Orchestrated by Faith

John and Sue were wed on August 29, 1970, at Mount Calvary Lutheran

John and Sue (Romberg) Jaeckel (Milwaukee Lutheran Class of 1965) are living proof that music, faith, love, and generosity can intertwine to shape a remarkable legacy. Their journey unfolds like a classic melody, guided by God's hand, whether they noticed it or not.

It all began with a shared love of music. In the spring of 1959, as sixth graders, Sue joined the Milwaukee CONNtinental Cadet Band, where John was an active participant. Their paths crossed again in January 1961, when Sue transferred to Mount Calvary Lutheran School, where John attended.

John went home to his parents and announced, "There's a new girl in my class, and I think I know her." Sue's response was quick-witted: "Well, we've been playing in the band together for two years. It's about time you noticed!"

The two were confirmed and graduated from Mount Calvary side by side. At the guidance of Pastor Elmer Neitzel, both chose Milwaukee Lutheran for high school, where their passion for band continued. Their friendship blossomed, but by sophomore year, their paths diverged. In hindsight, both agree: it was all part of God's plan.

Looking back, their days at Milwaukee Lutheran seem like a different time, with over 1,200 students filling the halls. From the band and choir rooms to math and science classes, their education was never short on phenomenal teachers who invested in their students' lives. When Sue later needed help with college math problems, Mr. Hammes welcomed her back without hesitation. When John secured the lead in the school musical but lacked a ride, Mr. Balko made sure he got to rehearsal and home again. Years later, John and Sue honored that lasting bond by attending Mr. Balko's memorial service at Valparaiso University. The impact of their mentors still resonates.

Graduation from Milwaukee Lutheran came in 1965. John attended the Milwaukee Institute of Technology, now MATC, to study Automotive Technology. Sue went on to attend UW-Milwaukee to study Medical Technology and eventually interned at St. Luke's Hospital.

After graduation, their connection lingered, but they drifted apart as two ships passing in the night. In early 1968 John returned to Milwaukee from Peoria, IL, enrolling in fall at the UW-Milwaukee to study mechanical engineering. Fate, or perhaps God's orchestration, intervened when they unexpectedly crossed paths at UW-Milwaukee. John asked, "If I were to call, would you go out with me?" Sue agreed, but John forgot one crucial detail: how to get ahold of her. Determined, John tracked her down by calling Sue's mother. Following that phone call Sue's youngest sister, Sandy told her mom, "if John finds her they will get married.

Their first date in August 1969 quickly turned into conversations about marriage. On New Year's Eve, they were engaged. On August 29, 1970, they were wed at Mount Calvary Lutheran in a ceremony filled with music. Once again, God's hand was unmistakable.

The Jaeckels are, without question, a legacy family. John's grandmother and Sue's mother both attended Lutheran High. Their daughters, Anne and Julie, continued the tradition at Milwaukee Lutheran. Faith is the thread that binds them, woven through generations. Anne now teaches young musicians as a Christian school band director, while Julie, a chemical engineer, leads a global team of scientists and engineers who support innovation across her employer's businesses and has served as her congregation's president.

In the early years, John and Sue lived modestly, but their desire to give back never wavered. Even when money was tight, they set aside a portion of every paycheck. When Martin Luther High School's development began, Sue personally called the community to gather financial support. They repeated that generosity for Lake Country Lutheran. Sue broke new ground as one of the first women on the WeTeachTruth Board of Directors, and later, its first female president.

See the Jaeckel's in "A Thousand Generations," a short film about generational impact from the 2026 Gala.

Why have they championed Lutheran high schools so fiercely? Sue puts it simply: "We always felt the high schools were one of the best ways to give stability to young people, because they might not have it when they become adults. If you can support that, all the better."

John echoes that sentiment. "I truly believe we were given money as a gift from God. We never imagined we'd be in a position to give, so we're trying to be good stewards."

Good stewards, indeed. John and Sue are committed to supporting Milwaukee Lutheran and WeTeachTruth today, tomorrow, and through endowment gifts that will echo their generosity for generations to come.

Music, faith, love, and generosity: these are the notes that compose the Jaeckel legacy. Their story is a testament to what can happen when passion meets purpose, and when ordinary lives are lived with extraordinary faith.