

# Couples saying 'I do' later in life

When Pete Munsey and Jannifer Anderson-Munsey exchanged marriage vows last year, they considered themselves emotionally and financially secure in making that lifelong commitment to one another.

And, with Mr. Munsey being 42 and Ms. Anderson-Munsey being 36 at the time of their November 2006 nuptials, they also felt like they were mature enough for marriage.

"Looking back, I had a lot of growing up to do in my 30s," said Mr. Munsey, a parishioner of St. Pius X, Rodgers Forge. "I also had a cynical view of marriage. I also hadn't found the right person. Once I did, my hesitations about marriage melted away. I knew I wanted to be married to Jan."

Ms. Anderson-Munsey spent her 20s getting a college education, traveling and building a career in the insurance industry and didn't feel like she was emotionally prepared for marriage until she was in her 30s.

"By then I was more settled in my career and mature enough for that kind of a commitment," the Towson resident said. "Plus, I found the right guy."

The Munseys are older than most couples getting married in the United States today, but statistics show that men and women in general are older when they tie the knot than their 1950s counterparts.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average age for getting married in 1950 was 22 for men and 20 for women, compared to 2003, when the average age was 27 for men and 25 for women.

"More people go to college now than they did in the 1950s," said Father John P. Cunningham, pastor of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Pasadena. "A lot of the couples want to first have an education, and then start paying back their loans for their education and get started in their careers before making that long-term commitment."

Although Father P. Edward Kenny Jr. said he marries couples who are in their 50s as well as their 20s, the pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption in Govans said the standard age for those exchanging vows at his church is middle 20s to early 30s.

“The couples who are between 20 and 22 tend to be men and women who have chosen not to go to college,” Father Cunningham said. “Men and women who go to college tend to be a little older when they get married.”