



## Miracle of Birth

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Having a baby is often one of the most anticipated and joyful events in a married couple's life. Imagine, then, the disappointment that ensues when after four years of trying to conceive a child, efforts are unsuccessful.



Such was the case with 34-year-old couple Jodie and Duane Scott of New Iberia.

The Scotts married in January 2000 and like many newlyweds, the Scotts weren't in a huge rush to have a child. A year and a half into the marriage though, they decided it might be the right time. After a year of not becoming pregnant, they began to wonder if anything was wrong. They visited Jodie's obstetrician who

assured them that it was normal for it to take some time. The couple felt more at ease after visiting the doctor and took additional steps to increase their chances of pregnancy. They took temperatures, tracked cycles, did ovulation testing and more. Another year went by though and still, no baby.

The couple knew there was a problem. They underwent testing to determine the cause of the infertility. A series of tests showed that Jodie's fallopian tubes were severely blocked by endometriosis and this was keeping her from becoming pregnant. Efforts to surgically unblock the fallopian tubes were unsuccessful.

The couple said they shared the same thoughts and feelings — “What did we do to deserve this? Why couldn't this happen to a couple who didn't want children? How can we afford this? How are we going to live a complete and happy life without children of our own?”

Everything reminded them of children — holidays, invitations to baby showers, Christmas. They didn't look forward to these events because they didn't want to be reminded that they had no children of their own with which to share them.

“At that point, you want to do whatever it takes to have a baby,” Jodie said.

The couple knew their chances of conceiving the old fashioned way were slim to none. Though Duane had entertained the idea of adopting a child, Jodie wasn't as keen on the idea. The couple then learned about invitro-fertilization, also known as IVF. They decided this was something worth looking into. IVF is a process in which the egg is fertilized by the sperm outside of the womb and the embryo is later transferred back into the uterus in hopes that pregnancy will occur.

The Scotts researched IVF clinics and found one in Alabama. Twice IVF was attempted there and both times it failed.

“The embryos were living human beings and for a short while I was pregnant,” Jodie said. “The hope of holding this (baby) in nine months vanished.”

The couple did serious soul searching to decide how badly they really wanted a child and why.

“Did we really want children or did we want them because we couldn't have them,” they wondered.

They thought about adoption again and thought about all they had invested in their quest to have a baby.

“How can we keep going like this,” they said.  
“What if we fail a third time?”

In their soul searching, they decided they did want children and two unsuccessful attempts at IVF were not going to make them give up hope. The couple decided to find a clinic closer to home. They consulted Dr. John Storment of Fertility and Women's Health Center in Lafayette. Storment is a reproductive endocrinologist who specializes in treating issues of infertility. The Scott's attempts at IVF through Storment's guidance and care were successful just six weeks after they began seeing him.

“I'll never forget the day Dr. Storment called to tell me the first time I was pregnant,” Jodie said. “He said ‘Congratulations’ and everyone started crying, everyone at the office where I worked, everyone at home. I had a lot of friend and family support.”

Today, the couple are the proud parents of two beautiful children born through IVF — Miles Kenneth who will be 3 in January and 12-month-old Shelby Katherine. The children were named after their grandparents — Katherine being the name of Duane's mother and Kenneth after Jodie's dad. Shelby's namesake came from a unique source.



“Duane wanted a Shelby mustang but I told him ‘No’ and said we’d name the baby after the car,” Jodie said laughing.

Jodie says Miles is a typical little boy who loves football and loves to play outside and Shelby is a good baby, sleeping through the night since the first day.

“Miles is such a firecracker,” she said. “Shelby’s so fun, and they get along so well.”

Duane has a different take on the little ones’ personalities and is quick to point out that Miles is also a mama’s boy.



“He was our first one so we babied him more than Shelby. Shelby’s a lot tougher and gets her way a lot. I think she’s gonna be able to beat Miles up. He gets his way by whining. They have two completely different personalities.”

Storment says infertility affects 6.1 million people in the United States, and one out of eight couples attempting pregnancy are

unable to conceive. Both male and female factors can cause infertility.

Storment said he went into the field in part because of the need and also because his patients are easy to please.

“I love OBGYN because it’s a happy specialty. It’s hard to imagine a place where I’d be more appreciated than my specialty,” Storment said.

Storment said the process of IVF depends on the cause of the infertility. He said diagnosing the underlying problem is the first step.

“In a male, the No. 1 cause is a decreased sperm count, while in the female, there are four main causes ranging from difficulty ovulating to blocked fallopian tubes and endometriosis,” Storment said.

Many of the causes have treatment options available to improve the chances of becoming pregnant.

“Only about 10 to 20 percent of couples eventually need invitro fertilization to get pregnant.”

Most couples, Storment said, can conceive using less invasive and less expensive methods. And expensive IVF is.

IVF and its related expenses cost the Scotts between \$16,000 and \$20,000 per baby. As with most insurances, the procedures were not covered through their policies. The Scotts paid for IVF through savings, refinancing, and help from their families.

“At that point you make a decision of your priorities and what’s important,” Jodie said.

Storment said he has probably helped to bring more than 200 babies into the world using IVF. He said the typical patients that consult with him are young couples who have been trying unsuccessfully to get pregnant.

“They all have unique aspects and problems,” Storment said. “They’re all anxious to have a baby and there are a lot of tears shed. Yesterday I had a patient who had lupus and had a successful delivery but her baby died because of the complications of being premature. Her doctor said she should not get pregnant again. Her eggs are fine, but she just can’t carry a baby. So, this time her sister will carry it for her.”

The Scotts hope to have one more child. If it doesn’t happen through IVF, they said they are open to adoption. For now though, they can look forward to the holidays with anticipation knowing their little angels will help make it an especially joyful occasion.