

Style+Soul



Teen thriller "The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones." **C5**



When he e-mailed "friend," she knew he meant more. **Love, C3**

LOVE

BY KELLIE PATRICK GATES ♥ FOR THE INQUIRER



ED HILLE / Staff Photographer

BEHIND THE SCENES

Officiant

Inglis House Chaplain Nancy Selinger, Philadelphia

Venue

Founders Hall at Inglis House

Catering

Inglis House

Music

DJ Frank, a friend of the family who does music on the side

Dress

Borrowed from the bride's sister Wendy

Flowers

Mindy's sisters Wendy and Julie purchased and arranged silks from Michaels.

DO YOU HAVE THE DATE?

Tell us in a short e-mail — at least six weeks before your ceremony — why we should feature your love story. Send it to weddings@phillynews.com.

Unfortunately, we can't personally respond to all submissions. If your story is chosen, you will be contacted.

'Love' Retrospective

Was your story featured in the "Love" column? We'd love to hear what's happened since you said "I do."

If you're interested in being featured in a "Love" retrospective, e-mail your triumphs, challenges, and adventures to weddings@phillynews.com, with your contact information.

Hello there

It started with art and music.

Mindy and Craig don't remember what got them talking in recreational therapy class. Craig, now 39, was definitely drawn to her smile and her eyes.

"They are mysterious, and she looks right into you," he said.

Mindy didn't think about dating Craig at first. She liked him — especially his sense of humor and his smarts. But she hadn't considered dating a possibility in a very long time.

"I got into a car accident when I was 22," said Mindy, now 41. "I'm a C6 quadriplegic."

Mindy had lived with her sister Wendy in Hamilton, N.J., since their mother passed away when Mindy was 9. Mindy was studying hospitality management when the accident occurred. She tried taking classes again afterward, but they proved difficult.

Four years ago, Mindy and Wendy put Mindy on the waiting list at Inglis House — a residence for people with disabilities who can't live on their own, but are not retirement age — so Mindy could have a more independent life.

Mindy moved to Inglis in April 2011, and two weeks later, Craig did.

Craig also uses a wheelchair — always has. "I have spina bifida," he said. "I'm a level 3, paralyzed from the waist down."

For most of his life, Craig lived with his parents in South Philadelphia. His father died in 1990. About three years ago, his mother was diagnosed with cancer. As she weakened, she and Craig moved into a nursing home. Living there was fine when he could be with his mother, but after she died, he wanted to be with people his own age. Craig had also given up on

MINDY ORTH & CRAIG STEPHENS

July 20, 2013, in Philadelphia

love. In his late 30s, he reasoned that if he hadn't found someone by then, it wasn't going to happen.

Mindy's beautiful eyes made him want to try.

Too shy to say anything in person, Craig e-mailed Mindy through Facebook that May. He was glad to have a friend like her, he said.

Despite the word *friend*, Mindy knew what the e-mail meant. She saw Craig, and their relationship, in a new way. The two began spending more time together — and then way more time. "From 9:30 a.m. until quarter-till-9 at night," Mindy said.

Besides the art and music classes, the couple enjoy dates at Olive Garden and other places they can zip to in their chairs. But they are frequently found talking beneath the large trees on the Inglis grounds, or by the courtyard fountain.

How does forever sound?

In the summer of 2011, Craig kept telling Mindy he wanted to get married, and she kept asking if he was sure.

The next February, on Mindy's birthday, he asked her sister Wendy for her blessing.

Inglis took a group of residents to Atlantic City in August 2012, and Mindy wheeled into a jewelry store. "I thought I was just looking," she said. But when she spotted a ring she loved, Craig bought it.

September brought Inglis' King Games. It's the community's version of the Olympics, with events



Mindy Orth is escorted into the ceremony by her brother-in-law Rich Coia.

including bowling, wheelchair soccer, the home run derby, and Mindy's favorite, the wheelchair slalom.

After the games, "Chariots of Fire" played and the awards ceremony began.

At the end of the ceremony, activities director Janet — with whom Craig was in cahoots — asked the more than 200 Inglis residents, friends, and family members to face the back of the room.

"What?" Mindy said. "There isn't anything happening." "Look at Craig," Wendy whispered.

Craig had the engagement ring in his hand. "Will you marry me?" he asked.

"Yes!" Mindy said, and everyone cheered. "It was the best day ever," she says.

It was so them

Mindy's sisters Wendy and Julie, and Craig's ex-sister-in-law Erin — with whom he remains very close — decorated Inglis' Founders Hall in lavender, green, and ivory.

"I wore [Wendy's] wedding dress," Mindy said. "I wish I could wear that dress every

day — I'd sleep in that dress."

"The support we got was great," Craig said.

Mindy entered the ceremony to Pachelbel's *Canon in D*.

Craig waited with the Inglis chaplain under a flowered trellis. At first, the couple were on either side of Chaplain Nancy. But "we both wheeled down a bit — about half a yard — and came together," Craig said.

He reached over and placed his hand on Mindy's, and she beamed.

The couple didn't have a first dance — Craig doesn't like the spotlight so much — but they had a wedding song: Savage Garden's "Truly, Madly, Deeply."

Craig, Mindy and their 55 guests celebrated with dinner and a DJ.

Awestruck

It's hard to explain the "blur" of emotions Mindy felt coming down the aisle. "It was 'Wow!' It was pretty cool," she said. "It was just happiness."

Craig said until he saw Mindy, he was calm and relaxed, talking to his best man, Lamont — an Inglis staffer. When he saw her, the excitement of the day took hold. "Seeing her coming down the aisle in her dress ... she made a beautiful bride. And I thought, 'Pretty soon, I'll be married.'"

Discretionary spending

A bargain: The couples' champagne flutes were a gift from Gigi, the administrative assistant to Inglis' co-executive directors.

The splurge: Their families hired Inglis House to cater a full dinner.

The future

The couple hopes to someday move into one of Inglis House's few double rooms. None are available yet.