

Sunday, 11 October 2009

Page: 8

Circulation: 270,362

Area of Clip: 66287.00mm

Clip ID: 452497



Struck by tragedy, widow finds love springs eternal

Marion's first husband died saving their son but she was blessed with a second chance, writes **Andrea Smith**

MOST people would consider themselves lucky to find one great romantic love in their life, but **Marion Creedon** Hegarty from Cork has managed to find true love twice.

Marion's first husband, the Cork footballer, Tom Creedon, died in 1983 following a tragic accident. She met her second husband, Cormac Hegarty, in 1990, and they were married in 1992.

They make a great pair. Marion is very glamorous, vibrant and great fun, while Cormac is handsome and calm, with a subtle line in witty repartee. They run a very successful business called **Top Image**, comprising of a tanning line and fashion accessories for weddings, debutantes, casual and business wear.

According to Marion, she had "five magnificent years of love and happiness" with Tom before he was cruelly taken away. He had borrowed a van to move furniture and had taken with him their baby son, also called Tom. When he stepped out of it for a moment, the parked van began to roll down a hill with the baby inside, and was heading for a group of children playing at the bottom.

Tom ran after it and managed to divert it, but he slipped under the wheels and was seriously injured. He died after 16 weeks in a coma in hospital, having saved his 19-month-old baby's life, and that of the children in the van's path.

"I had a really good partner in life, so it was very hard," she

says. "I threw myself into work after Tom died."

Marion set about finding a business that wouldn't affect her time with her son, but would help to fill the void in her life. She had previously worked with Mary Quant cosmetics, and became an international award-winning image consultant with Color Me Beautiful. This then led her into the area of cosmetics, fashion and accessories.

Seven years after Tom died, she was introduced to Cormac by a friend, Marian. While she found him very attractive, Marion had initial reservations because there was an eight-year age difference between them.

"I thought, 'What is she doing bringing this young fella over to me,'" she says, laughing. "I thought he was good-looking and charming, and when we went on a date, I found him to be a lovely, gentle man, like my late father and my husband."

Cormac recalls with amusement how Marion kept changing her age, every time they went on a date.

"She said she was 36, then 37 and then 38," he laughs. "I said to her that we'd have to stop going out because she was getting older every time I met her. Marion has an awful lot of strength and she's a go-getter, which I like in a woman. I also thought she was very good-looking, although she thinks to this day that I went out with her because I was attracted to her Saab!"

As her business grew, Marion rented premises in Merchant's Quay Shopping Centre. Then she purchased her premises at 31 Grand Parade, where she still trades today on a retail and wholesale basis. She also has a 5,000sq ft wholesale cash and carry unit at 30A Fashion City in Ballymount, Dublin, and spends a lot of time travelling

between the two.

Cormac is very much involved in the business as well, and he also works in his family's construction business.

One of the products that is extremely popular is their tanning range, also called **Top Image**. It's the number one seller in Munster and the pair are hoping to emulate its success in other regions. It's already in many pharmacy chains, such as Sam McAuley's nationwide and Hickey's Pharmacy on Grafton Street.

"I had it developed because I'm so fair," says Marion. "It comes up in 10 seconds, dries instantly with no streaking, and has no after-smell."

Marion admits that she was very lonely after her husband Tom died, and believes that Cormac was sent to her by her dad, who died a few months before they met.

"Cormac's brother Diarmuid had also died when he was only 22, so he understood where I was coming from," she says. "He always said that he thought I'd lost my confidence. And he was right because although I had great self-belief and confidence business-wise, I was very shy socially."

"I will always talk about Tom with respect and love because I was very happy with him too," she adds. "He will always be part of my life, and what I love about Cormac is that he has absolutely no problem with that."

Cormac is a strong, confident man and is secure enough in himself that he wasn't daunted by the fact that Marion's first husband was so well-known and loved. Marion is very proud of him for going back to college in 1997 to do an MBA and he is also clearly devoted to his bubbly wife.

"She's good fun and has a great sense of humour," he says. "She can be fiery at times,

which was exciting, particularly in the early days. I don't relish it that much now! We have a place in West Cork that we go to at weekends, so we have an idyllic lifestyle."

Marion and Cormac were married in 1992, when young Tom was 11. Now aged 28, he is working as a stockbroker in Japan and is Marion and Cormac's pride and joy.

"Unfortunately, Cormac and I had a miscarriage so it wasn't meant to be that we

would have more children," says Marion. "It was tough, but I have a great husband and we got through it. Tom is very close to Cormac too. He looks so like his dad it's unbelievable, but he also has many of Cormac's traits."

Plans for the future include expanding the business even further. Marion and Cormac are both devoted to it, and even on holiday love to research new products.

"Cormac and I don't play

golf or tennis, so the business is our passion and our hobby," she says. "It's lovely to have a husband who is your best friend. If something happens, I'd ring him straight away and he'd help me out immediately. So from a sad beginning, I've really been very blessed."

www.topimage.ie

*Tel: Dublin (01) 429-5793
and Cork (021) 427-2454*



SUCCESSFUL: Cormac and Marion run a business supplying tanning products and fashion accessories. Picture: David Conachy