

Getting to Know Our UUCSC Board of Directors—Bill Rodriguez

As many of you know, the UUCSC Board of Directors is a talented and energetic group. I feel so fortunate to work with each and every one of them. Each time we gather I learn a little bit about these interesting folks and I always want to know more. It occurred to me that the congregation might also like to know more about our current leadership team. I have decided to interview each of them over the next year and share what I learn with our congregation. I asked Bill Rodriguez if he would go first.

Bill Rodriguez and I sat down after service. We enjoyed a cup of coffee together and a lot of laughs. I learned that he grew up Catholic in Passaic, New Jersey, son of Gertrude Donna Crucificia Loggia. It has been a long journey from altar boy in Passaic to the UUCSC. I asked him why he decided to serve on the UUCSC Board of Directors. He said that he likes to be helpful and welcomes the idea of taking on tasks that the congregation needs done. I will certainly not let him forget that he said that. One of the challenges for me as President is writing these monthly columns. I now know that I am working alongside an accomplished writer and editor that can help me over this hurdle.

For me, writing is a chore that I try to avoid if possible. Bill has been writing since he was old enough to hold a pencil. One of his proudest moments was in fourth grade when one of his classmates was positive that he could not have written the extraordinary piece he had shared in class. Bill spent many years writing for one of my favorite publications, *The Providence Phoenix*. Interviewing and writing about creative people is his specialty. He was also the editor of the *Arts and Leisure* section of the *Narragansett Times* and has had pieces published in the *New York Times*. In addition to writing, Bill enjoys spending time with his wife Johnnie, who you might know as the coordinator of the amazing *Music and More at Lily Pads*.

I bet you are wondering how Bill met Johnnie? In the late 1960's after finishing his studies at Northeastern and Boston University, Bill was a self-described scruffy taxi driver. Bill's best friend Jerry was dating the lovely young Johnnie at the time. After Jerry returned from a visit to California, he found that Bill and Johnnie had kept each other company in his absence. They have continued to enjoy each other's company and celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary! If you are wondering about how Jerry made out, just ask Bill because they have remained close over the years.

I asked Bill what brought him to the UUCSC. He said he needed the strength of community after the tragedy at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. In the seven years that he has been attending, he values our Sunday worship service and the comfort that it brings. He especially enjoys watching the children listen to the stories each week. It gives him hope about the future.

I appreciated Bill sitting down with me and sharing his story. Everyone at UUCSC comes with an interesting story. We should take the time to ask each other what has brought us together and why we keep coming back.

Warmly,

Natalie Herbermann, December 2019