

# OPINION

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A bouquet

# A bouquet for Emma

Contributed photo

**M**ay 7 saw a long-awaited family celebration as one of my daughters got married to an amazing man. The bride's best friends and sister stood up for her, and the groom's best friends and brothers for him.

Coming from a family of six siblings and being very social, Jenner had some hard decisions to make for her entourage. She chose based on what she and that person had gone through together (both good and mischievous), on their closeness and how long they had known each other. The groom did the same.

It's difficult not to hurt those not chosen for the wedding party and still have the support around the bride and groom that's needed when one gets married. You want to include everyone in the excitement, but with five people standing up for bride and groom, we had to have some limits.

Jenner chose three of her BFFs (best friends forever), her cousin from France and one of her sisters. All were excited to be invited.

Her sister Emma has been going to school at North Island College and living with some dear friends. When asked if she would stand up for her sister, the shrieks of happiness on the other end of the line told it all.

The wedding was planned for over a year, so there was a lot of time to organize. Selecting the location, date, colours, gowns and suits was an exciting undertaking for all of us.

Emma was included in the planning and confided to me that she hoped to catch the bouquet.

As we went through the planning process, from the bridesmaids' dresses to flowers and hair, all were given an equal voice, no matter their age, where they lived, if they were married, single, pregnant or had a developmental disability.

When the maid of honour planned the gals' stag, they were all invited and all attended – no one was left out. They celebrated with a gals getaway, had a sleepover, went out for dinner, had manicures and stayed up and talked to the wee hours.

The week before the wedding, Emma came home from college and got really involved. Being a pretty organized person, I had "to-do" lists for everyone. Emma's was just as long as everyone else's and in some ways was more intricate, as she is really good at detail.

The night before the wedding, we had an open house with friends, family and neighbours. All my kids took on major roles in helping host the event and welcomed our guests with enthusiasm.

After the guests left, the female portion of the wedding party all stayed over. The next day, we awoke to my chef friend making lovely food and drink, and hairdressers and estheticians setting up for some relaxing pampering.

With a flurry of nail polish and hair extensions, hairspray and high heels, soon the time to leave was upon us.

The knowledge that my husband, who died almost 16 months ago, wasn't going to be able to walk our daughter down the aisle was on most of our minds, so we did what we could to have as

relaxing a day as possible.

Just like a good memory, he is always with us – and truly was that day – by organizing the only half hour of non-rain that day for the outdoor wedding.

As noted by those who know our family, we have quite a dry sense of humour. In my speech at the wedding, I remarked that, along with amazing support from community, family and friends, our ability to see humour in disaster has certainly helped lighten the load.

One of our sons was the emcee. When preparing his speaking notes, he asked Emma if he could share a story that took place when our family was preparing for another family event, their father's funeral, Jan. 30, 2010.

My parents used to give Jack a bottle of scotch on special occasions, and that Christmas was no different. On the night of his funeral, our family was getting ready to go to the celebration of life and, before we left, I suggested we each have a little dram of Jack's Christmas scotch.

As Emma was 20 at the time, she was familiar with champagne and wine for toasts at special occasions.

As we toasted her father, Emma raised her dram and drank it down.

She smacked the glass on the counter and yelled "WOOW!" We all laughed, of course, and when our son asked what it tasted like, Emma responded "It tastes like FIRE!"

Out of the mouths of babes . . .

At the wedding, our son introduced the wedding party and said he felt blessed to be brought up with someone who sees life as Emma does.

I think we all feel the same way. And all who get to know her realize she sees life through a different lens. She shares how she feels sometimes more exuberantly than we may, but she gets her point across.

An example of that happened on the wedding day, as apparently wearing high heels in grass on a rainy day is not her favourite thing. Who would blame her?

As the wedding went on and speeches continued, everyone remarked at how lovely everyone was in the wedding party, how grown up our girls were and how blessed we were to have such an amazing family.

Then, a little more magic took place. When it was time for the bride to toss the bouquet, all the single gals squished onto the dancefloor. Guess who caught the bouquet?

We have never seen Emma so excited. She is now interviewing for good candidates to marry.

An amazing event and an amazing family. We are blessed, indeed.

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