

Our Green Lake Story: Neil & Brenda Saunders

Brenda, from Vincennes, IN, worked at Green Lake the summers of 1970 and 1971. Her pastor, Rev. Ron Kerr, recommended the "ABA" to her. She worked in food service as a waitress in Pillsbury Hall. Neil, from Merseyside (Liverpool) England, worked on the waterfront the summer of 1971. He rented boats from the old boat dock, and every afternoon he gave guided tours of Green Lake while piloting the Captain Bickell.



at the Tea House. Every time we visit the Conference Center, we always enjoy a picnic next to the lake across from the Tea House.

One of the many fun experiences we enjoyed was when a large group of ministers and their families were taking their meals at the Abbey and Brenda was a server. On a dare, at

Simply stated, Green Lake, is the beautiful beginning of the chronicle of our life together. It was in South Hall on June 16, 1971 at the initial staff meeting of the summer that we first met, so everything we remember about Green Lake is viewed through that prism.



breakfast one day, Neil and a friend dressed in waitress's uniforms—a yellow dress; Brenda and a friend dressed as busboys and together we waited on tables. The group gave us a rousing applause and requested an encore.

Great memories!!

"Green Lake is the beautiful beginning of the chronicle of our life together."

Green Lake holds a significant place in our hearts. While walking

around the grounds, nature's beauty is not only visually pleasing but the very ambience of the place can be felt viscerally. Sitting in the quiet of Spurgeon Chapel, looking at the lighted cross on Judson Tower at twilight one can feel the Holy Spirit at work! A spiritual oasis; Green Lake is quiet, reflective, meditative, and full of nature. It is as close to being one with God as one can feel.

We married on June 10, 1973. The summer of 1971 was magical for us, and is recalled often and with great fondness. The staff was mostly college students mixed with volunteers. The student staff were an eclectic group from all over the world. We had friends from as far away as Kenya and Sweden, and as close as "just across the lake." The staff was an active group in every sense. We worshipped together, worked together and played together.

We have many wonderful memories of the summer of '71, but if we were to choose a singular favorite event, Brenda's might be walking to the Snackery from South Hall the first night we met - a walk we still refer to as "the long and winding road." Neil's favorite memory is their first date, which was a staff hayride (being from a big city, this was something he had never experienced) which culminated in a bonfire

While June 10, 1973 is the date of our wedding, we recognize and celebrate June 16, 1971, as our anniversary. Green Lake is a special place to "simply be"—all in a serene setting. When we visit and drive through the gates onto the grounds, we know we are "home." The many nooks and crannies close to the lake, to walk, read, or just sit and enjoy solitude make it easy to get back in union with yourself, with nature, and with God.

Our memories of Green Lake and the summer of 1971 are joyful. It is a beautiful memory that pleases us and a place we will always return to.