

I'm grateful to have met the Unification Church in 1979 and being Blessed in 1982

Malinda Vogel
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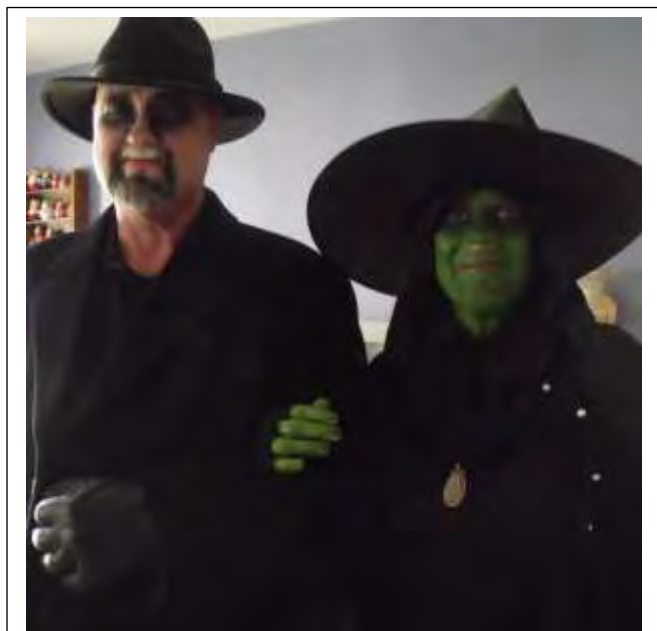
Steve and Malinda Vogel on July 1, 1982, Madison Square Garden

I feel grateful to have been able to introduced to the Unification Movement in 1979. I was raised Catholic, but I wanted someone to teach me how to put my faith into practice. After meandering through different faiths, from Catholicism, other forms of Christianity, Sufism, to Buddhism, I found the Unification Church and True Parents. I had finally found my spiritual teacher.

I was matched to Steve right before we received the Blessing in 1982. At the time, I was with a group of people in the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP). A group of women in CARP sewed our white dresses, taking such good care of the fitting and preparing of them for our Blessing Ceremony. The others fundraised so that we could head to New York by van, and check into the New Yorker Hotel. We fundraised again in the busy streets of New York City, eventually buying our gloves, veils, and heels.

I remember being so excited to see True Parents and the True Children. In particular, I had looked up to Heung Jin Moon. Steve, my match and my husband-to-be, somehow was able to introduce me to Heung Jin. On top of

that, Steve gave me one of Father's speeches that was signed by Heung Jin! The Blessing had yet to happen, and I was already receiving so many blessings.



Now: Steve and Malinda on Halloween of 2016

When the big day arrived on July 1, 1982, I had lost sleep over whether I would be able to find Steve among all the thousands of blue-suited men. I recall the unbelievable procession of brides and grooms through the lobby of the New Yorker Hotel. I felt a tap on the shoulder and heaved a sigh of relief. It was Steve.

We crossed the street and headed over to the Garden to the sound of honking taxis and well-wishers. When we made way to True Parents during the ceremony to receive the Holy Water, I recall believing True Mother was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen. I had such a deep, wonderful experience, as many of my friends had gotten married on the same day, in the same place as I did.

As I look back on July 1, 1982, the memories feel bittersweet, poignant. My husband Steve

ascended March 4th of this year, having lost his three year battle with colo-rectal cancer. This is my first anniversary without him. But it is a comfort knowing that he is with the Heavenly Parent and True Father. Steve walking together with True Father, in spirit, is also a blessing. Thank you, True Parents.

Love,

Malinda Vogel