

Marriages

Darlene (Doran) Gillett (BS '12) and **Derrick Gillett** (BSA '12, MArch '13) are happy to announce their marriage on May 26, 2013, at Deer Path Gardens in Benton Harbor, Mich. They currently reside in Granger, Ind.

Births

To Duncan and **Corey (Brace) Grodack** (BBA '98), a son, Colby Cabot, born on August 27, 2013 in Winter Park, Fla. He joins siblings Calleigh, Aubree and Brady.

Deaths

Sanders S. Blakeney (BA '62) died Nov. 12, 2013, at home with his family at his side.

After graduating from Andrews University he completed medical school at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa. He served in the U.S. Army for five years, completing his residency in OB/GYN at the Madigan Army Medical Center. Prior to his solo practice, he was a member of Stork & Associates in Federal Way, Wash. He retired from private practice on Oct. 31, 2013. His desire for the wellbeing of others and his great spirit will be missed.

Sanders is survived by his wife of more than 50 years, Bettye Blakeney; two daughters, Krista Blakeney-Mitchell and Kelli Blakeney-Robinson; five grandchildren; and one brother, Lawrence Blakeney. He was predeceased by his sister, Meredith Brooks.

Alex Ruben Vargas Hernandez (former staff) was born August 27, 1965, in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. On Oct. 27, 2013, Alex succumbed to a heart complication.

He was the first in his family to accept Christ and since the age of 12 has been deeply involved with the ministry of the church.

Until he attended Antillian College in Mayaguez, Alex resided with his parents and younger brother, Melvin Vargas, in Barceloneta.

Alex began as an education major but soon realized that God had different plans for him and switched to theology. During his time at Antillian, Alex was involved as a school and spiritual leader. He was one of the youth directors at the college and director of the drama department. One of his passions was the performing arts, and he organized and directed multiple plays.

During this time Alex met his future wife, Nereida. He was the youth director for the male students, with Nereida fulfilling the same role for the ladies. Alex and Nereida married on August 9, 1987. Alex would go on to work at the Convention Center for the Fine Arts. When offered a promotion that required work during the Sabbath, he promptly declined and chose to move on.

He went to work for the Red Cross as an instructor of classes for emergency response and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), but once again felt the call of the Lord and decided to focus on pastoral ministry by finishing his studies in education and religion.

Alex and Nereida were blessed with the birth of two beautiful daughters, Nerialex and Rossenery, born in 1988 and 1990, respectively.

On January 2001, all four members of the Vargas family arrived in Berrien Springs, in hopes of providing a great Adventist education for the children and attending Andrews University. Alex and Nereida held various jobs, including the Andrews Academy and RMES cafeteria programs, where they would impact the lives of hundreds of children and youth with their kind and cheerful demean-

or. They also continued to teach CPR and emergency response classes in Indianapolis, and Alex staged a Christmas ministry that performed in churches.

Unfortunately, in the wake of increasingly serious health concerns, Alex was forced to put his studies and full-time job on hold.

He is survived by his wife, **Nereida** (BS '98); daughters, Nerialex (current student) and **Rossenery** (BHS '13); mother, Candida; brother, Melvin; and his nephews.

John G. Snell (BS '71, MAT '74), 90, of Berrien Springs, died Oct. 19, 2013, at his home.

John was born May 31, 1923, near Watertown, Wis., on a farm overlooking the Rock River, to John and Lillian (Schnitger) Snell. He had two brothers and three sisters. At an early age he learned the value of hard work and responsibility.

He attended Broadview Academy, where he met **Ruby Brown** (MA '68), the love of his life and future wife of 71 years. They moved from Illinois to Michigan where John worked as a process engineer. John earned his master's degree at Andrews and taught in Benton Harbor junior high schools for 17 years.

John had a passion for God and family. He also enjoyed camping, bird-watching, rock collecting, antiques, model trains, vintage toys, and joyful music.

Survivors include his wife, Ruby; their two sons, Dennis (Judy) and Doug (Rena); two daughters, Lynnece (Jerry) Abel and Joni (Tim) King; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Mae Gloede; a brother, Gerald Snell; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Roger Steven Vitrano (BA '82) was born on Nov. 4, 1959, in St.

Joseph, Mich. and died on Sept. 2, 2013, in Auburn, Calif., of complications related to multiple sclerosis.

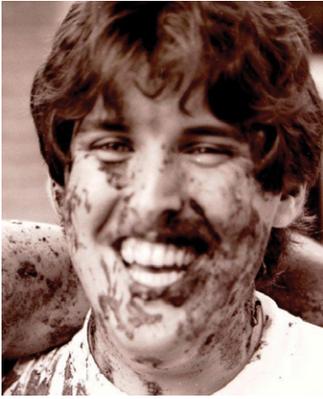
He graduated from Andrews Academy in 1978 after starring in varsity sports, particularly as the quarterback, and as a member and officer of the National Honor Society. He loved being involved in extracurricular activities during high school and delighted one summer in touring Europe with his parents.

Besides performing well scholastically and athletically during college at Andrews University, Roger served as vice president of AUSA and was chair of the Student Senate. He also traveled to Australia on a University-sponsored tour and graduated in 1982 with a degree in business.

