



JEFF WISOFF AND TAMMY JERNIGAN

starstruck love

Jeff Wisoff and Tammy Jernigan have kept their love growing through time and space. By LeeAnne Jones

Flowers are always a nice gesture. But having a bouquet delivered to your wife back on Earth while doing a spacewalk to assemble the International Space Station—well, that's stellar. Jeff Wisoff was a Stanford grad student when he introduced himself to undergrad Tammy Jernigan in the Physics Department. Soon after, they started dating.

Turns out their stars were aligned in more ways than one, as both Tammy and Jeff eventually wound up in NASA's astronaut program. From 1991 to 1999, Tammy flew five Space Shuttle missions, and from 1993 to 2000, Jeff flew four, during which they ran experiments, tested jetpacks, launched satellites—and, of course, admired our blue planet from space. Though the couple never explored that final frontier together, they took their own giant leap in 1999, when they got married in between missions.

That didn't make the stress of space travel any easier on them, however. "When you're in space, you're focused on your job. You don't want to mess up what you're doing," says Jeff. "It's always harder to watch someone you love in that window of danger."

But even though one spouse was floating 200 miles above the Earth and the other remained on terra firma, the couple found ways to stay in touch. They exchanged e-mails every day and organized private videoconferences.

After retiring from NASA, the couple—each boasting a Ph.D. in physics—took positions at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where Jeff oversees the operations of the world's largest laser and Tammy is the senior advisor to the laboratory's director. As busy administrators on a large campus, they rarely see each other at work, but lunch together at least once a month is a must.

The former astronauts have also taken on another great adventure: parenting. Jeff and

Tammy spend much of their time with their two sons, attending basketball games and Boy Scout campouts. It's not the adrenaline rush of space flight, but that doesn't mean raising their children has been any less rewarding.

"I think marriage is enriched by children," says Tammy. "It's an enormous statement about the future, I think, to have children. You have to have faith in your future and your marriage."

And about those flowers? Jeff sent them during his final mission (Tammy's was just prior), and they arrived just in time for a party that Tammy hosted.

"Everyone was so impressed," Tammy recalls. "For all that you have on your mind getting ready to fly, arranging for flowers to be delivered while you're in space is pretty impressive." ■

He Said, She Said

What do you appreciate most about each other?

He: "Tammy is just an extraordinary lady. She's smart, she's beautiful, she's accomplished, she's driven."

She: "My husband's devotion to his family and his inherent goodness."

What's something small your spouse does for you?

He: "She puts little treats in the refrigerator, things she can hide from the kids—cookies, candies, and sweets that I love."

She: "He brings me coffee upstairs in the morning."

Does your partner have an annoying habit or tic that you've learned to embrace?

He: "She's close to perfection."

She: "Now you're going for brownie points."