

**Welcome to the Marriage Ceremony Between
Jennifer ***** and
Dean *******

Introduction

Family and friends, Dean and Jennifer have invited us here to share in the celebration of their marriage. We come together not to mark the start of a relationship, but to recognize a bond that already exists. This beautiful couple knew each other as kids, but they “fell in like” with each other about a decade ago. They eventually had an opportunity to explore this like and decided it was love. They moved in together eight years ago. This couple’s three children, Chasity, Daniel and Danica, approve of this union and have important roles in this ceremony.

When I asked these two why they would want a legal marriage, they both said “because this is the one I’m going to spend the rest of my life with.” Marriage is an outward symbol of an inward union of hearts, a union created by friendship, respect, faith, passion and love. Love is one of the greatest experiences that we can have, but it is when love is combined with real friendship that both are blessed.

Theirs is a partnership freely chosen and founded on friendship, trust, respect and a shared vision. That vision includes the stability, sanctity and permanence of family. That vision also includes helping others and thereby making this world a better place. When talking to Jenny and Dean about this, I thought of a prayer that was said by a former premier of this province, Tommy Douglas. Mr. Douglas was an ordained minister, but he wanted to deliver a prayer that would unite the religious and the non-religious in such a vision, and I have adapted it for this occasion. I would like you to bow your head, if that is your tradition. You may look skyward, if that is your tradition. You may also simply listen attentively, if that is what is most comfortable for you at this time.

Let us give thanks for the family and friends here to witness the union of Jenny and Dean. We are thankful for the variety of rich attire worn to honour these two and we are thankful for the vehicles in which they arrived. We are thankful for the children who are well cared for, who eat foods that come to us from afar, and who benefit from the education and medical care we provide. We are thankful for these and all the good things of life. We recognize that they are part of our common heritage and come to us through the efforts of our brothers and sisters the world over. What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. To this end we take our share in the world's work and the world's struggles.

Address to the Couple

Dean and Jennifer, you may never become a premier or a chief, but I detect in you something of the spirit of Tommy Douglas and other great humanists. Nurture that spirit starting with each other. Part of the art of marriage is finding room for things of the spirit. So to you two I say join together in your search for the good and the beautiful in this life.

You have chosen as a theme for your marriage ceremony, the medicine wheel. The cultural symbol of the medicine wheel carries the important concept of holism. But I would like to talk about something less well recognized – its flexibility. There have been 343 ancient stone medicine wheels uncovered and dated on the Great Plains of North America situated from Wanuskewen, near Saskatoon, to the Gulf of Mexico. A small minority are divided into four with spokes emanating from a central hub. Some are not divided at all. Some are divided without reference to a central hub or spokes. Others are divided with a great many spokes. One, situated in the Bow Valley of southern Alberta is divided 26 ways. The lesson I take from this is that there are many ways of seeing things holistically. For example, it is sometimes thought that the medicine wheel depicts the four seasons. But the Woodland Cree, on whose traditional territory we now stand, had six seasons, not four.

So I encourage the two of you to merge your experiences and knowledge in creating your own personal medicine wheel to help guide and plan your life. That medicine wheel will change as you gain in knowledge and wisdom, and will become a treasure for your children, your grandchildren and even your great-grandchildren.

Moment of Silence

Dean was greatly influenced by the teachings and guidance of the late Jimmy Roberts. So it is that this couple would like a moment of silence to remember all of the great elders and teachers who are unable to be with them for this ceremony. They are with us in spirit.

Betrothal

This ceremony today is a most serious covenant made before all of us as witnesses. From this relationship has come the nurture, strength, and, yes, love you two need to face the world. Those qualities will be multiplied. For this, we all celebrate.

Officiant: I now ask you in the presence of these witnesses to declare, repeating after me:

Groom: I do solemnly declare that I do not know of any lawful impediment why I, Dean *****, may not be joined in matrimony to Jennifer *****.

Bride: I do solemnly declare that I do not know of any lawful impediment why I, Jennifer *****, may not be joined in matrimony to Dean *****.

Exchange of Vows

Officiant: Jennifer, on this special day in the presence of these witnesses, do you take Dean to be your lawfully wedded husband, to be his one true love, to stand by his side in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, and to cherish him from this day forth?

Dean, on this special day in the presence of these witnesses, do you take Jennifer to be your lawfully wedded wife, to be her one true love, to stand by her side in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, and to cherish her from this day forth?

Sand Ceremony

At this time I would like this couple's three children, Chasity, Daniel and Danica, to each take a container of sand and together pour their sand in a woven pattern. The different colours represent their different origins. The pattern represents the beauty and the potential of this blended family.

Exchange of Rings

In keeping with the aboriginal tradition that the circle represents wholeness and is never ending, the ring symbolizes the unbroken circle of endless love. The custom of wearing it on the third finger of the left hand is based on the ancient Greek belief that a vein from that finger leads directly to the heart. Thus, let the ring become a symbol of your love and friendship.

Ring bearer, do you have the rings?

Dean, please take the ring meant for Jennifer and place it on the third finger of her left hand and repeat after me:

I give you this ring as a symbol of our love and unity.

Jennifer, please take the ring meant for Dean and place it on the third finger of his left hand repeating after me:

I give you this ring / as a symbol of our love and unity.

Pronouncement

Officiant: Dean and Jennifer have agreed to go forward in a life together, seeking an even richer and deeper relationship. They have pledged themselves to seek joy and conquer sorrow together. Therefore, I, Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson, by virtue of the power vested in me, by the Marriage Act of the Province of Saskatchewan and the Humanist Association of Canada, do hereby pronounce you Dean ***** and Jennifer ******, to be husband and wife.

Dean, you may kiss the bride.

Let all others honour them and the threshold of their house. May they find peace, happiness and fulfillment in their union. Do you, the families and friends of these two, bestow your blessings on their union and their home?

Spoken Meditation

I wish you all happiness; but my wishes cannot give it, nor can it come from outward circumstances. It can only come from yourselves, from the love within you.

You cannot choose what changes and chances are to befall you in the coming years, but you can choose the spirit with which you will meet them. Let it be the spirit of the noble vows in which you have just made your pledges, each to the other.

If you take these vows not as a form, but as a bond of honor, which you will keep with unswerving loyalty, then whatever may come, you will have inward happiness... which no pleasures of themselves can give, no sorrows take away. Then, the whole of life that awaits you, will be an abiding security to yourselves, and a welcome example to others.

Signing of the Register

[Jennifer and Dean prepare to sign the marriage documents. The Bridesmaid and the Best Man accompany them to witness their signatures.]

Please rise to honour Mr. and Mrs. Roberts with an honour drum song.