After college, Roger contemplated becoming a lawyer and applied to several schools, including Harvard, to which he was accepted. However, before continuing his education, he moved to Washington, D.C. and worked as an intern in the Office of Management and Budget during the Reagan administration.

Ultimately, he elected to enroll at Indiana University in the School of Business in pursuit of his MBA. While attending the Indianapolis campus he once again excelled and was awarded the Outstanding Student Award in the MBA Career Integrated Program of the graduating class of 1986. He was also given recognition for distinguished service as a member of the Student Advisory Board. In 1984, while attending IU, he married **Jennifer (Ginger) Duff** (BS '81), his college sweetheart.

Upon graduating from IU, Roger and Ginger moved to Gaithersburg, Md. Roger was employed as vice president of Planning and Development at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, where he first worked with **Michel Augsburg**



Roger Vitrano after a muddy ball game during his college years (top above) and in a more recent photo

(BA '77). While in Gaithersburg, his two daughters, Alle and Amy, were born.

In 1991, while still at Shady Grove, Roger was invited by Michel to join him in Santa Rosa, Calif., to work for Breckinridge Healthcare, where they worked together for 18 months. While there, Roger was approached about founding Chancellor Health Care with Michel and two other partners. Roger's professional dream was realized and life was good. He was involved in the local school board, church activities, social events and settled in to raise a family with Ginger.

1993 brought difficult news when Roger was diagnosed with MS. In spite of that, Roger performed his responsibilities admirably but had to quit the job he loved so much in 1998, after suffering a head injury resulting

from a fall. Shortly after, in 1999, he moved again to be closer to Ginger's family in Tennessee but ultimately returned to Northern California. In 2001 he moved into Auburn Oaks Care Center in Auburn, Calif., and was cared for during the next 12 years by his wife, parents, brother and sister.

Roger is survived by his wife of 29 years, his two daughters and a sister, Joyce Dirnberger, and brother, Ed. Interment occurred at Rose Hill Cemetery in Berrien Springs, where he was buried next to his parents.

Neil Mason Carruthers (BS '10), 34, died unexpectedly August 11, 2013. His wife Florentina Nedelcu Carruthers, "Tina," 29, died 46 hours later, following a courageous battle with a recurrence of brain cancer.

Neil graduated from Greater Boston Academy, a Christian school in Stoneham, Mass. He developed a love of the outdoors from visits to his grandparents in Maine and so when he attended Andrews University, Neil decided to study environmental science. He also spent a couple of summers working in the Alzheimer's unit of a nearby facility.

After returning home, he did landscaping and construction on Cape Cod, then returned to Stoneham. He took a job at Winchester Hospital as a patient safety associate and sat through nights with confused, elderly patients, or those at risk of falling, to keep them safe.

When Tina and Neil first began talking via an online Christian Adventist dating website in 2008, their conversations about faith and friendship soon led them to meet in person. They married Sept. 5, 2010, in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Neil knew Tina's funeral might



Neil & Tina Carruthers

arrive sooner than either wanted since she had already been treated for brain cancer, but he told his mother, "Whatever time we have, I want to spend with her."

The story of their short, but dedicated love affair was chronicled in the *Boston Globe* by Bryan Marquard.

Their joint funeral service was held at the Stoneham Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church on Saturday, Sept. 28, 2013.

He is survived by his parents, Robert J. and Rosanne (Mason) Carruthers, sister Jill Hodson and her husband John, two nephews and one niece. He is also survived by his grandmother Virginia Mason of South Woodstock, Maine, and many aunts, uncles, cousins and his wonderful dog, "Bear."

Preston Fletcher (BA '73) was born May 21, 1951, in Memphis, Tenn. and died May 22, 2013, in Concord, Calif.

Preston was born and raised in the Midwest, and graduated from Andrews University in 1973. He met his wife Rose while working in Portland, Ore., and they were married in 1979.

In 1981 they moved to California, where Preston took a job with the treasury department of the Northern California Conference, a position he held until his medical retirement in 2012.

His daughter Melinda was born in 1982, followed by Hannah Joy in 1986. Preston joined

the Antioch Adventist Church shortly after moving to California. He loved his church and loved working for his Lord, serving as head elder for many years. He dedicated countless hours to the church and school, including technology assistance, attending numerous committee meetings, meticulously arranging details of services, and personally supporting individual members.

Preston had an infectious positive attitude and an unwavering trust in God which continue to be an example to all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife Rose; daughters Melinda and Hannah Joy; mother, Evelyn Rost; and brothers Gregory, Jon and Christopher.

Harold Eugene Armstrong (att.), 82, of Joliet, Ill., died on Monday, April 15, 2013.

He was born Sept. 22, 1930, in Albany, N.Y.

Harold proudly served his country at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., as a member of Operation White Coats. After discharge, he was employed for many years by International Harvester Corp. of Melrose Park.

After retirement, he worked another 10 years for Product Saver in Downers Grove, Ill. Harold was a long-time active volunteer at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Ill. He was also a long-time faithful member of the Hinsdale Seventh-day Adventist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Marolyn (Case); son Kevin Armstrong; three grandchildren; sisters Esther Baker of Florida and **Kathy** (DIP2YR '53) (Don) Labrenz of Wisconsin; and many nieces, nephews and cousins. Harold was predeceased by his parents.