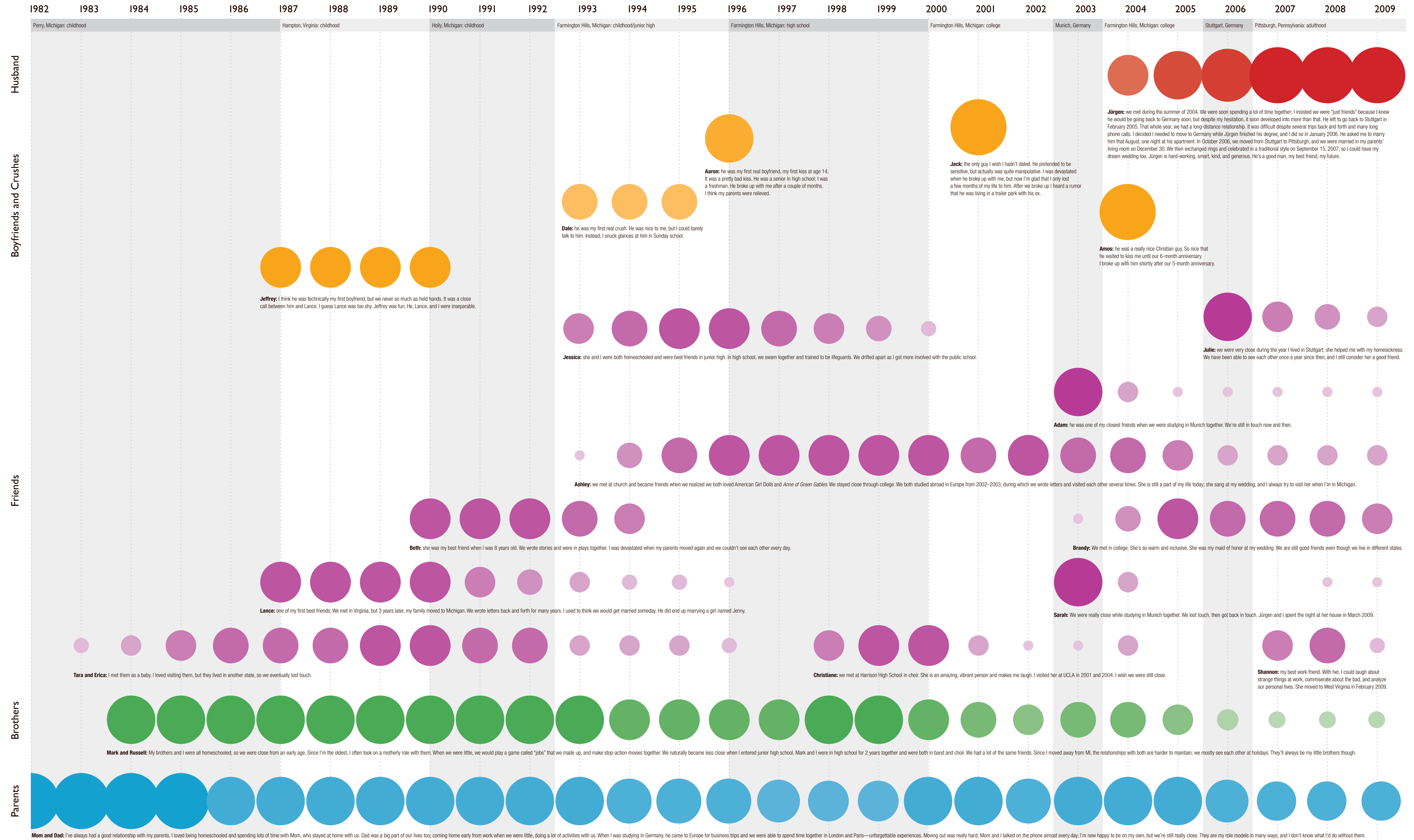


Important People throughout my Life by Jenny Shirey



1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009

Perry, Michigan: childhood Hampton, Virginia: childhood Holly, Michigan: childhood Farmington Hills, Michigan: childhood/junior high Farmington Hills, Michigan: high school Farmington Hills, Michigan: college Munich, Germany Farmington Hills, Michigan: college Stuttgart, Germany Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: adulthood

Husband

Boyfriends and Crushes

Friends

Brothers

Parents

Jeffrey: I think he was technically my first boyfriend, but we never so much as held hands. It was a close call between him and Lance. I guess Lance was too shy. Jeffrey was fun. He, Lance, and I were inseparable.

