

# *The History of the Blazers Sunday School Class Peachtree Road United Methodist Church*

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## **The Early Years: "The Young Marrieds"**

Every Blazer has an early history he remembers about this special Sunday school class, but the class, itself, has a combined early history that spans many years. What follows is a patchwork of these memories. Enjoy.

Lin Black, January 12, 2005

### **1961**

The beginning of the Blazers' Sunday school class was in the fall of 1961. At that time, the class was called The Young Marrieds. One of the original class couples interviewed for this document was **Catherine and Errol Eckford** who remember that the class began with about 10 people. Errol named **Ann and Ken Milton, Harriet and Jerry Havermale, and Katie and Claude Saunders** as three of the other original couples. He said that they formed the class because there just wasn't any class available for them to join at that time that matched their age group and interests. Errol, who has since moved to Florida, remembers that the original teacher was George Bates (see "Teachers" below). Catherine now lives in Marietta and attends Peachtree Road United Methodist Church as do the Havermales. In fact, Catherine is a member of the Good News Sunday school class.

### **1962-3**

**Carole and Bob Rogers** joined the class in 1963. At that time, it met in the Brides' Room which was located under the small chapel. Carole and Bob were invited to visit the class by Errol who had been a neighbor of Carole's when she grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. Carole said that the class had about six couples in it at that time.

### **1964**

**Charlotte and Floyd Hale** joined in 1964. Charlotte remembers that "Catherine Eckford was a great cook and that her three boys could sure eat homemade ice cream". Charlotte noted that "she (Charlotte) and Floyd were instrumental in bringing **Kitten and Paul Ervin** into the class in 1965", and that she wanted the record to show this accomplishment. Charlotte remembers covered dish dinners, parties at their teacher's house and a day trip to Callaway Gardens sometime in 1967.

### **1965**

Kitten and Paul were the driving force that drew many of the original long-term members into the class. It was at this time that the class grew into a group of about 30 couples. Kitten remembers some of the couples who were members of the class when they joined or who joined shortly thereafter. They included:

- **Martha and Harold Copus** (Harold was an accountant who went on to join the FBI.)
- **Jean and Warner Wilson**
- **Frazier and Dave Harrison**
- **Judy and Bill Lockler**
- **Betsy and Rick Rapps**
- **Mac and Brenda Nease**
- **Linda and David Graham** (Linda works with the Rollins Company, and Dr. Graham is a dentist at Lenox Square.)
- **Patsy and Perry Michael** (She was a teacher, and he was an assistant attorney general.)

- **Evelyn and Wilton Dennis** (Wilton ran the recreational program at the church.)
- **Janice and Kevin Dial**
- **Priscilla and Larry Adams** (Larry was the church counselor at that time.)
- **Ann and Al Clark** (Al was an Associate Pastor at Peachtree Road)
- **Marlys and Charles Dowman**
- **Martha and Charles Mason**
- **Janice and Dick McGalliard**
- **Elsie and Holden Thompson**
- **Patty and Charlie King**
- **Sue and Win Leadingham**
- **Jean and Tom Culpepper**
- **Patty and Tom Shore**

Kitten remembers inviting a young political candidate (attorney, Maynard Jackson) to speak to the class well before what they believed was the first African American politician to speak to a worship service at PRUMC. At about the same time, the church invited Andrew Young to speak to the whole church in the sanctuary.

It was during this time that **Lin and Bill Black** visited the class (fall, 1968) and found they were members a week later because Paul called to ask them to invite **Sara and Phil McGaughy** to class the following week. Paul had heard that Phil was a great baseball player, and needed his participation in a church team. Sara adds that it wasn't true that baseball team members had to join a Sunday school class in order to join a baseball team; Paul made that up. However, it worked, and the McGaughys joined the class. The baseball team was made up of some super folks, too, thanks to Paul's hard work. The members included: Paul, Phil, John Sherrill, Wilton Dennis, Tommy Carlock, Vance Rankin, Charlie White, Keith Rueckert, Woody Jones, and Mac Nease. Sara wrote that "everyone went to the games; wives watched, kids played in the dirt-terrible to get the clay out of their clothes and shoes!"

