

## **THIS IS ONEIDA VALENTINE'S DAY**

As I observe the young people on our campus who are “dating,” I cannot help but think of the memories I have of the “dating” time Angie and I spent on this campus. We started “dating” in middle school. Would you believe Angie is a couple of years older than I am and she chased me all over this campus? I guess I will need to be sure to hide the Western Recorder from her after penning that last sentence. Perhaps this next sentence or two will help dig me out of this hole I have dug for myself. Angie is an amazing wife, mother, and person. We met and fell in love at Oneida, and now continue to love each other more and more. Young love is such a fickle thing, but it potentially can grow into an amazing, lifelong thing.

We recently had a Valentine’s Day celebration on our campus. It was funny to watch the gift-giving amongst our young and in love students. Our activities director and food service director put on a festive event at lunch. There was music, good food, and gift exchanging. Our students seemed to enjoy the event and hopefully appreciated the efforts of our people who made it happen.

I received a gift or two, some from my own children and Angie. My children are still at the age where they seem to think I am pretty cool for some reason. The gift that was most surprising to me was a gift from one of our international young men. The gift was a rose with a hand-written note that said, “I just want to thank you that you accepted me to graduate at this school. THANK YOU!!” That same student also sent Angie a rose with a note that said, “Thank you for always smiling and having a positive attitude. When I see you smile it makes me happy and makes me want to be like you.” We were so touched by the fact that this young man took the time and went to the expense to say thank you.

As I continue to observe our young people and the apparent ups and downs in their OBI relationships, I can’t help but wonder how many of our “dating” couples will one day be married, love each other unconditionally, raise a family together, and hopefully live a life of service to our Lord. I also wonder how many faculty and staff members from the late 1980’s and early 1990’s wondered if Angie and I would one day marry. By my count, we currently have 10 faculty and staff married couples who met at Oneida. Perhaps there is and always has been something in the water around here.

Scripture says we must love the Lord more than anyone or anything else. Those verses in the gospel of Luke are so challenging, yet so powerful. Hopefully we are doing a good job of teaching our young people not only to love one another, but to love Jesus with all their heart, soul, and mind.

Oneida is a great place to find both the love of Christ and the love of friends and that special someone. Take time today to tell your special someone how much you love them, but always remember Christ loves us all more than we could ever love ourselves or anyone else.



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