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Graduation dilemma: How to be in two places at once

BY KATIE HUDSON ('10)

During last spring's commencement ceremonies, Pam Eddy ('73) and her family had to be in two places at once. The Eddy's twin daughters graduated from JMU and Radford University on the same day.

Pam Eddy's initial reaction was shock and disbelief. Knowing neither school would change a graduation day, the Eddys had to decide which family members would attend which graduation ceremonies. Raechel Eddy ('09) was graduating from JMU with a degree in psychology, and Laura Eddy was graduating from Radford University with a degree in education.

The twins' father, Allan, and brother, James, decided to travel to Radford, while Pam chose to come back to her alma mater to watch Raechel graduate. Eddy says her daughters were extremely upset that they would miss sharing each other's graduation day. "They made us promise to take lots of pictures and video," says Pam.

"Laura and I are extremely close. She's my best friend," adds Raechel. "Even though we went to different schools, we still talked every day."

When May 9, 2009, rolled around, the weather changed the Eddys' luck. JMU moved its departmental ceremonies up an hour because of the threat of afternoon storms. Radford's main ceremony was canceled because it stormed earlier that morning. "It had to be some sort of fate for the weather to make things work the way they did," says Raechel.

Immediately following the JMU ceremony, Pam and Raechel got onto I-81 and attempted to make Laura's three o'clock ceremony. They stopped at Laura's apartment to pick up James and made it to the ceremony at four o'clock. Luckily, Laura's group was among the last to get their diplomas. Everyone watched Laura graduate, and a feeling of relief poured over the family. "I was afraid that I would regret missing out on things that went on in Harrisonburg, but Laura is my twin," Raechel says. "I knew she'd be there for me, too. I'm glad that I was able to make it there for her."

After two graduations in different parts of state, the Eddys' day concluded with a dinner with the entire family in attendance. Thanks to the weather, Pam says, "There were two proud parents and two happy college graduates seated at the table."



Raechel ('09) and Laura Eddy got to share same-day JMU and Radford graduation moments, thanks to the weather. (Inset): The Eddy family (l-r) are Curtis, Raechel ('09), James, Laura, Allan and Pam Eddy ('73).