

## Ted and Willetta Rissell

*Members since 1967*



We joined the yacht club in 1967 when it had about 65 member families. Ted had sailed some, in fact had built his own *Jet 14* from a kit and we were very excited to be transferred by Hercules Co. to Cumberland with its nearby lake. Up to that time, we had sailed but were not *sailors*. It took a couple of years and many races for us to reach that level and to be accepted fully by the membership.

We were anxious for our kids to enjoy sailing, so the winter of 1970 Ted and several other fathers agreed to build 8' *El Toro* boats, and Ed Gibbs, a club member and an outstanding sailor, would teach them to sail. (Up until that time it was not customary for children to be at the club.)

It was quite comical to see Ed sailing around followed by a line of 6 young sailors. Our son, Kevin took to sailing “like a duck takes to water” and just recently commented that owning his own boat and being able to go wherever he wanted gave him such a feeling of confidence and accomplishment.

Ted quickly became involved in the upkeep of the club and was in line to become Commodore in 1978. That was a momentous year because Ted, along with Secretary, Mike Belmonte, and aided by attorney Susie Crawford, were able to complete the sale of the club from the previous owners.

Always interested in teaching young people to sail, Ted and Dan Muss organized a small group in 1993 and enlisted our son, Kevin, as head instructor. Those founders attended a training course, led by Joni Palmer in Annapolis, so they would be properly qualified to accept students. The first year 10 students were enrolled. Interestingly, one of those students later married a Brazilian man and together they, in their 70 foot boat, now guide tours for scientists in Southern and Antarctic waters.

While Ted was starting the sailing school his wife, Willie, was busy learning how to build a website and started a site to communicate with, and keep members “in the know.” She maintained the site for many years until Quoc Tran joined the club; he took it over and gave it a much more professional appearance.



*Stained glass compass rose  
created by Willie in 1995*

In 1995, Willie had her own stained glass business, and when Harry Filemyr, who was building the western pavilion, asked her to make a compass rose panel for one of the proposed lights, she accepted eagerly. The original proposed location was discarded when a couple of members offered to place it in the peak of the western wall, where it now shines brightly on sunny days.

Later on Ted was honored to receive the “Sportsman of the Year” award, an award given annually by the Deep Creek Yacht Racing Association to the person who has done much to encourage sailboat racing. And Daughter Kathy was given the award for organizing a Junior Laser Racing fleet. Kevin was also recognized for reorganizing the Laser Fleet.

Looking back, we are reminded how much this club has meant to us as individuals and as a family. It had a healthy atmosphere of mutual respect, sportsmanship and concern for others. It encouraged working together for common goals and was a safe place for kids to grow and blossom. It was a center for wholesome social activity and for building lasting friendships. It anchored all of our lives in a very meaningful way.

~Willetta “Willie” Rissell, July 2020