

FFWPU USA: 1982 Marriage Blessing - Then and Now

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July 1, 1982 is seen as a major turning point in Unification history. In just one day, the American movement went from being primarily single people to one of married couples. More than 60 percent of the couples were either interracial or intercultural. A large percentage of Unificationists participated in the record-setting Marriage Blessing Ceremony officiated by Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, affectionately known as True Parents, at New York City's Madison Square Garden arena.

We asked three couples from the 1982 Blessing to share about their journey celebrating 38 years together.



Larry and Akemi Krishnek

My wife and I were matched in 1979 and received the blessing in 1982 at Madison Square Garden. I remember that I felt a strong sense that I should have a Japanese partner because I felt it would balance my character. My wife, on the other hand, wasn't sure if she wanted an international blessing, but then she decided to go for it. My wife is very public-minded; she is very involved and engaged all the time in mission work and has a strong faith. I think the basis for our enduring marriage and love is our strong faith in God. We really love and respect each other, although I am more of a romantic than her. We raised our four children in Northwest Washington and we are all very close; now we have five grandchildren! I am very happy that my kids really love each other and are very involved in each other's lives. They also want their own children to be with their grandparents all the time, so that is really a blessing for us. Our

journey amazes me sometimes; I look at my wife and see that our marriage is a real testament to how the blessing brings together people of very different backgrounds. We are in the happiest stage of our life right now, working with wonderful people while doing mission work, and building a beautiful family that continues to grow.



David and Agnes Rendel

I joined the Unification movement in 1975 in Oakland, California, while I was on a spiritual journey. I was from Indiana and had studied musical composition at Indiana University. My wife Agnes and I were matched in 1981 and received the blessing at Madison Square Garden in 1982. As a native of France, my wife could not speak a word of English so we really couldn't communicate. I had no idea what to expect, but I was really open to anyone and putting God first in my life. The blessing was a total departure from anything we had ever anticipated in our lives, but it was the best decision my wife and I have ever made. I felt she had a very pure and strong faith, which was the most important thing to me. Public outreach and fundraising has been our lifestyle. My wife is very stable and intelligent and her character balances my more impulsive character, so I think we complement each other well. We have one daughter who we raised in the suburbs of Chicago. She is now in college studying music education. She felt a strong passion for choral music and sings in a number of music groups. She's a really good kid who has never been in trouble. The three of us are very close, and while our daughter is away at school, we close the day together each night with prayer. One of the most important aspects of my family's relationship is our faith. Considering the journey that we have been through in life, we realize family and faith are the most important things. The more grateful I am, the more I feel love and value, individually and through my family. It isn't always easy, but my family strives to maintain a heart of gratitude and to be thankful for the gifts in our lives.



Jorg and Ayako Heller

My husband and I were matched in 1979 and received the blessing in 1982 at Madison Square Garden. He is German and I am Japanese, so our relationship was a challenge culturally. We also did mission work in Harlem. My husband was working toward the launch of The Washington Times, while we both worked many years at the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA headquarters, where I just retired this year. We have stayed in Harlem all these years, having raised six children, and now we have two grandchildren. We focused a lot on our mission work as a couple, but we continue to strengthen our relationship with our kids, who are all very close to each other. Though we faced many challenges as a couple, we overcame these things through our faith. People know us quite well in our neighborhood and my husband and I have built a lot of great relationships in Harlem. The neighborhood has changed dramatically and we believe that we have had some influence in bringing a beautiful atmosphere to our community. Living here brought my husband and I closer together; we had to be united and have a strong, supportive mindset. Our marriage has been a real blessing to us with God and True Parents at the center.