

A divorce lawyer looks at how marriages last

By Mary Martin Niepold

Special for Associated Press

NEW YORK — He's seen some of the best go separate ways. He's helped many of the most powerful make sure the kind of life they've become accustomed to won't slip away. He's Raoul Felder, maybe this country's best known divorce attorney.

Frequently it's the woman he represents (as in the female sides of Mike Tyson, Anthony Quinn and Mick Jagger).

Sometimes, it's high profile husbands, as in Larry Fortensky versus Elizabeth Taylor, and most currently, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani versus Donna Hanover.

In Felder's world, it's up to him to try to make love-gone-sour taste sweet nonetheless. Given more than 30 years of sorting out the ways of fractured love and \$500-per-hour fees, Felder has a unique view of what makes good marriages work (he and his own wife, attorney Myrna Felder, have been married for 39 years).

And though he resists talking about his own life, he's a staunch believer in two things for anyone going into marriage: One, get a prenuptial agreement, regardless of your economic level. And two, try to maintain a mutually agreed view of what constitutes love, commitment and shared goals.

Every partnership is unique, says Felder, and whether it's a 60-40 or 90-10 partnership, he says its still a partnership. Rarely is it 50-50; it's how the two individuals operate together which determines dynamics, harmonious or otherwise, he says.

Felder has been called a publicity hound, and a look at his office won't contradict that impression. His firm's entrance on the 30th floor at a trendy Madison Avenue address has signage for fictional detectives Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade hugging the front door. Down the hall is the attorney's private office, a large baronial space complete with faux fireplace, works by Picasso and Groz, wing chairs, a sofa, memorabilia — from ceramic monkeys to tin soldiers — and a needlepoint pillow stitched with a slogan, "It ain't easy being king."

A natty dresser with hundreds of pairs of velvet slippers, Dunhill suits and custom-made shirts, Felder spends an hour delivering deadpan assessments of the state of divorce (cracking 50 percent of all marriages, according to some statistics, with a quadruple increase between 1970 and 1996) and what it might take to avoid it.

He sounds like his buddy Jackie Mason, the comedian, but he's dead serious about the pitfalls of love

he's battled in splitups.

Unsurprisingly, Felder urges a pre-nup, for everybody, not just the rich and powerful. Since serenity and well as money is at stake, retain two lawyers. "If there's just one lawyer, you can say he's not protecting my interest, and you want to avoid that," he says.

"You have to err on the side of making sure the thing is going to stand up, then worry about the delicate interpersonal dynamics later.

I've had many cases over the years where the marriage never took place because of the pre-nuptial," he says, explaining that the pre-nup is a great way to find out what you might not have seen in the other person until the discussion of money went to paper.

When it comes to love — which is after all the reason most people say they're joining — it's smart if the future husband and wife are on the same page there, too. "I don't

know what love is. It may be what you do in the back seat of cars when you're 17 years old. It may be looking for Dulcinea in 'Don Quixote.' There are all kinds of love. Who knows? What is successful for one is not successful for another."

Should marriage be forever? Felder will say only that the idea of divorce wasn't fashionable back in the early 1960s when he married.

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Wedding traditions: Making the perfect toast

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Here's a toast to the happy couple.

It's not to test the drinks for poison — a reason the practice started among the Greeks in the 6th century B.C. — but to salute the stars of the day, according to etiquette expert Jacqueline Whitmore.

"It is an art, because its effectiveness depends on intuition, timing, and a well-articulated message," she says.

Whitmore, founder of the Protocol School of Palm Beach, says to remember the three Bs as you raise your glass:

"Begin, be brief, and be seated."

It may seem obvious, but don't forget the toast is to recognize the people you're toasting, she says. Be as eloquent and creative as you please. But be brief, keeping your tribute to just a few sentences. End on a positive note and sit down, giving the bride and groom an opportunity to respond.

And, she cautions, don't confuse a toast with a "roast."