## 1966-1969

Others who joined during the Ervin's tenure included:

- **Mary and Bob Trogdon** (Bob was a Delta pilot.)
- **Edie and Kent Williams** (Kent was a Georgia Tech professor who later joined the EPA)
- **Priscilla and Charles Harrison**
- **Anne and Dick Griener**
- **Elizabeth and Ryland Koets** (Ryland is an architect in the Atlanta area.)
- **Ann and Bob Price** (Bob is an attorney practicing in Decatur.)
- **Barbara and Jim Hightower**
- **Karen and Jerry Bartenfield**
- **Martha and George Haas**

## **Name Change: The Blazers**

Sometime during the late sixties, the church asked the Young Married class to change its name. Many members wondered "why?". Never mind that some of the members were beginning to gray around the temples. Later, at one of the Friday night dinner functions, Patty King and Lin Black (Patty remembers it a little differently, but since I'm writing this, I get to tell it my way.) were looking through a Sears catalog trying to get inspiration for a new name. Suddenly, Lin (remember, I'm telling this.) saw a green blazer, and said, "what about calling us the Blazers?" Patty questioned her judgment, but Lin persevered. "We are blazing a trail we're leaders...". The class liked the suggestion, and we became the Blazers. (See Ken Carroll's video version of the name origin [here](#).)

## Class Presidents in the Sixties

1961-1962  
1962-1963  
1963-1964  
1964-1965  
1965-1966  
1966-1967  
1967-1968  
1968-1969  
1969-1970

We know that Erroll Eckford, Floyd Hale and Paul Ervin served as President during the sixties, but do not know the specific years.

## 1970-1975

During this time, another Sunday school class, which was originally called the Odd Couples, asked if they could join the Blazers. According to Margaret Blackstock, the reason they called themselves the Odd Couples was because none of them had children at that time which was odd for their age group, and because they met an hour later on Sunday morning at 11:00 AM. They later called themselves the Corinthians class. They became instant Blazers:

- **Mary Stewart and Chris Hagy**
- **Joyce and Keith Rueckert**
- **Margaret and Jerry Blackstock**
- **Mary and Dick Holmes**
- **Lindley and Warren Small**
- **Bryn and Ross Daniel**
- **Dotty and Earl Duckett**

In addition, several couples joined the Blazers class individually during this time. They included:

- **Gail and Larry Cummins**
- **Martha and Ken Carroll**
- **Marsha and Bob Grout**
- **Paula and Jim Grout**
- **Susu and Doug Cockrill**
- **Laurie and Pearce Hardwick**
- **Patricia and Larry Mashburn**
- **Pam and David Weeks**
- **Carole and Bob Covington**
- **Karen and Lowell Evjen**
- **Emily and Cliff Johnson**
- **Sherry and Bert Cloud**
- **Ki and Luke Curtis**
- **Priscilla and Jack Glass**
- **Janice and Kevin Dial**
- **Ann and Wesley Cash**

## Class Presidents in the Seventies

1970-1971	
1971-1972	Phil McGaughy
1972-1973	Bob Grout
1973-1974	
1974-1975	
1975-1976	
1976-1977	Larry Mashburn
1977-1978	Keith Rueckert
1978-1979	
1979-1980	Ken Carroll

## Social Events

Sara remembered many social events planned by the Blazers. She writes "Many memories ..I can't date them! I remember Christmas festivities, cooking turkeys at Linda & Dr. David Graham's house, square dancing in the great hall, a 1970 summer Hawaiian party at the Leadingham's house (Charlie King and Win Leadingham barbequed chicken all afternoon), a 1971 Las Vegas Days dinner party in honor of Wilton Dennis at Lin and Bill Black's house (the Blacks made 450 dessert crepes that afternoon, and during the party, the men danced in a dance line to Dwayne Eddie), white water rafting down the Oconee and the Chattochee Rivers, many fall weekend trips to Camp Rabun near Clayton, Georgia, and to Callaway Gardens with tennis tournaments at both places, and several shrimp and oyster parties at Patty and Charlie King's house where Charlie brought the oysters in gunny sacks from Florida. Then we started progressive Christmas parties at three houses (appetizer, main course and dessert) that eventually turned into one party at one house."

Lin remembers one of the earlier family trips to Callaway Gardens in April of 1979. It was to be a day trip since none of the members could afford to spend the night. A tour bus was rented, box lunches were ordered from the Callaway Gardens Inn, and plans were made to ride bikes, fish, and play golf. The day dawned cold and wet. There was thunder and lightening. No way would this be a fun day. Everyone was on board ready to go at 8:00 A.M. since we had paid our \$26/person fee. The last person to arrive was George Haas who climbed on the bus wearing a short-sleeve golf shirt, sun visor and carrying golf clubs over his shoulder. The Blazers hooted, but George insisted that we were going to have a great day. He was right. The sun was shining by the time we arrived, and we had a WONDERFUL time.

Edie Williams insists the Blazers had a Fabulous Fifties party. She remembers that George Haas came dressed as Elvis. (Where is George now, for heavens' sake?) It was the responsibility of Patty King, Sue Leadingham and Edie to come dressed in poodle skirts and swoon over George. Can you believe that Kent led the group that lip-synced to "Stranded in the Jungle"?

