



The Unqualified Widow: Love, Loss, and Basketball

Shirley Spires Baechtold

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Theirs was not a fairytale romance. They met in college--the basketball star with NBA ambitions and the English major who spent her weekends singing with a jazz band. Their brief romance ended when passion interfered with basketball. When, ironically, they were elected king and queen of their junior prom, they danced together and exchanged polite small talk. They graduated and went their separate ways without realizing they were meant to be together.

By the time they met again, he was playing in the NBA. After a year in Baltimore as a first round draft choice of the Bullets, he had been traded to the New York Knicks and was excited about playing in Madison Square Garden. He found her in Dayton, Ohio, singing and playing piano in clubs and working during the day to pay the rent. But the timing was wrong, and they went their separate ways once again, never realizing they were meant to be together.

Another year passed before they met again, not really by chance. Finally, the magic was right for romance. Shirley Baechtold tells her remarkable story of growing love and five decades with her husband. He was not supposed to die and leave her to play the piano alone at midnight. She wanted to do everything over, sing "Our Love Is Here to Stay" to help him go to sleep. In the do-over, she would convince him to make different decisions about his cancer treatment, and this time they would get it right. But there are no do-overs, and she still had memories to sort. The Unqualified Widow portrays romance and tragedy with humor and wit. Discover hope and inspiration from an unqualified widow.



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