



The Wedding Dress

December 27, 2022 By [Shawn Decker](#)

Earlier this month I had the honor of officiating my niece's wedding. It's the fifth time I've officiated, and I guess it means something that my loved ones trust me with a hot mic on such an important day.

The wedding was beautiful! And it had all the things that make a wedding a wedding- the power flickered a couple of times before the wedding party waltzed down to the venue, family scrambled to make sure everything was as close to perfect as human hands are capable of... but, above all else, what made it a success was the pure joy of people gathering together to celebrate a couples' love story.

I'm so happy that my niece, Katie, found a loving partner to share her journey with. And I'm happy I didn't screw anything up as "the master of festivities".

After the ceremony and well into the reception, I had so many touching conversations and interactions with family and friends, many of whom I have not seen in years. I was sure to repeatedly check in on my dad, who has been doing well since Mom passed in June. Of course, it hasn't been easy, but I feel so fortunate that he's been willing and able to share his feelings with me, which have- depending on his mood- been sprinkled with tears of both sadness and joy.

The couple had a memorial table set up, and a picture of Mom sat right beside a photo of my dad's little brother, "Uncle Mook", as we affectionately called him. My niece and, more importantly, the bride in this tale calls me "Uncle Poo". The lineage of that nickname dates back to my grandfather, who called me "Shawn Poo", which I believe was an homage to Winnie the Pooh or the damage I did to my grandparents bathroom as a toddler. Mom called me "Pookie", and all through high school my big brother's friends called me "Poo!" After the great honor of being crowned Homecoming King, they upgraded me to "King Poo!"

But the ultimate upgrade has certainly been my role as Uncle Poo. The funicle, the drunkle. Anytime I think of Uncle Mook, my soul smiles in knowing that I'm now in the role he played when I was younger. Anytime he was around my dad, their laughter permeated the household. Plus, as I told my cousins (Uncle Mook's kids), it was Uncle Mook who introduced me to professional wrestling. So it's no surprise that, when my niece, Katie, was younger, I'd go over to my brother's house and watch pay-per-views with the family. I even took her to her first live event, where she screamed out her appreciation for her first crush, John Cena.

And, yes, I worked Cena into the ceremony, but it was only to put Tony over big time with the

crowd.

During the reception I had a wonderful chat with one of my mom's friends, Vickie. As we talked about the day, the couple and, of course, our memories of Mom, she told me the most incredible story that came as no surprise. Vickie said that mom visited her about a month before she passed. She was feeling really rough then and wasn't leaving the house and didn't want anyone to see her in a weakened state. I was both surprised- and happy- that she'd made the effort to see someone she really cared about. Turns out, her visit was to inform Vickie that she wasn't going to be making it out to any formal events in the near future. I'm sure that was the reason she allowed herself for the visit when, in actuality, she was simply wanting to say a final goodbye to someone she loves.

Vickie told me that Mom had brought a dress with her.

"No, Pam, you keep it!" Vickie said, knowing full well when Mom is gifting you something you're taking it. Vickie relented, found a spot in her closet for the dress and continued with what would be her last conversation in person with my mom.

Fast forward six months or so, and my niece's wedding snuck up on Vickie. She told me that she began to frantically look around her house for something nice to wear and had forgotten about mom's gift until she sifted through her closet. When she put it on it actually fit... and perfectly at that! As she told me this story, we both cried. We shared a few hugs and we acknowledged what was one of mom's finest attributes.

She really looked out for the people in her life.

A few days before the wedding, I was starting to get nervous. Part of me wished that I could watch the wedding from the back row and be the kind of drunkle that makes people laugh with his goofball dance moves at the reception. Of course, I knew my role was different, and I really didn't want to carry my nervousness into the day. I thought about Mom, and I felt like all I could hear coming from her spirit was, "Be cool. Be yourself. It'll be fine, Pookie."

And that really helped me put things into perspective.

And it was fine- even better, actually... it was truly joyous. Ultimately, I was just one more person in a room filled with love for the couple. I just had the hot mic, that's all.

At the reception, Katie's younger sister- by a decade!- was telling me how much she loves her new brother-in-law. They go Thrift store shopping together and simply enjoy each other's company. Which is a nice thing when that company is becoming family! She said something about Tony that I said about my own dad when I was her age, and that is that he provides some comedic relief in her sister's life. Laughter, in so many ways, has been an important component in my family's life, so adding another ham to the "family", as I call us, is certainly a plus.

Welp, I began writing this before Christmas. And now it's after. And maybe I'll write a post about the first Christmas without Mom, but maybe not. If I don't, then I'll just let you know that the family

gathered... we laughed... Mom's spirit was there.

As it will always be.

Hope this finds you well as we all approach a new calendar year and a new set of adventures. I don't have any advice beyond the generic and your needs may be different than my own. I will say that, for as long as I'm here for it, I want to be here for it. And if I've unlocked one gift for myself this year it's been to live in the present. And I really think that helped when it came to being there for my niece on her special day.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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