One Friday night dinner party involved four volunteers who agreed to prepare REAL spaghetti sauce from Lin Black's Italian grandmother's recipe. She picked up each huge pan of sauce and brought them all to the church where the pans were combined and served to the Blazers'. Needless to say, there was enough spaghetti for several dinner parties. The class also roller skated in the gym, swam in Jerry Bartenfield's brother's pool on Tuxedo Road, and took part in a Friday night scavenger hunt arranged by Edie Williams. They were supposed to end up at Ferrals' Ice Cream Parlor by the disco Kroger if the teams read their clues ("stepping off to the orient", "shadow on the lawn") correctly, which they did. Martha & Ken Carroll also remember the night the class went to the Crystal Palace Country Dance Hall. Actually, that wasn't so long ago (1993).

## Teachers

Volunteer teachers were responsible for the Sunday program in the early days. The very first teacher was George Bates who worked for Southern Bell and had recently been transferred from Birmingham. He and his wife were parents of several children and had many foster children as well, yet they were there every Sunday to guide the Young Marrieds. Errol Eckford remembers that when the class first met, everyone would select a seat from one of the rows in the back of the room. One morning, George waited patiently until everyone was seated and then picked up his podium and carried it to the back of the room facing the backs of the class members. He asked them to turn around, and now he was in the front of the room. George never had a problem with people sitting in the back of the room after that. Unfortunately, he had to leave the class in the spring of 1968. A Mr. Durwood Fincher, a church elder, was asked to fill in until a permanent replacement could be found. Elsie Thompson remembers that a Mr. Milton followed Durwood. We were very fortunate then because our job as class members was to simply show up each Sunday morning.

## Presents

The class appeared to be more generous in the early days. They gave each departing president a gift. Sara remembers that Phil received both a silver bowl with the years of his tenure engraved on the side for his first term and a silver picture frame for his second term, and Margaret received a friable cross. Flowers were sent to members who were ill. When Carole and Bob Rogers left the class in May, 1968, they were given the book **Leaves of Gold** from the class. Eleven couples signed it. Catherine Eckford remembers receiving a copy of the book too.

### Class Presidents in the Eighties

<b>1980-1981</b>	<b>Warren Small</b>
<b>1981-1982</b>	
<b>1982-1983</b>	<b>Jim Grout</b>
<b>1983-1984</b>	<b>Margaret Blackstock</b>
<b>1984-1985</b>	<b>Cliff Johnson</b>
<b>1985-1986</b>	
<b>1986-1987</b>	<b>Ki Curtis</b>
<b>1987-1988</b>	<b>Phil McGaughy</b>
<b>1988-1989</b>	<b>Elizabeth Moultrie</b>
<b>1989-1990</b>	<b>Priscilla Adams</b>

### Class Presidents in the Nineties

1990-1991	Matt Prickett
1991-1992	Ross Daniel
1992-1993	Dick Holmes
1993-1994	Ken Carroll
1994-1995	Kirk Wimberly
1995-1996	Eleanor Stewart
1996-1997	Bryn Daniel
1997-1998	Lynn and Peter Banks
1998-1999	Pearce Hardwick
1999-2000	Janice McGalliard

### Class Presidents in the Naughts

2000-2001	Carolyn Hearn
2001-2002	Kathy King
2002-2003	Peter Banks
2003-2004	Jim Breedlove
2004-2005	Johnny Allan

## Notes

We thank [Lin Black](#) for her dedication in researching and writing this **First Edition** of the Blazers History. Obviously a lot of work was required to produce this document. **THANKS LIN FOR DOING THIS FOR US.**

But this history will never really be complete. Our future history is being written now. But our past history still has some holes which we would like to fill. The list of Presidents is incomplete. We don't have names at all for some years, we know some who served as President ([Mac Nease](#), [Lowell Evjen](#), [Cliff Johnson](#)) but don't know the years, and some who served more than the one time shown here. **Please help us** fill in the blanks with information about yourself or others as you know it.

Current members names are shown in **red**. Please advise if we've missed any of these.

This history is weighted toward the early years as that is when Lin and Bill were first active in the Blazers. Certainly something happened in their brief time away and **we solicit your help** in adding that information. Perhaps something about your year as President or maybe just some other noteworthy events which you feel should be covered here----the trips to Callaway Gardens, Friday night progressive dinners, square dances, bunko games at the Rueckerts, and who knows what else. Put on your thinking cap and see if you can help make our history more complete. Please call or [e-mail Lin](#) if you can help.