



150 Stories for 150 Years

Another 'Kissing Rock' story

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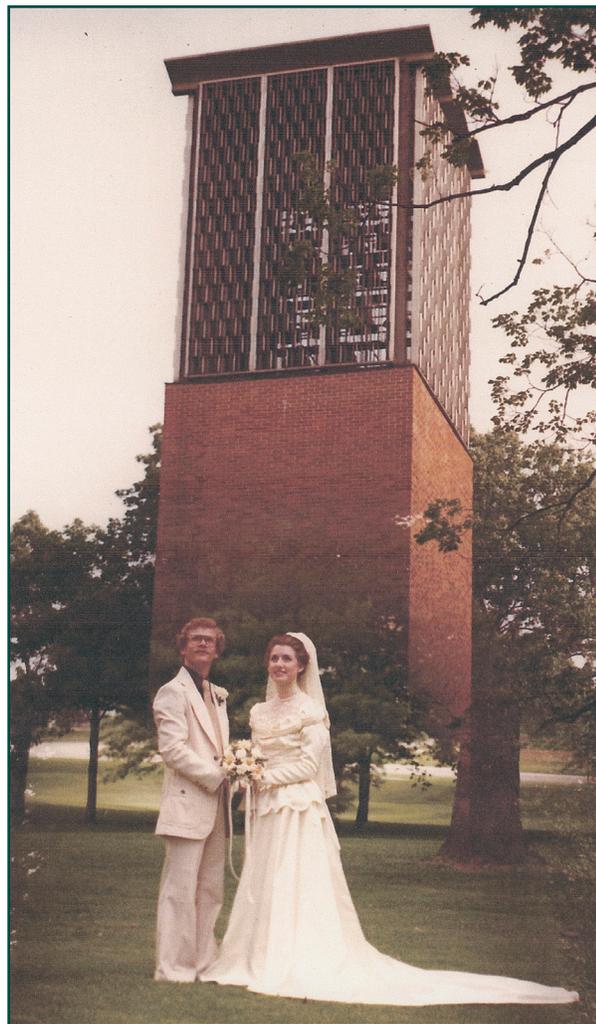
I came to campus from Purdue University with a two-year associate degree. Darlene and I met in the fall of 1980 at the home of Jim and Anne Ellis. Anne, who served as the College president's administrative assistant, had an evening gathering at their home for the Quaker students on campus.

We grew up in different Friends meetings in Indiana, attended the same summer camp, Quaker Haven Camp, but our first meeting was on Rombach Ave. at the Ellis residence. Our family had known the Ellis family for over 25 years, a wonderful couple. I gave a eulogy address at Jim Ellis' memorial service.

In the spring of 1980, Darlene traveled to England with a group of Wilmington College students and leaders Robert and Helga McCoy. Upon her return, she had sent several postcards to young men she invited to her graduation party at the home of her parents, Robert and Leuola Beck. Her dad, Robert, was executive secretary of Wilmington Yearly Meeting at the time.

I went to the party and we began dating that fall. Our first official date was the College's Homecoming dance in 1980. Darlene was hired by Bright Local School District as an elementary school teacher.

During the 1980-81 academic year, I became the volunteer College minister on campus. Living in an apartment owned by the Ellises, Anne helped me obtain an appointment with Dr. Robert Lucas, the College president. Dr. Lucas, T. Canby Jones, Robert Beck and I planned and helped fund a new position, a part-time campus minister, that began in fall 1981. Also, during the 1980-81 academic year, I began doing deputation to area Friends' meetings with students from campus.





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As the fall turned to winter, the love between Darlene and me blossomed. Dr. and Mrs. Lucas asked if I would housesit for them while they were out of town on a fundraising trip to Tennessee. While staying at the president's College home, I proposed marriage to Darlene — and she accepted! We were married Aug. 8, 1981, at Wilmington Friends Meeting with Darlene's dad, Jim Ellis and Larry Barker officiating. This picture was taken on campus prior to our wedding.

Yes, we shared a private kiss by the "Kissing Rock" that day.

Darlene taught for 18 years primarily in the Blanchester School System. I was a Friends minister in Ohio for almost 20 years. We then moved to North Carolina and Darlene is in her 21st year teaching Title I Reading and I just retired from the pastoral ministry in December 2020. We have three grown children and six grandchildren.

We just wanted to share the story of another long love affair from the campus of Wilmington College. We will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary in August 2021.

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