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An age-old saying that proved true for area attorney



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February 14, a day that puts some warmth into winter in a variety of ways, embodies more than mere cases of pure puppy love, according to a prominent family law attorney.

Annette Benson, who has carved out her own legal reputation as the "most antidivorce attorney that I know," subscribes to the belief of "love at first sight," one of the most common tropes in Western fiction.

And yet there is nothing fictional or fanciful about attorney Benson's belief in the shopworn phrase.



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She's living it.

Her first brush with the saying took place following her sophomore year at Michigan State, where she was pursuing a degree in political science as a stepping-stone to law school.

"I was home for the summer and needed a job," Benson said, matter-of-factly. "I was with my mom and my grandmother running a few errands when we stopped at a bulk food store on Maple. I decided to run in to see if they had a summer job for me."

Her query drew the attention of a store manager, Mitch, who just happened to be the son of the business owners.

"I was eager for an answer and couldn't understand why it was taking him so long to make a decision," said Benson. "After all, I was smart, enthusiastic, and I needed a job. What else did he need to know?"

Just one thing, she soon discovered.

Could she answer a simple math question in her head?

"The next thing he said," Benson recalled, "was 'What's 10 percent of 80?' Fortunately, I answered, 'eight."

With that magical number, a romance was born, at least in a young woman's mind.

"I went back to the car and told my mother and grandmother that I had just met the man I was going to marry. Simple as that," Benson said, noting that her pronouncement was greeted with various forms of incredulity.

But five years later in 1994, Annette and Mitch became one, starting a marriage that has produced two children and will reach the 30-year milestone in a couple of years. In addition, it has framed two successful careers, hers as a family law attorney and his as a Certified Financial Planner.

Their marriage also has spawned a shared love of travel, hiking, and running, including marathon finishes at the Magic Kingdom of Disney World. Nearly two years ago, in the beginnings of the pandemic, they added another member to their family – a Goldendoodle puppy.

"Yes, another case of love at first sight," Benson repeated. "I'm a believer."

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