Some other toast points from Whitmore:

- There are usually two traditional toasts. One is offered at the beginning of the wedding meal, to welcome everyone, and the other is proposed to the wedding couple at the beginning of the dessert course.

It's acceptable but not necessary to clink glasses as you raise the toast. Simply raising your glass — a practice of many cultures — is fine.

- Never tap the side of your glass with a utensil to get attention or quiet the chatter of guests. For all you know, it may be a piece of fine crystal you're endangering.

- The father of the bride or the best man takes precedence in offering the first toast. And after the toast is made, the couple should rise and respond with their own toast.

- The couple should never drink a toast to themselves.

- And never refuse to participate in a toast, even if you're a teetotaler. It's perfectly acceptable to toast with a non-alcoholic beverage.

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Pearls are traditional, classic, timeless

By Karol Stonger

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Cultured pearls are as traditional for the wedding as diamonds are for the engagement. But today's bride is looking beyond tradition.

She already may have a strand of 7mm pearls — as a gift to herself, an inheritance or part of a divorce settlement.

"The great thing about a strand of pearls is that it is classic, timeless, something that can be worn every day," says Melvyn Kirtley, general manager and regional vice president of Tiffany & Co. in New York City.

But there are a lot of other options, from funky to high fashion. The pearls range from imperfect to flawless in shape and luster, and



prices are based on quality, size and setting design.

"Just one drop would be so beautiful on a snake chain," a spokesman at a recent industry show of pearls harvested in Japan and Australia, Tahiti and elsewhere in the South Seas. Tahitian pearls are distinctive for their color, ranging from black and gray to pistachio and yellow. The Tamara Comolli Collection had a 9mm cream drop

accented with a .36 carat diamond. From Coleman Douglas Pearls, a pistachio "love nugget" was sitting on a little ruby.

Ella Gafter designs in Italy while her daughter, Talila, takes care of business at the Ellagem salon in New York. The designer says pearl pendants have been "successful with husbands. Men are more open to change than women."

Prince Edward's gift to Sophie Rhys-Jones for their June wedding was a necklace of his design: a black pearl cross on a white pearl strand. The necklace and matching drop earrings for the new Countess of Wessex were made by British jeweler Asprey & Garrard.

For bridegrooms who prefer to leave the designing to others, New Yorker Henry Dunay certifies each

of his South Sea cultured pearls with a serial number. One necklace of his design any bride would love, available at Neiman Marcus salons, is a large single pearl suspended from a curl of brushed platinum accented with a diamond solitaire.

A cultured pearl pendant from Cartier Inc., is like the bud of a white peony bursting with life. It is secure on a necklace of marquise motif diamonds.

Still, a string of pearls is "the quintessential gift," according to Kirtley of Tiffany. It is given by the bridegroom, or sometimes by the bride's parents. In Italy, Gafter says, the bridegroom's family traditionally make the purchase.

"The great thing about a strand of pearls is that it is classic, timeless, something that can be worn every day," Kirtley says. But in these heady financial times, "lots of brides are looking for something other than pearls. They're looking at platinum and diamonds." Or combinations thereof.

Tiffany offers something for nature-lovers — a butterfly or dragonfly pendant of platinum and diamonds on a platinum chain interspersed with small cultured pearls. Sans motif is a diamond necklace in platinum or 18K gold with one pearl for every three diamonds.

Lynn Ramsey, president of the Jewelry Information Center, suggests a triple-strand dog collar for the bride with a swan neck and strapless gown.

Decadent? You bet. But a girl can dream. And some dreams do come true, most likely for those brides whose visions are a little more earthbound.

Elsa Peretti, designing for Tiffany, has pearls by the yard on a fine gold chain. Prices start at an affordable \$450.

More offbeat is an idea launched recently by the Tahitian pearl industry. It's the Circle of Love necklace, described as the ultimate in urban chic with an industrial flair. About 20 to 30 percent of cultured black pearls are harvested with rings on them, according to the industry. Now they are pierced on a steel wire necklace to retail for about \$125 in department stores nationwide.

