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A Special Kind of Cupid

Until last November, Gene and Jane Mitchell, married for 51 years, had seldom been apart. Their union has produced four children, 14 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and a legacy of togetherness that was abruptly interrupted by an automobile wreck last year.

Mrs. Mitchell was admitted to Floyd Medical Center at a time when COVID-19 numbers were rising and hospital visits were limited to help protect individuals like the Mitchells, who were at risk of severe complications should they contract the virus.

The Mitchells were able to celebrate the big holidays together as she recuperated first on Floyd's Inpatient Rehabilitation floor and later at Polk Medical Center's Subacute Care unit, with Mr. Mitchell driving daily from Shannon to Cedartown to visit with his wife, but Mrs. Mitchell's injuries eventually required her to be transferred to a nursing home. COVID-19 quarantines and strict visitation rules meant that, for the first time in their long marriage, Gene and Jane couldn't be together.

As January gave way to February, the outlook for spending Valentine's Day together didn't look too promising. But, a need for additional surgery, a new visitation policy and the thoughtfulness of a Floyd employee, conspired to reunite the couple just in time for that very special couple's day.

Jane was readmitted to Floyd's orthopaedic nursing floor on Friday, Feb. 12 for tendon repairs, and Gene could at long last join his wife at her hospital bedside. Tammy Hanks, a unit secretary cross-trained as a certified nursing assistant (CNA), quickly made friends with the couple, learned their story and saw an opportunity to play a special kind of Cupid role this Valentine's Day. She enlisted a co-worker to stage a conversation outside Mrs. Mitchell's door with singular goal in mind.

Tammy and her co-worker talked about Valentine's Day and discussed where their significant others should take them out to eat. Professing unfamiliarity with restaurants

in the area, Tammy asked Mr. Mitchell where they should go. He suggested Outback Steakhouse—the final piece of information Tammy needed to execute her plan. Determined to make Valentine’s Day special for the reunited couple, she arranged for a steak dinner and a signature appetizer to be delivered to their hospital room on Valentine’s Day.

The Mitchells were overjoyed and completely surprised by Tammy’s efforts on their behalf. They rang the nurse call light when they had finished their meal and told Tammy they needed some help. She went to check on the couple, whose “need” was to tell her they had thoroughly enjoyed their meal and to express their appreciation for her extra special effort to help them to celebrate their 51st Valentine’s Day together.

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