



THE GREEN LAKE FOUNDATION

THE GREEN LAKE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

“God save the foundation!” (Shakespeare)

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Green Lake Foundation

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Alvin Kwiram—15 years as Foundation President

Alvin Kwiram has completed 15 years as President of the Green Lake Foundation, an organization he launched and steered. In January 2018, he stepped aside in this role but fortunately will continue to serve as Vice President. The newsletter asked him about his years of leadership.

Where did the vision for a Green Lake Foundation come from?

When I was chair of the Green Lake Church board, I felt we lacked a strategy to provide explicitly for future needs. Why couldn't we create a more systematic approach to generate and manage resources to sustain and expand the programs of the congregation? Other non-profits routinely do this through foundations and endowments.

Was there a template that inspired and guided you?

I had some experience with this at the University of Washington. Universities, for example, typically use foundations to generate support for and manage funds for many programs.

The church has a Finance Committee. Does it need a Foundation?

The Finance Committee is mostly focused on immediate needs of the church budget. Furthermore, congregations are not legal entities so they aren't set up for the mechanics of owning property or managing endowments or investments for the long term.

The Foundation is not only concerned with Green Lake Church's present health but with its future.

The Green Lake congregation is generous in contributing tithes and offerings to serve the programs of the Adventist church. It also supports the local church budget. However, the focus on the latter is a month-to-month effort. The challenge is finding a systematic way to enlist the interest and support of our members to plan for future needs. Families set aside funds for a college education or for retirement. Shouldn't our church be equally prudent? Doing so will reduce the month-to-month burden on the local budget.

Green Lake members often comment that the Foundation Board has some significant "heft" and experience. What skills were you looking for?

The founding members of the Board included Rhona Kwiram, George Neiswanger, Don Mehrer, and Alvin McGill. Each of these had significant experience with investments, finance, or



Alvin Kwiram

business. Since then, we have added others with similar experience.

Rhona Kwiram was named by the Board as your successor. She has unique and special qualifications.

She is one of the most knowledgeable professionals in the non-profit sector in the Pacific Northwest. I have worked closely all along with Rhona beginning in the early planning stages. We met together with Conference officials to obtain their approval. Rhona has played a leading role in building up the substantial non-profit side of the Clark Nuber firm and was their first female partner. Of course, anyone who has worked with her on the Church Board, Finance Committee, or Foundation Board knows what an incredible resource she is.

Some in the Green Lake community aren't yet fully aware of the work of the Foundation.

The Foundation belongs to the congregation, and it's important for members to help make the GLF a more powerful asset for the congregation. Most in our community are aware of the fund-raising campaigns we have mounted over the past decade or so. The newsletter and the support the Foundation has provided for the History Project, the Housing Ministry, the Church Retreat this last year, and other programs all help.

What are some accomplishments of the Foundation?

Just to name a few: (1) two very successful fund-raising campaigns; (2) effective management of the assets of the church; (3) creation of eight endowments (including one for the elevator and one for the new organ); (4) acquisition of the Green Lake House; (5) launch of the Housing Ministry. Those who read this newsletter know of other projects!

You have encouraged families and individuals to put the Green Lake Foundation in their estate planning. Why is that so important?

The resources of the Conference are always under pressure. To ensure that the unique character of the GLC is sustained for future generations we'll need to carry more of the burden of ministry ourselves. Many of our members make provisions for other charities in their estate plans. We encourage our members who have enjoyed the fellowship of this congregation over the years to consider the GLF as one of the beneficiaries on their list.

Green Lake Launches the Lecture Series: 1980 Speaker Receives Spectacular Send-off

Fifty years ago plans were initiated by Pastor Magne Fuglheim to bring in an outside speaker of distinction to



Magne Fuglheim, Green Lake Church Pastor 1968-1970

Green Lake Church for a special lecture event. In 1969, William A. Loveless was the guest speaker at that inaugural lecture weekend, and the Lecture Series was officially launched.

Over almost five decades, the lectures proved to be quite popular and well-attended. By the 1970's, the Lecture Series had morphed into a fairly elaborate affair. Yet the format proved to be a bit daunting for the lecturer—

and for some members of the congregation.

The soup supper on Friday evening was followed by the “keynote” lecture, typically a content-intense presentation. On Sabbath morning in Sabbath School, the guest was interviewed in many cases by our resident “talk show host,” Dick Johnson, followed by a grilling of the guest in the Library Class, no holds barred. The guest then spoke at the worship hour. At an afternoon session the guest speaker gave a short presentation and again was bombarded with a Q&A session. In the evening, there was usually a reception, typically with more grilling and discussion. After a quick night’s sleep, a Sunday morning brunch continued the discussion. After this 36-hour marathon, the speaker was rushed to the airport on a stretcher [just kidding] and sent home to recover.

