Whether they shared a class, were paired up for a project, or crossed paths while letting loose on a Friday night, countless couples have met and fallen in love during their time as Catholic University students. As the following stories show, for some, college romances last a lifetime.

**Joe and Elissa (Milone) Metz
50 Years of Family, Faith, and Service**

Joe and Elissa Metz hold many important memories from their time at CUA. Joe still remembers how nervous he was when his parents drove him to campus for the first time in 1958. Elissa remembers gathering with classmates on the University Mall after President John F. Kennedy was shot in 1963. And both of them can remember the class project that resulted in a life-changing romance.

The year was 1963. Joe was a politics major in his senior year and Elissa A. Milone was a speech audiologist and pathology graduate student in what was then known as the Speech and Drama Department. As part of her program, Elissa was required to administer a number of hearing tests. “I saw her walk by and asked one of my fellow classmates, ‘Who is that girl?’” Joe remembers. “I signed up for a test because I wanted to meet her.”

After that, Joe and Elissa would occasionally see each other around campus. They became friends once Joe, who was by this time pursuing his master’s degree, took a job as a tour guide in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (which had not yet achieved basilica status). Elissa had a job at the Shrine selling memorial plaques. She would go to noon Mass every day and leave her books at his guide desk. Occasionally they would grab lunch in the cafeteria together.

After growing closer and eventually dating for a year, the couple got married Aug. 14, 1965, at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre, N.Y. Many of their Catholic University classmates and friends attended.

In the years since, Joe and Elissa have had many personal and professional successes. Elissa taught speech and hearing in three D.C. public schools. Joe earned his doctorate in politics from CUA and his law degree from Fordham University. He worked as a professor and as a director of a national pension and investment consulting company. Together the couple raised four children.

Joe and Elissa believe the faith formation from their time at CUA has helped them in life. Their biggest struggle came when their oldest son, Joe Jr., was hit by a car in 1989. At the time, he was a 22-year-old student at Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore. He died instantly. “I think without our faith, with the loss of our child, we would have fallen apart,” Elissa said. “That has kept us strong and kept us going.”

As a living tribute to their son, the couple took a working pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, where they served ill pilgrims. Ministering to the suffering proved to be “a cure for the heart,” Elissa said. That trip has become a yearly tradition for the couple. This year, they plan on going twice — as nonworking pilgrims in May with 350 people, and again in August to do volunteer work.

“Our 50th anniversary is Aug. 14 and we’re going to celebrate it at Lourdes with a Mass there. Hopefully our children and grandchildren will be there with us,” Joe said. “Our 50th anniversary is Aug. 14 and we’re going to celebrate it at Lourdes with a Mass there. Hopefully our children and grandchildren will be there with us,” Joe said.

Today, Joe and Elissa are very active in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. They serve as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, and RCIA instructors, and they have helped lead the diocesan fundraising appeal.

They also have remained active with the University. The couple stays in contact with friends from the University; during the last 50 years, they have helped lead the football team, I immediately had 50 friends,” he said. “I think without our faith, with the loss of our child, we would have fallen apart,” Elissa said. “That has kept us strong and kept us going.”

Looking back, Joe says his years at CUA were some of the best of his life. He found the faith formation he needed and the wife he loves. “We were young and the campus was a happy place for us,” he said. “No matter what you do in life, your mind always goes back to those days and it’s more than a university. It’s a real home and you never lose it.”

**Louis Ruggiero and Rosanna Scotto
A New York Power Couple**

For Rosanna Scotto and Louis Ruggiero, college was a time to explore their individual interests and pursue passions. Rosanna, a theatre major, spent much of her time in Hartke Theatre auditioning and rehearsing. Louis, an accounting major, was more interested in sports. “My parents dropped me off in August for preseason practice and when I met the football team, I immediately had 50 friends,” he said. “I’ve remained friendly with a lot of those guys over the years, which is a real testament to the school.”

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Louis grew up in Queens and I grew up in Brooklyn,” Rosanna said. “I think New Yorkers can always find one another in the crowd. It’s like a magnet.”
Though they became friends, the couple didn’t start dating until the following year. Their first date was the CUA homecoming dance in 1978.

