

Wedding



This photograph is from our wedding on 23 June 1965. On the left is my wife, Ludmila Hanakova and I, Jan Hanak, am on the right. The picture was taken at the Town Office in Martin.

After finishing school I married my classmate, Ludmila Vtakova. We'd attended school in Martin. Back then the Faculty of Medicine in Bratislava opened a branch in Martin. For us it was closer, so we ended up there. Currently it's named the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine of the University of Comenius in Martin. Our wedding ceremony was on the day of her graduation. Our wedding was a strange one, because her parents came to the graduation and didn't know about the wedding. The graduation was supposed to be at 1:00 p.m. Her parents were at the residence when my bride announced at 11:30 a.m.: "You should get ready. We've got to go soon."

"What for, it's only 11:30 and the graduation isn't until 1:00?"

"The graduation is at 1:00, but the wedding is at 12:00."

"What wedding, whose wedding?"

"Mine!" By the time her parents came to, they were already at the National Committee. From there we went to a theatre, where the graduation ceremony was taking place. My in-laws were angry at us. Especially my father-in-law. They were from a village, and there it had been the custom that they'd announce to everyone that their daughter was getting married. That their relatives are really going to be upset, that their daughter had a wedding and they hadn't been invited.

My wife was from the village of Visnova. The Cachtice Castle rises high above the village. She studied academic high school in Nove Mesto nad Vahom, and then at the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Martin. My father-in-law was truly angry at us. He said that the entire village would stone him to death. We persuaded him to tell them that he hadn't known anything

about it. Later it came out that people in the village had been waiting as to who'd start with this sort of wedding. After that many continued in this fashion. You know, in villages there are various customs and to-dos around weddings. Wedding preparations already begin two weeks beforehand. They invite several hundreds of people... The best thing is when you pay a hotel, and they arrange everything. Back then the entire wedding cost us about a thousand crowns [in 1953 the equivalent gold content of the Czechoslovak crown was decreed by law to be 0.123 grams, which remained in place until the end of the 1980s – Editor's note]. All told, there were ten of us. So our wedding was in June 1965. We had two daughters. Marcela in 1966 and Michaela in 1969.