Both Ramsey and Devin Macnow, executive director of the Cultured Pearl Information Center, suggest pearls for the bride's hair. Ramsey likes strings of freshwater pearls woven through the hair, and Macnow opts for a pearl tiara. They both have ideas for something blue, too. Ramsey prefers sapphire and pearl earrings. Macnow chooses a large Tahitian pearl with a blueish hue.

A final word on the Circle of Love necklaces: "Although simple, in a metaphysical sense," the literature says, they embody "a basic influence in our lives: the people we love and the bond we share with them that remains unbroken." emony w

True commitment is most important

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"And certainly, if you go back one generation.

"My parents in the last years of their marriage — they lived in a hotel. My mother was in one room, and my father was in another room. That described many marriages in those days. You just didn't get divorced."

Nonetheless, he believes commitment is important in a marriage, but not easy to come by in a world that no longer values loyalty. There are subtle signs of its absence, he says.

"I think the lack of commitment starts in humble things. Like TV. You have a clicker, and you see the president, you don't like him, click. A ballgame you don't like, click, click, click. These simple things resonate in your life. Today people walk out of movies they don't like, and there's no sense of loyalty in business anymore in America.

"Generally in life, you can't fight some monstrous lack of morality in people. It's better to recognize it and move on. Otherwise you tilt at windmills your whole life.

"For me, if you have a core belief, you adhere to that core belief. But I'm old-fashioned. I go down shooting. If I believe in a case, if I dislike somebody, if I'm consistent with the dislike and there's a sensible reason, I don't care if I go down for it."

To build relationships, it's good to encourage your partner's individuality and interests, he says. Too much togetherness is not necessarily a good thing.

"It's like geometry, an angle. You start out with the lines very close to each other, but as you extend it into space, it goes out. I think marriage is like this, too."

"You want (your partner) to absorb new experiences, so new aspects of character and personality emerge."

Arguments happen, but argue creatively to find a common goal in the marriage, he says. "There's one argument, a veiled, 'I hate you, I hate you.' Then it's like Rommel and General Montgomery in the desert. They just pick a piece of sand they're going to fight over. That's just an exercise in hostility. The other thing is you could argue over some intelligent decision. 'Where is the child going to to college? I believe in this, you believe in that.' This is what should be going on, but much of the time it's not."

If the relationship is no longer working, let it go, he says. "I think, looking back on life, if things don't work out, you move on. I think people should learn in relationships that don't work out, there's no pejorative aspect. You move on. And they do it today. Unfortunately, they do it too much, but they do it."

So what of the marriage that should last "forever?"

"Well, the Thousand Year Reich lasted 12 years, so what's forever? It's a terrible thought, to commit yourself to anything forever, even if it feels good. I wouldn't want to be Cindy Crawford forever. Who wants to do that?"

There's a test Felder recommends to clients who are consider-

ing ending a marriage. "A woman will come in and say, 'You know, I don't know whether to leave or not leave. He's not a bad person.' It's very simple. I ask her, 'When he does on a trip, do you feel better? Or do you feel worse?' Some women will look up and say, 'I feel like a load off my shoulders when he's gone.' Or others will say, 'I feel like a lost sparrow when he's gone.'

"So life gets reduced to very simple terms."

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There are new slants on the jewelry

By The Associated Press

Wedding and engagement jewelry symbolizes permanence, but that doesn't mean there aren't any new slants on its traditional look.

One of them is Tiffany & Co.'s new Lucida diamond engagement ring, with square-cut gems in a four-prong arched setting in 18K gold or platinum.

Then there is the renewed interest in three-stone rings.

Another is the increased popularity of almost invisible inscription on a diamond for both sentimental and security reasons.

Yet another trend is toward more valuable jewelry for the groom.

The new Tiffany creation won't supplant the company's 114-year-old classic and often-copied six-prong diamond ring. But the Lucida should appeal to those who prefer modern design. The diamond has mixed-cut square shaping with a high step-cut crown and wide corners, with its fire enhanced by a brilliant-style pavilion. The band of the setting curves smoothly into the prongs; viewed from the side, it reveals crossed arches reminiscent of cathedral design.

