

Our Stories—Larry Kelland

When Larry Kelland retired from URI in 2008, his brother told him that he should retire *to* something not just retire *from* his job. Larry thought that was a wise idea but he didn't yet have a clear idea what or where he was retiring *to*. The first thing he did was to go on a cruise with a group of high school buddies. Larry's love of nature has lured him to several locations around the world but Alaska is one that he has visited a few times—he is absolutely taken with the grandeur of the glaciers.

Not long after returning from this trip Larry found himself curious about the Unitarian Universalist Congregation meeting at the American Legion Hall. His research told him that the UU Church was liberal and not dogmatic. When he decided to check it out, the very first person that he met was Val Follett whose hugs and warm welcome have drawn many people to return after their first Sunday morning visit. Larry enjoyed the services and was particularly interested when a woman from the Jonnycake Center gave a presentation on the organization and the need for volunteers. He ended up being a volunteer at the Center and he soon realized that he had found his "to". He was retiring *to* the UUCSC and related service activities.

Born in East Orange, NJ Larry has had a lifelong interest in science and nature. He attended Rutgers University and then earned his PhD from Princeton. He taught biology at the college level until the mid-70s when many small colleges were closing due to the recession. On the advice of a friend, he decided to expand his opportunities by returning to school to get a Master's Degree in Library Science (MLS). He finished the often two-year program in just one year at City University of NY, Queen's College. Now he could combine these new skills with his already strong science background. The first job that he took was at the University of Georgia in Athens, a city known for its beautiful antebellum architecture. He next worked at Clemson University in South Carolina before landing a position at URI in 1984, a move that allowed him to be closer to family. URI was a good fit and he worked there for 24 years as a reference librarian covering science topics. He did research for students and faculty and taught classes in scientific library research.

At UUCSC Larry has been involved with the Green Task Force working to gain and maintain UUCSC's accreditation as a nationally recognized Green Sanctuary. He is participating in the Antiracism Group formed in March 2020 in response to the death of George Floyd. This group, supported by the Racial Justice Committee, meets weekly by Zoom to educate and advocate for racial justice. Two subgroups meet alternately on Monday evenings; one is an action committee focusing on promoting justice through various initiatives, the other is a study group currently working through the book "My Grandmother's Hands, Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies" by Resmaa Menakem. A third interest for Larry is the UU Animal Ministry, a group devoted to the welfare of animals which he connects with via email and phone. Larry has given three lay sermons at UUCSC focusing on science and the place of human beings in the living world.

Larry feels most spiritual in the presence of nature and spurred by his love of nature he has traveled widely and mentions as his favorite places the coastal redwood forests in California, Tahiti and many sites in Australia. Of particular note is the night sky in Australia with the brilliant stars of the Southern Cross and the "glorious" Milky Way stretching from one horizon to the other.

Larry's hobbies include travel, photography, bird watching and classical music and he reads a lot, primarily scientific journals. He has had much to keep busy with during the pandemic. Though he has kept connected to UUCSC through his participation in online groups including the Men's Breakfast Zoom he is looking forward to returning to Sunday services in our sanctuary at Lily Pads.

Elizabeth Donovan, March 2021