

LAURA

Slyman & KEVIN Brown

PHOTOGRAPHY by
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ARTICLE by CARRIE McCONKEY

In the spring of 2015, Laura Slyman, owner, broker and Realtor at Slyman Real Estate, corralled her two sons — Keylor, 10 and Cole, 7 — into their SUV. She was on her way to a crawfish boil, and she knew the boys would have a blast digging through the messy, but delicious, mix of boiled vegetables and shellfish. She had been invited by a Louisiana couple who became her clients after moving to East Tennessee. As she made her way to the event, the Knoxville native had no idea that romance would be a lagniappe to the authentic Creole meal.

At the party, Kevin Brown was enjoying the festivities. “I remember catching eyes with Laura throughout the day,” he said. Born and raised in Oak Ridge, Kevin had been friends with the event hosts since high school. When he was finally introduced to Laura, the moment was fleeting. Laura’s youngest son Cole ran to her in tears, distraught about a water balloon fight that had gone awry. She quickly excused herself for mom duty, but the connection had been made. “I left without her number,” said Kevin, “but luckily she Facebook-stalked me.”

After they began dating, the couple’s lives fell into sync. Kevin’s night job at UPS gave him the time to dabble in residential construction projects during the day, which dovetailed perfectly with Laura’s skill set. Within a year, the two invested in a foreclosed property and began a rehab project together.

Kevin’s bond with Keylor and Cole also developed. Young at heart himself, he enjoyed sharing their boyhood pursuits such as bonus-room football and basketball games. For Laura, the situation seemed ideal ... nearly too perfect. “I truly never thought I would get married again,” she said. “My life was fairly complicated with young kids and running the business. It was really important to me that the boys always knew they were my first priority.”

As the years passed, Kevin and Laura’s first renovated home led to the couple opening 2B Properties, a real estate investment/rehab company. Kevin’s indoor sports activities with Laura’s growing sons evolved into mountain biking and rounds of golf, and Laura began to see that a future together was inevitable. “It took seven years before I realized ‘the other shoe’ wasn’t going to drop, and that Kevin really was my perfect match,” said

the long-time Real Estate agent. “Getting married was our natural progression; Kevin was an integral part of the kids’ lives, and I couldn’t imagine not having him as a forever partner.”

With busy lives at work and school and more family friends, and business associates than the East Tennessee couple could count, Laura and Kevin pondered the logistics of their wedding day. “The answer became clear,” said Laura. “We eloped—as a family.”

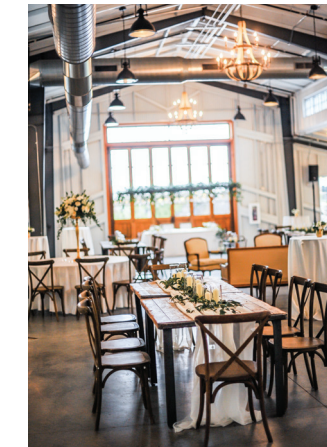
Kevin, Laura and the now teen-aged boys traveled to nearby Asheville, North Carolina, to hold a private wedding ceremony at Biltmore Estate on Friday, November 4, 2022. Relishing a long weekend together, the family headquartered at The Inn on Biltmore Estate while dining, sightseeing and exploring the 8,000-acre property. “The environment was magical, decorated for the Christmas holiday just days before. “It was so meaningful to just have it be the four of us,” said Laura. “No outside stressors ... a beautiful setting ... it was so easy, fun and intimate. It truly was the perfect day.”

Their union having been made official, the family was ready to share their joy with friends and loved ones. A reception for 200 was planned at The Quarry Venue in West Knoxville.

Early in the evening on April 8, 2023, the elegant location was abloom with the crisp freshness of springtime. While a video of Laura and Kevin’s wedding played, guests moved among multiple buffet islands and lingered indecisively over six varieties of melt-in-your-mouth cupcakes. Outside under a tent strung with bistro lights lay a vast charcuterie board—unintentionally reminiscent of the crawfish boil that had brought Laura and Kevin together eight years earlier. “The entire night was so special,” said Laura. “We felt so much love from our friends and family.”

For Laura, Kevin, Keylor and Cole, now settled in West Knoxville, life finally feels complete. Merging the lives of a lifelong bachelor and a busy single mom may have seemed daunting to some, but for Kevin, the decision to enter into Laura’s “complicated life” was an uncomplicated one.

“After watching the kids grow up,” he said, “it was time for us to all grow together.”



BEHIND the SCENES

- Ceremony: Biltmore Estate
- Reception: The Quarry Venue
- Hair and Makeup: Rachel Archer-Sigmon, Grow Knoxville
- Florist: CACHEPOT
- Catering: Bistro By the Tracks
- Stationer: Wallace Paper Company
- Cupcakes: Twisted Sisters Sweets and Treats
- Charcuterie Board: The Cheese Boss

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