Dale: he was my first real crush. He was nice to me, but I could barely talk to him. Instead, I snuck glances at him in Sunday school.

Aaron: he was my first real boyfriend, my first kiss at age 14. It was a pretty bad kiss. He was a senior in high school; I was a freshman. He broke up with me after a couple of months. I think my parents were relieved.

Jack: the only guy I wish I hadn't dated. He pretended to be sensitive, but actually was quite manipulative. I was devastated when he broke up with me, but now I'm glad that I only lost a few months of my life to him. After we broke up I heard a rumor that he was living in a trailer park with his ex.

Amos: he was a really nice Christian guy. So nice that he waited to kiss me until our 6-month anniversary. I broke up with him shortly after our 5-month anniversary.

Jürgen: we met during the summer of 2004. We were soon spending a lot of time together; I insisted we were "just friends" because I knew he would be going back to Germany soon, but despite my hesitation, it soon developed into more than that. He left to go back to Stuttgart in February 2005. That whole year, we had a long-distance relationship. It was difficult despite several trips back and forth and many long phone calls. I decided I needed to move to Germany while Jürgen finished his degree, and I did so in January 2006. He asked me to marry him that August, one night at his apartment. In October 2006, we moved from Stuttgart to Pittsburgh, and we were married in my parents' living room on December 30. We then exchanged rings and celebrated in a traditional style on September 15, 2007, so I could have my dream wedding too. Jürgen is hard-working, smart, kind, and generous. He's a good man, my best friend, my future.

Jessica: she and I were both homeschooled and were best friends in junior high. In high school, we swam together and trained to be lifeguards. We drifted apart as I got more involved with the public school.

Julie: we were very close during the year I lived in Stuttgart; she helped me with my homesickness. We have been able to see each other once a year since then, and I still consider her a good friend.

Adam: he was one of my closest friends when we were studying in Munich together. We're still in touch now and then.

Ashley: we met at church and became friends when we realized we both loved American Girl Dolls and *Anne of Green Gables*. We stayed close through college. We both studied abroad in Europe from 2002-2003, during which we wrote letters and visited each other several times. She is still a part of my life today; she sang at my wedding, and I always try to visit her when I'm in Michigan.

Beth: she was my best friend when I was 8 years old. We wrote stories and were in plays together. I was devastated when my parents moved again and we couldn't see each other every day.

Brandy: We met in college. She's so warm and inclusive. She was my maid of honor at my wedding. We are still good friends even though we live in different states.

Lance: one of my first best friends. We met in Virginia, but 3 years later, my family moved to Michigan. We wrote letters back and forth for many years. I used to think we would get married someday. He did end up marrying a girl named Jenny.

Sarah: We were really close while studying in Munich together. We lost touch, then got back in touch. Jürgen and I spent the night at her house in March 2009.

Tara and Erica: I met them as a baby. I loved visiting them, but they lived in another state, so we eventually lost touch.

Christiane: we met at Harrison High School in choir. She is an amazing, vibrant person and makes me laugh. I visited her at UCLA in 2001 and 2004. I wish we were still close.

Shannon: my best work friend. With her, I could laugh about strange things at work, commiserate about the bad, and analyze our personal lives. She moved to West Virginia in February 2009.

Mark and Russell: My brothers and I were all homeschooled, so we were close from an early age. Since I'm the oldest, I often took on a motherly role with them. When we were little, we would play a game called "jobs" that we made up, and make stop-action movies together. We naturally became less close when I entered junior high school. Mark and I were in high school for 2 years together and were both in band and choir. We had a lot of the same friends. Since I moved away from MI, the relationships with both are harder to maintain; we mostly see each other at holidays. They'll always be my little brothers though.

Mom and Dad: I've always had a good relationship with my parents. I loved being homeschooled and spending lots of time with Mom, who stayed at home with us. Dad was a big part of our lives too; coming home early from work when we were little, doing a lot of activities with us. When I was studying in Germany, he came to Europe for business trips and we were able to spend time together in London and Paris—unforgettable experiences. Moving out was really hard; Mom and I talked on the phone almost every day. I'm now happy to be on my own, but we're still really close. They are my role models in many ways, and I don't know what I'd do without them.