The couple continued to date for eight years, during which time Rosanna moved to Atlanta to work at television station WSB. Louis attended Hofstra University School of Law in Hempstead, N.Y. After two years in Georgia, Rosanna returned to New York and got a job at a television station, where she worked as a reporter for several years.

She was laid off from that job, on what was coincidentally Louis’s birthday. It was also the day he proposed to her.

The pair wed on Sept. 13, 1986, at St. Bernadette Church in New York City. Their reception was at the Pierre Hotel.

Louis and Rosanna have two children — a daughter who works in the music business and a son who is currently in college.

After years of mutual support and encouragement, Rosanna and Louis are highly successful in their respective fields. Louis is an attorney in private practice and Rosanna, a journalist, is the cohost of Good Day New York, a morning television show.

The couple has returned to CUA several times, including in 2009 when Rosanna was honored with an alumni achievement award.

The following year, she hosted the awards ceremony. Louis is an attorney in private practice and Rosanna, a journalist, is the cohost of Good Day New York, a morning television show.

The couple says they look back on their time at CUA as a happy, though challenging, period. "Graduate school is pretty intense, so I think it was amazing having the Shrine right there," Mary said. "My favorite place to go was one of the little chapels in the Shrine, the smallest one in the basement. It was a wonderful place to go to be at peace."

Since graduating, Mary and Joe have traveled back to the University for social work events or to attend CUA basketball games. Recently, they took one of their sons on a tour of the campus.

"Catholic has always been — especially for me — a special part of our family because so many of us went there," Mary said. "I think it’s a very special place."

Looking back on their marriage so far, Joe says he is amazed how fast it’s gone — "It’s like a whirlwind," he said.

When it comes to marital success, the pair believe it’s important to take a relaxed approach to life’s challenges. "Don’t have any expectations and roll with it," Mary said. "Life is not meant to be easy, but with a good sense of humor and a more laid-back attitude, all will be OK."

The Newlyweds
Four alumni couples who have recently tied the knot reflect on their relationships.

Joe and Mary (Murphy) Petrizzo An Unexpected Partnership

When Joe Petrizzo enrolled in the National Catholic School of Social Service in 1990, he never expected to meet his future wife. At the time, Joe was a brother in the Conventual Franciscans and had taken his temporary vows. After studying at Queen’s College in New York and working for several years, he was directed to pursue his master’s in social work at CUA.

While there, he met Mary Murphy, who had a strong familial relationship with CUA — three of her brothers also attended. After earning her bachelor’s degree in politics from CUA in 1987, Mary was back to pursue a master’s degree in social work. In her second year of graduate studies, she was in charge of welcoming new students — including Joe — to the program.

The social work students were a tight-knit group and it wasn’t long before Mary and Joe established a connection. “We were in the same group of friends and we would hang out at the frats,” Mary said. “It was a good friend.”

A year and a half after Joe entered the program, Mary had graduated and was working at the National Council on Aging. Joe was questioning whether he should remain in the Franciscans. The pair had questions about where their relationship was going. For help, they sought spiritual direction in the spring of 1992. They were instructed to use Lent as a time to pray about it and we used it really well.”

For the entirety of Lent, the pair stayed away from each other. Then, on Holy Thursday, Joe drove to Mary’s mother’s house, where he picked her up for Mass.

“He brought me this huge white Easter bunny and said, ‘We need to celebrate.’” Mary recalled. “He had made his decision, and I knew. We celebrated the Tidium and he started making plans to move into a new life.”

Leaving the Franciscans was not an easy decision, but the other friars were “extremely supportive,” Joe said. When the couple wed at Holy Trinity Church in Washington, D.C., in 1993, all the friars were there. Also in attendance were social work professors Marie Raber and Sandra Chipungu.

Today, Mary and Joe live in Silver Spring, Md., and have four children, ages 10 to 20. Joe works as the director of behavioral health at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Md., while Mary serves as the marketing manager with Holy Cross Homecare and Hospice.

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