On one occasion the speaker received a spectacular sendoff. Dr. James Londis, the Spring Lecture Series speaker in 1980, flew out of Seattle on Sunday morning, May 18. Shortly after the plane was airborne from SeaTac, Mt. St. Helens offered its historic eruption. Dr. Londis was delighted by the Green Lake congregation’s impressive salute for his weekend’s work.

Despite strong attendance, some Green Lakers felt the Spring Lecture Series was a little too “academic” and suggested we tone down the scholarly flavor. The focus on contemporary theological issues in Adventism and Christianity was understandable since this was a period of intense interest in the basic ideas that formed the foundation of our faith. The Association of Adventist

Forums had been launched only a year or two before (1968) and its journal, *Spectrum*, provided a broad array of theological and contemporary ideas. Others resisted the notion of abandoning the scholarly emphasis.

A compromise—another Lecture Series!—was reached in 1977 when Dr. Edward Heppenstall inaugurated the new Fall Lecture Series with an explicitly spiritual emphasis. Since then, these two series have run almost continuously.

Over time it became clear that the breakneck schedule was too much not only for the speakers but also for the congregation. Putting on such a big production twice a year proved daunting, so the format began to shift. The first thing to go was the Sunday morning brunch. A few years later the Saturday evening reception became intermittent, depending on the interest in the topic and the congregation’s wish to spend more informal time with the speaker.



But one thing was clear. The speakers list reads like a Who’s Who of Adventist leaders, theology professors, and pastors. The reputation of the Green Lake congregation soon became known nationwide. But more importantly, these events often had a profound effect on the engaged members of the congregation who gained new insights, were stimulated to explore new dimensions of theological thought, and developed a more holistic understanding of the foundations of Christianity and Adventism. Both the Spring and Fall Lecture Series continue to be an integral part of Green Lake’s traditions and culture.

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A Conversation with Ray Damazo

Ray Damazo was interviewed by Alvin Kviram on April 8, 2017. Edited for length and clarity.

Ray, you have been Green Lake's true impresario, organizing numerous events and major projects over decades. If I had the courage, I'd have the Husky band here and have the Governor declare Ray Damazo Day.

Thank you. This is like a family reunion.

Your life is really quite a remarkable story. When did your parents come to the U.S.?

My father left the Azores when he was 12 years old. He was the eldest in the family, shipped to America to make money to send it back to help with the family, which turned out to have 17 children. He worked for a relative in California's Napa Valley, herding sheep. He was a little Catholic kid with no education.



Raymond Damazo, DDS

Where does the Adventist connection start?

The relative in Napa Valley died, and my father was placed with a farming family who were Adventists. They sent him to the local church school and then to the academy, which became Pacific Union College.

Your father saw Ellen White speak at what became Pacific Union College?

She often spoke in chapel. My father was an early Adventist of the Ellen White type.

When did he move to the East Coast?

At age 18 or 19 he moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where there was a big Portuguese settlement. He went to the Adventist church in Taunton (a neighboring town), where he met my mother. Her family had converted as a result of a tent meeting. She had come over from Portugal as a four-year-old with her parents and siblings. They got married and had 10 kids.

You grew up in New Bedford and attended Adventist schools?

I went to Brookside Academy, and I tell people at parties that it was a private school in Massachusetts, and they are so impressed. [Laughter] The truth is that a husband and wife taught all 12 grades. There were 26 of us at my illustrious private school, Brookside Academy.

Where did you go to college?

I went to Washington Missionary College, which became Columbia Union College. When I'm at a party, I just abbreviate it to Columbia. [Laughter]

Your parents told their kids they had to be in a profession to finish the work. Did all 10 of you pursue some kind of mission-related work?

Our profession was picked out long before we were five

years old. We didn't even have a choice. My father was totally dedicated to "finishing the work" so all of us went to college and ended up being teachers, medical professionals, or preachers.

Your family was featured at several General Conference events?

They loved our family and paraded all 10 of us to show off the value of Christian education.

Why did you start your dental career in Frederick, Maryland?

My brother Frank was a surgeon, and we wanted to be in the same town. I practiced there for 11 years and then we moved out West in 1969. We really liked the Green Lake Church. In fact, they won't take my name off the books—so I'm still a member.

You did so many things for Green Lake. Just one was the church picnics at Mountain Meadows Farm in the mid-'70s.

Yes, we had picnics for Green Lake. The commercial picnics didn't start until the mid-'80s.

Was Green Lake a guinea pig for your commercial picnic enterprise?

Well, okay. If you want to take credit for that, okay. [Laughter.] Maybe, who knows?

You moved on to running big picnics for corporations.

More than 15 companies. The last Microsoft picnic had 22,000 people and 4,500 cars, so it rolled into a very big thing. We'd have two picnics in a day.

