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When Home Is Not a Place

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In their 27 years of marriage, Nicole '92 and Robert Tideman Penland Jr. '90 have moved 14 times, traveled to six continents and lived in four countries.

"Our daughter Eliana, in just her short 10 years, has many stamps on her passport already," says Nicole. But before they were exploring the globe and became pros at living abroad, Nicole and Tideman were two Furman undergraduates who fell in love.

Nicole noticed Tideman in the spring of 1990, when they both brought other dates on a weekend getaway with her sorority. When his date – her sorority sister – had to get back to campus early, he stayed behind and hitched a ride back with Nicole and her date. Tideman asked her out the following weekend, inviting her to dinner at Bennigans, followed by a Widespread Panic show at Al's Pumphouse.

"I tried to impress Nicole with the fact that I worked at a bar," says Tideman, who majored in political science.

They both had a family connection to Furman: Tideman's maternal grandfather, **Donald Kesler '39** (business), and Nicole's sister, **Andrea Miller VonAldenbruck '90** (English), came before them.

The couple endured three years of long-distance dating when Tideman went to law school at the University of Notre Dame and Nicole continued her studies at Furman. To be closer to her, Tideman finished law school



WHEN HOME IS NOT A PLACE

Nicole '92 and Robert Tideman Penland Jr. '90

BY MORGAN SYKES

at the University of Georgia.

In the spring of 1992, the pair were hiking in the mountains north of Furman when Tideman proposed to Nicole at the top of a waterfall. They've tried to revisit the spot since then.

"But we can't remember where the unmarked pull-off is located," says Tideman. "I

just remember it was where a farmer used to sell boiled peanuts on the shoulder."

Because he was an ROTC scholar, they both understood that their married life would look different than their civilian friends' and families'.

"Picking up your household and moving every two to three years is a lot of

work," says Tideman, who is a colonel in the U.S. Army and serves as the staff judge advocate for the Republic of Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command, United Nations Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, an assignment he began in 2018, part of his 27 years on active duty.

"We've had amazing experiences," says Nicole. They spent five years in Italy and Germany, traveling extensively in Europe and North Africa.

"Now," she says, "we're lucky to be stationed in South Korea because we've been able to experience Asia, which is different from anything we've done before."

Their nomadic lifestyle has led to rewarding professional achievements for both: Nicole, who has her master's in education from Vanderbilt University and an Education Specialist degree from the University of Virginia, has been teaching special education for 25 years and is licensed to teach in seven states.

When they reflect on their marriage, what sustains them is clear.

"I admire my husband's integrity as a husband, as a father, as a lawyer, as a leader," says Nicole. And Tideman is moved by his wife's "selflessness and kindness to the hundreds of students she's taught over the years." But at home – wherever it may be – "she's always loving, always kind, always supportive," he says. "She's my angel." ♦