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A little more than a year ago, Nathan Walton, son of basketball legend Bill Walton, was a tall guy who Grafton High School graduate Ali Bunting wistfully remembered meeting in the Los Angeles airport.

Following a whirlwind courtship that included hiking the Patagonian trail in four days and an extraordinary wedding attended by 7-foot-tall basketball players and heads of companies from around the world on the Town of Grafton farm where she grew up, Ali is now Mrs. Nathan Walton and living in Santa Monica, Calif.

When Ali Bunting married basketball great Bill Walton's son Nathan, her family's Grafton farm was the scene of a fairy-tale wedding whose guests included the famous, the powerful and the very tall.

Everyone, including her parents Jill and Richard Bunting, a Grafton physician, is still talking about the wedding, which included four days of festivities.

Xeno, former lead singer for Cheap Trick, and Joe 2.0, a rock string orchestra, played at the July 28 wedding held "under the tent and evening sky," as the invitation promised.

Fourteen children — relatives and sons and daughters of guests — dressed in ivory, with girls wearing wreaths in their hair, preceded Ali to the gazebo and pond where the ceremony was held.

After exchanging their vows, the couple rode in a horse-drawn carriage around the Bunting property. Carriages were then available for guests to ride in.

A dance was held in the barn with their animals — a horse named Hannibal, goats and white guinea hens, turkeys and ducks — on the lower level. Ali traded her white slippers for white cowboy boots when the dancing began.

“It was the most amazing wedding. It was a dream come true,” Ali said. “I could have had the wedding anywhere, but I always dreamed of getting married on my farm. I’m proud of where I grew up, and I wanted his people to meet my people.

“It was a really eclectic group — everyone from CEOs to film personalities to basketball players. We had the whole Princeton (University, where Nathan attended school) basketball team there, and his brother Luke plays for the Cleveland Cavaliers in the NBA.

“Everyone got along so well. It was like one big family. My friends are now friends with Nate’s friends and are planning things together.”

One of the biggest attractions on her parents’ farm, Ali said, was the cornfield.

“Everyone wanted to have their picture taken in front of the corn,” she said. “People from Los Angeles and New York had never seen a cornfield. They were amazed at the space we have.”

Her father picked the song to which he danced with his daughter — “Anything You Want, You’ve Got It” by Roy Orbison.

A small barn on the farm — where it’s rumored Al Capone hid out and stored booze during Prohibition — was converted into a man’s bar where cigars and liquor were available.

The roof of the structure was raised to accommodate the tall basketball players. Nate, at 6 feet, 8 inches, is the shortest of four brothers. His father is over seven feet.

Nate’s brothers, Christopher, Adam and Luke, were in the wedding party, along with Ali’s brother Rick.

Shully’s Catering of Thiensville provided the food, which was served on antique and collectible china from around the world.

Ali and her mother collected 2,500 pieces of china — enough for 250 guests — from estate sales and second-hand and antique shops.

Old postcards embellished the menus and guests received berry bowls from the china sets. Place cards were attached to old keys because “Love is the master key that opens the gates of happiness.”

The evening ended about 2 a.m. with a bonfire by the pond amid twinkling lights in the trees.

Because people were coming from as far away as China, the couple invited children.

“That’s the best thing we did,” Ali said. “That made it more casual and family oriented. The children had so much fun.”

The wedding party and many guests stayed at the Iron Horse Hotel in Milwaukee, where a

brunch was held Sunday.

The festivities began Thursday evening at a suite in Miller Park, where guests watched the Brewers play the Washington Nationals.

On Friday, the couple rented pontoon boats and 80 kayaks for guests to explore the Milwaukee River, stopping at Barnacle Bud's in Milwaukee for lunch.

The groom's dinner on Friday night was held at the Milwaukee Public Museum with hors d'ourves served in the Streets of Old Milwaukee — mini brats at the German shop, crepes with salmon at the Norwegian house and sweet potato cakes with raisin chutney and fritters near the American Indian diorama. Nate's mother is part American Indian.

Dinner was served near the butterfly garden, with desserts available in the rainforest and dinosaur exhibit.

Ali credits her mother for creating a wedding that was the best she ever attended, and her mother credits relatives and friends who added little touches that made it so special.

The wedding was planned in five months, a whirlwind of activity that matched the courtship.

The couple initially met two years ago at the Los Angeles airport while waiting for flights. They both went to Vancouver, where Nate was competing in an Ironman event and Ali was visiting her boyfriend.

Ali, who was a champion diver at the University of Texas and is a personal trainer in addition to acting and modeling in California, told Nate she always wanted to do an Ironman.

They talked about training together when they returned to California, but never did. They were dating other people at the time.

Nate broke up first and tried contacting Ali. She was dating another man when Nate started e-mailing, texting and calling her, so she didn't return his calls.

"I wanted to, but I didn't think it was right because I was dating someone else," she said.

Ali broke up with the other man, returned home to study for a personal training exam and finally answered Nate's call.

"I was supposed to be studying for the test the next day and we talked for two hours," she said.

Nate finally convinced her to meet him in New York.

“We just hit it off. He’s a crazy athlete. We ran all over New York. I think we went for a three-hour run,” Ali said.

When Nate suggested they go hiking in Patagonia, she thought he was kidding until he called her on a Monday and said he had two tickets reserved for a flight to Patagonia that Friday. Would she go?

“It was my mother who convinced me to go,” Ali said. “She said, ‘I’m in my 50s and I have a better social life than you do.’ So I packed my hiking boots and flew to the southern tip of South America.”

It was obvious there was a connection between the two, her mother said, and she felt her daughter should give him a chance.

“They spent so many hours talking on the phone, and she giggled all night before she went to meet him in New York,” Jill said.

The couple embarked on a hike in Patagonia that experienced hikers take eight days to do, but Nate wanted to do in four days.

“When you hike 65 miles in four days with someone, you really get to know that person,” Ali said.

At the end of the trip, on New Year’s Eve, Nate asked Ali to marry him.

She said, yes, then called her parents, who were celebrating the New Year with a group of close friends.

“I could hear 50 people screaming, ‘She’s getting married, she can’t get married,’” Ali said.

In January, Nate flew to Wisconsin to ask permission of her father. He proposed again in front of her parents and gave Ali a seven-carat yellow diamond ring.

“It’s unbelievable,” she said. “I asked if it was real.”

A photo of the couple resting along the Patagonian Trail was inside the envelope for the save-the-date announcement, which featured a picture of their hiking boots.

Lynn Mann, a friend of Jill’s, designed the wedding invitation which featured a painting of the couple dancing by the pond on the farm.

The couple went to Bali for their honeymoon, but it was cut short when Ali became ill. They had participated in a healing ceremony in a river. When the healer told them to drink river water,

Ali drank the water while Nate pretended to drink it.

It took her several weeks to recover.

Ali said her in-laws are down-to-earth people who are involved with many charities, including the Challenged Athletes Foundation, which enables people with disabilities to participate in sports.

“Nate and his father are biking from Los Angeles to San Francisco to raise money for the foundation. It’s an awesome family. The brothers are all really close,” Ali said. “Nate is the nicest person you could ever meet.”

Her husband ran unsuccessfully for governor of California against Arnold Schwarzenegger and will probably seek the office again, Ali said.

“Each day I learn something new about him,” Ali said. “This is a fairy tale. It’s like I’m living in a dream.”