

## Emily Harper &amp; Toby Mills

*March 31, 2007**Written by Christie Smith**Photography by  
Dodd Studio*

A love for football brought Emily Harper and Toby Mills together at a church dinner. They were attending a singles dinner and happened to sit next to each other. They discovered during the course of the dinner that they had many things in common - one of those things being football. Toby is a former NFL player, and Emily, who taught high school in Katy, was a supporter of Katy High School football. So it was fitting that their first date was a high school football game.

"We met in September, right before Hurricane Rita came through Houston. After things settled down a bit in October, he called me and we went to the football game," Emily said. The football game convinced Emily that Toby was worth getting to know. "He's so down home and giving, a very sweet man," she said.

A year to the day after their first date, they got engaged. Toby's way of proposing was very unique, Emily said. "I was training for the Austin marathon, and I was running with a friend. He called me and told me he was working on his roof. He said that part of his roof was rotted and he needed me to bring him a disposable camera to take pictures for proof."

So Emily went straight from Herman Park after her run to pick up a camera and over to Toby's house. When she got up on the roof, she first noticed a bicycle tire. "I didn't think anything of it, it didn't register," she said. Then she noticed a board with a "U" spray-painted on it. As she walked to where Toby was standing, she looked down at the pool.

"At the bottom of the pool, he had put tiles that spelled out, 'marry me,'" she said. And suddenly it all made sense. The tire, "wheel", along with the "U", and the tiles formed the question that she had no choice but to say 'yes' to after such a creative proposal. "It was a beautiful day, and we sat on the roof, drinking champagne, with me in my running shoes and baseball cap!" she said.

She pronounces the proposal "perfect". "It was exactly him, who else would have come up with that?" she asks.

They decided they wanted a destination wedding, outside of Houston, but not so far that it would be hard for family to make it. "I had a friend who had gotten married at Old Glory Ranch in Wimberley, so we went and looked at it





and picked a date," she said. The couple wanted a spring wedding to take advantage of the beauty of the Hill Country at that time.

On the day of the wedding a nice breeze was blowing and the sun was shining brightly. The couple chose their colors, sage green, ivory, and accented the colors with orange and pink flowers. They were married in the Old Glory Ranch chapel, and the sun shining through the stained glass windows added to the beauty.

"There are three doors to the chapel, and they were all open. There was a spring breeze blowing throughout the chapel, it was just beautiful," Emily said.

The reception was held outside on a pavilion leading down to the river. "Kellye Lawson and the team at Old Glory Ranch do everything from flowers to lighting. Old Glory Ranch did an amazing job! They had even put chandeliers in the trees," Emily said.

During the couples first dance, to Rascal Flatt's "God Bless the Broken Road", a slide show played behind them. "I loved that," Emily said. Another unique touch was their wedding cake, a red velvet cake.

Because they knew several children would be present, the couple took advantage of the miniature donkeys at the ranch. "We put little packs on the donkeys, inside each pack the children could help themselves to water, juiceboxes, snacks like cheerios and crackerjacks." They also had child care available for the kids during the ceremony, where the kids had an

opportunity to do crafts. "We also ordered pizza for the kids to eat," she said.

The planning didn't stop with the kids. Because their guests were all coming in from out of town for the weekend (all guests were invited to the rehearsal dinner held at the Salt Lick Restaurant, too), the couple had prepared a list of things for the visitors to do. At the rehearsal dinner, each guest received a "Texas" basket stuffed with things from Texas such as bluebonnet seeds. They also gave their guests a "save the date" card listing places they loved to eat, hike, and shop. "We wanted people to see the high points.

On the day of the wedding they went to different wineries, or went shopping," she said.

After the ceremony, we were all treated to a spectacular show of fireworks. "It wasn't a typical wedding," Emily said, "it was beautiful and unique out in the Hill Country." A white Rolls Royce convertible picked the couple up from the front of the chapel. "While the show of fireworks were entertaining guest, the grand finale was perfectly timed as we were driving off."

Mr. and Mrs. Mills stayed in the Hill Country that night and the following night, then left for a week-long trip to Belize. "We love to snorkel, and we had an opportunity to go to the jungle. It's very friendly, and I felt very safe there."

The newest endeavor for the couple is daughter Harper Ann, born January 17, 2008. They plan to return to the Hill Country each year on their anniversary. ♦

**Ceremony Location:** Old Glory Ranch  
512 847-3646 | [www.oldgloryranch.com](http://www.oldgloryranch.com)  
**Officiant:** Mark Poe, Second Baptist Church, Houston  
713 465-3408 | [www.second.org](http://www.second.org)  
**Reception Location:** Old Glory Ranch  
**Photographer:** Dodd Studio  
512 280-6911 | [www.doddstudio.com](http://www.doddstudio.com)  
**Wedding Consultant:** Kellye Lawson, Old Glory Ranch  
512 8473-646 | [www.oldgloryranch.com](http://www.oldgloryranch.com)  
**Catering:** Pascal's Catering Company  
512 447-4113 | [www.pascalscatering.com](http://www.pascalscatering.com)  
**Flowers:** Old Glory Ranch  
512 847-3646 | [www.oldgloryranch.com](http://www.oldgloryranch.com)  
**Wedding Cake:** Lauren Butler  
512 947-4976 | [www.laurencakesaustin.com](http://www.laurencakesaustin.com)  
**Invitations:** Evidence of Glory  
281 844-5502 | [www.evidenceofglory.com](http://www.evidenceofglory.com)  
**Gown Designer:** Mori Lee [www.morilee.com](http://www.morilee.com)  
**Gown & Veil Purchased At:** Weddings by Debbie  
281 531-6255 | [www.weddingsbydebbie.com](http://www.weddingsbydebbie.com)  
**Shoes:** Weddings by Debbie  
**Bridesmaid Dress Designer:** Jasmine/ B2  
[www.jasminebridal.com](http://www.jasminebridal.com)  
**Bridesmaid Dress Purchased At:** Weddings by Debbie  
281 531-6255 | [www.weddingsbydebbie.com](http://www.weddingsbydebbie.com)  
**Flowergirl Dress Designer:** C'est Chouette  
**Flowergirl Dress Purchased At:** Bambino's  
210 690-8100  
**Hair & Makeup:** Lacey Myers  
832 567-5223  
**Men's Formal Wear:** Men's Wearhouse  
[www.menswearhouse.com](http://www.menswearhouse.com)  
**Favors:** The Great Texas Pecan Candy Co.  
888 770-1000 | [www.texaspecancandy.com](http://www.texaspecancandy.com)  
**Ceremony Music:** Patricia Hager, Harpist  
512 392-9696 | [www.patriciahager.com](http://www.patriciahager.com)  
**Reception Music:** Patricia Hager, Harpist  
**Honeymoon:** Belize  
**Fireworks:** Gryphon Enterprises, John Davison  
**Car Rental:** Tom Daniels Rolls Royce Limousine Service  
210 930-3907 | [www.salimo.com](http://www.salimo.com)  
**Rehearsal Dinner:** The Salt Lick Barbecue Restaurant  
512 858-4959 | [www.saltlickbbq.com](http://www.saltlickbbq.com)