In the Green Lake picnics, you had the kids chasing greased pigs—Adventist kids chasing the porcine species. How did you justify that theologically? [Laughter.]

Theologically, not a problem. It was the Seattle Humane Society that put a stop to that. They raised so much Cain in the newspaper—claiming we were torturing these poor pigs.

You mounted a number of innovative Sabbath School programs in the '70s. This room was packed.

Jack Hennemann was the Sabbath School superintendent. This was a really rocking room, wasn't it!

A number of people have mentioned your live crèches at Christmas.

For a number of years we did that. We used to bring sheep down the back steps. We even brought a donkey in. And a live Mary and Joseph. Bob Hasselbrack was a Wise Man at one production.

You made a huge effort to pull together the Greater Seattle Area School District. What motivated that?

The two main churches supporting Christian education were Kirkland and Edmonds. I thought that all the churches in the area should participate. So I developed what was called the Greater Seattle Area School District where all the churches would be participating and equally supporting the two church schools, one east of Lake Washington and one west of Lake Washington.

And you sponsored fund-raising events.

We'd book places like the Seattle Center Opera House. We even had an astronaut come and speak.

The way you pulled that off with this huge meeting downtown at the Opera House was impressive. You had all the Seattle area SDA churches meet together.

Yes, at the Opera House. We did a lot of fun things.

We'd like to claim you as one of Green Lake's notable missionaries. Tell us about your work in Kenya.

As a little kid I remember missionaries came back from Africa. At one of the meetings I was up in the front row, and the missionary threw out the skin of one of those big snakes, and the skin went out about 25 feet. That was the beginning of my awakening of Africa.

If people really want to know about this, they should read *Safari Dentist*, copies of which are still available. Can you give us the executive summary?

I developed a program teaching clinical officers. A clinical officer is a nurse with a little bit more education that probably takes them up to the level of a sophomore nursing student in America. These clinical officers practice medicine all over rural Kenya, and a lot of them were concerned about patients' teeth—they don't know what to do for them. So I thought it would be nice to develop a program to teach them some very simple basic dentistry, and we would bring in groups of 30 or 40 to a Nairobi hotel to teach them. So out of that grew what I ended up doing in Kenya.

Your project was really what we'd call a ministry.

I had a very elaborate mobile dental clinic. We worked at 22 locations. After a while, I decided the biggest need was 30 miles from the main gate to the Masai Mara in Kenya, where there are about 75,000 Masai. They had no dentistry. So I built the Masai Dental Clinic (MDC). The Masai Dental Clinic was state of the art, probably better than 80% of the clinics in Seattle or Bellevue. I would get volunteer dentists to come and work for two weeks. I was able to get more than 102 volunteer dentists to work two weeks for free. We treated more than 10,000 of these Masai people. So it turned out to be a wonderful thing, which I'm very proud of.

You had some major recognition here in the state of Washington and nationally.

Am I allowed to brag in this church?

In this case, you're expected to.

In 2014, the State of Washington gave me the "Citizen of the Year" Award, and awarded the Masai project as the "Best Humanitarian Project" in 2014. Then, in 2015, the American Dental Association gave this project the "ADA HUMANITARIAN AWARD" in San Antonio at the national convention. They sent two videographers to the clinic and made a video of the whole operation and showed it to the 10,000 dentists attending the national convention. It was wonderful that they went to that length to showcase our work.

What is the current status of the clinic?

It's still going strong. I had been supporting everything, so I applied to a foundation for money. We got a \$1 million endowment plus \$341,000 to build a building. So it's doing a good job. There was a point where Green Lake had a little part in developing this Africa program.

When you were here in the '70s and '80s and the early '90s, this was a very active community to which you really contributed and enriched the lives of many.

I was really involved, and it was a good place for my children, who were being raised in this group. When we moved to this area, my daughter wanted to be a nurse; after we had been here three years, she wanted to be a doctor. That's literally what happened. It shows you the effect that Green Lake had on at least one of my daughters. The community had a spirit. It was very dynamic. So many kids excelled and went on to do a lot of great things. So it was really a wonderful period in my life.

I would like to read a short paragraph I wrote ahead of time: "The remarkable thing about Ray's story is the superb level at which he did things. He simply recognized opportunities and turned them into galvanizing experiences. He brought great energy and imagination to his enterprises whether in business or in good works. He demonstrated time and again a level of creativity and vision that was well beyond the norm. And he is a consummate impresario, who was able again and again to translate vision into smashing success."

So, Ray, it's been a fantastic journey, and we want to thank you again for all the things you contributed to this congregation, to this community, to this class, to each of us individually. It's been a fantastic friendship, and we hope we have another 20 years of that.

Thank you.



Ray, alongside his safari vehicle, which was used to transport supplies to 22 dental clinics in East Africa.