• Three-stone rings are classics making a comeback. The three stones can all be diamonds, or they might be combinations of diamonds with rubies, emeralds or sapphires. These are most popular in rounds set on a plain band, according to the Diamond Information Center, the information arm of De Beers. The three stones can represent the past, present, and future,



The wedding jewelry traditionally symbolizes permanence, and to day there are new slants on the traditional diamonds.

represent the past, present, and future, says the DIC, making it an appropriate choice for the millennium. It cites the three-diamond ring worn by Sophie Rhys-Jones, recent bride of England's Prince Edward, which features a central round brilliant-cut stone flanked by two heart-shaped diamonds.

• It might say something like "Forever Yours," or it could be the gem's grading report number. The use of diamond inscription on the gem's outside edge (called the girdle) has jumped 500 percent in the last year alone, says Thomas C.

Yonelunas, chief executive officer of the Gemological Institute of America's Gem Trade Laboratory.

The laser engravings can be read only under magnification but offer a way to personalize the diamond or identify its ownership and grade number. According to GIA, any diamond weighing one-quarter carat or more can be engraved.

• At least one line, Keepsake Diamond Jewelry, laser inscribes the girdle on the center diamond of all its rings with its "K" logo, registration number, quality grade and carat size. Each buyer receives a

Gemological Laboratory certificate with the ring. The company offers a variety of cuts and sizes set in gold, platinum or gold-platinum combinations.

• Another way to slip a personal message onto an engagement ring has been developed by designer Tammy Kohl. Her hand-made Takohl Treasure Ring is two-banded, and the bands open like a

locket to reveal an engraved message.

Some models even include a hidden ring of gemstones. Styles include the Princess, with a square gem; the Round, a bezel-set gem; the Classic, a simple band; the Royale, which has a raised latch with three channel-set stones; and the Baguette, which has one gem serving as the latch to open the ring.

Ideas for the right gift

By The Associated Press

As the wedding goes, so go the gifts — both to and from the couple:

• The prospective bride and groom need to consider those important subsidiary decisions, such as choosing the flatware they want listed on gift registries. Take a preliminary look at Reed & Barton patterns on the Internet, via reedbarton.com. Posted are patterns for sterling, silverplate and stainless, as well as the opportunity to buy sample teaspoons for a first-hand look.

• If you are either the one of the couple or a gift-giver, check out fortunoff.com, where you can choose from over 350 china patterns, 350 flatware patterns, 200 stemware-glassware patterns and hundreds of other things for the newlyweds' nest. The site includes an online bridal registry. There's round-the-clock customer service response, and you'll get free UPS ground shipping for Internet orders over \$100.

• The holiday of the moment is the wedding, and there are ornaments to commemorate it. Hand-painted, glass-blown ornaments in the Polonaise Collection from Kurt Adler include The Wedding Couple (\$35) and the Just Married Car (\$22.50). They also are available as a set, with a hand-painted wooden keepsake box (\$100).

• Use it as a cake topper at the wedding celebration, then save it as a permanent memento. Royal Doulton's bone china "Always & Forever" figurine (\$85) depicts two white doves with wings intertwined and is mounted on a heart-shaped base.

• Eye-stopping modern design characterizes the Eccentrica Decanters (\$495 each) from Bulgari. One is a sinuous elongated globe, another is more like an inverted trumpet. Both have stoppers in an arrow-tip design.

• For wedding party members, consider Eccentrica Pens (each \$385), also from Bulgari. These gold-plated pens have strong architectural shapes and come in two sizes.

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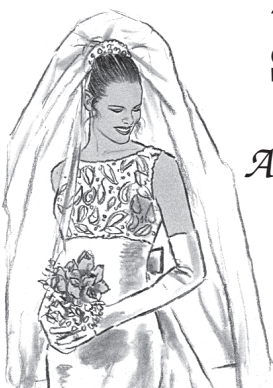
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