



happily ever a

HOW THREE COUPLES FOUND THE
LOVE OF THEIR DREAMS

By **DIANE HERBST** and **RACHEL DESANTIS**



'WE PRAYED FOR THE PERFECT FAMILY'

Ben and Tina Gibson used embryo
donation to have children and
learned true love is timeless



When Tina and Ben Gibson wed
in 2010 in Knoxville, Tenn., they
knew having children would be
difficult because of Ben's cystic
fibrosis, a genetic disorder
affecting the lungs that can
cause infertility. "We fostered
children and explored adop-
tion," says Tina, 29. "But
nothing fell into place until we
learned about embryo adop-
tion. That was God saying,
"This is what you need to do.'"

Tina, a schoolteacher, and
Ben, an IT specialist, began
working with the National
Embryo Donation Center, a
faith-based nonprofit that
offers adoption and implanta-
tion of unused embryos
from in vitro fertilization
(IVF) patients, and reviewed
hundreds of profiles describing
donors' hobbies, physical traits
and medical information. It
wasn't until minutes before
the implantation procedure
that they realized the five
embryos they'd adopted were
frozen in October 1992—a full
24 years earlier.

Although medical opinions
vary, the Gibsons' doctor



HAILEIGH GRANT/TEE PHOTOGRAPHY
JAMES COOPER/TINA GIBSON

after

assured them the embryos' age wouldn't affect viability. In November 2017 Emma Wren Gibson was born, setting a record for oldest embryo to result in a live birth. The Gibsons beat that record themselves, when Emma's full biological sister Molly Everette was born on Oct. 26, 2020, more than 27 years after the embryo was frozen.

The whole experience only deepened their love, Tina says: "We were leaning on each other and sharing when we were struggling. And there's nothing greater than seeing the person you love love something as much as you do." Adds Ben, 36: "You can't get any happier than this."



Small Miracles
"We took a leap of faith," says Tina Gibson of using older embryos to have Emma, 3, and Molly, 4 months.



INSET: COURTESY, PEGGY WILSON



Making It Official
"I thought, 'Why wait?'" says Peggy of their small wedding attended by 10 friends and family members.

'I SAW HIS

After 62 years began vic

Last June, four weeks of her husband of 43 Smutz, 80, received a Don Wilson, a classmate high school with in D whom she hadn't spoken to. "I heard the news from thought I ought to say Don, 80, who lost his 2019. "I called on Peggy

Despite six decades of contact—Peggy had seen Ariz., and Don in Missouri the pair hit it off, laughing times. By their third child smitten. "I trusted her from the start," says electronics operation Peggy's surprise, Don rejected him, suggesting Zoom to improve his