

Brittney & Jordan

July 27, 2013

Two Bears fans tie the knot with a fabulous fete at the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago.

| By Amalie Drury | Photography by Vrai |

They first met and exchanged numbers at a David Guetta concert at the Congress Theater, where they were more interested in catching one another's eye than in the thumping house music. Days later, they fanned the spark over wine and hours of conversation at LuxBar in the Gold Coast. When he eventually took her to meet his parents in Boston, and they showed Brittney Payton a photo of her husband-to-be, Jordan Benson, wearing a No. 34 Chicago Bears jersey at age 4, her heart knew it was meant to be.

Brittney is the daughter of the late football great Walter Payton and the bubbly host of the WGN-TV food show *Chicago's Best*, while Jordan is a VP at Cook M&A Advisory Services, a buy-side investment banking firm. Both are avid Bears fans, and as the pair planned their summer wedding with the help of Lisa Gia Bascomb of Parties Etc.—a onetime babysitter of the bride's, who grew up down the street from the Payton family in Barrington—they knew they wanted to honor Walter's memory during a joyous celebration of love with family and friends.

Jordan proposed to Brittney with a ring that incorporated stones from her father's cuff links, and she walked down the aisle carrying a bouquet of gardenias, Walter's favorite flower. Prior to their ceremony and reception, a bus shuttled the couple and their attendants to Soldier Field for a photo session. "Our bridal party loved walking out on the field and being the only ones in the stadium," Brittney says. "We were tossing bouquets around like footballs."

The bride, in her form-fitting Ines Di Santo dress, was the showstopper of the day, but there was plenty of wow factor in the wedding decor, too. Bascomb suggested baby's breath for lightening up the ceremony inside the dim and dramatic St. James Cathedral, and Brittney envisioned a forest inside the church. The resulting 10-foot-tall baby's-breath-festooned trees that were created to line the aisle turned out so perfectly, it was decided they would also be transported to the Four Seasons. "There were no windows, so we wanted to bring the outside in," Brittney says.

With their parents, the couple got a sneak peek at the hotel ballroom before the official start of the reception.





Clockwise from top left: The couple's elegant cake by Sweet Magnolia Bakery; Brittney's bouquet was bedecked with a photo of her and her father, the late great Bears running back Walter Payton; the bride's blue Manolo Blahnik pumps; the pale parrots in a photo shoot at Soldier Field; the reception menu courtesy of Clementine Ink + Paper. Opposite page, from top: Brittney and Jordan outside Soldier Field on their big day; ornate reception decor by Anthony Gowder Designs.



"When we saw how absolutely beautiful it was, we were in awe," says the bride. "It brought my mom to tears." The band struck up Brittney and Jordan's song, and they took a private practice spin before their guests joined the party. "When the doors were opened, every single person went straight to the dance floor," says Brittney. ■

The List

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| Ceremony St. James Cathedral | Bridesmaid Dresses Enzoani from Dimitra's Bridal |
| Reception Four Seasons Hotel Chicago | Groom's Tux Ralph Lauren |
| Wedding Planner Parties Etc. | Hair Erin Ahern |
| Floral & Design Anthony Gowder Designs | Makeup Stella Makale |
| Lighting & Draping Frost Cakes Sweet Magnolia Bakery & Weber's Bakery | Rentals Tablescapes Linens Private Label |
| Wedding Invitations Clementine Ink + Paper | Linens & BBJ Videographer I Do Films |
| Calligrapher Stacey Shapiro | Transportation Classic Wedding Car & O'Hare-Midway Limousine |
| Reception Music Rendezvous | Rehearsal Dinner Piccolo Sogno |
| Wedding Gown Ines Di Santo from Dimitra's Bridal | |