into our cars, Abby and I were in awe of the afternoon we could have never seen coming. Nothing could explain the feeling of unapologetic love and welcome that rested on our hearts. In just a short afternoon the Beachy's had inspired the two of us, to live a little bolder, walk a little prouder and love a whole lot grander. The beauty in it was, this was from no act of extravagance either. They merely loved. No agenda, no judgement, no expectations. Just love. They showed us an example of life lived well and whole. That is an afternoon with the Beachy's.