

GUARANTOR SPOTLIGHT – *Bringing family and friends to the Bach Festival – Sue & George Driesen* by Cheryl Dungan

EACH YEAR AT FESTIVAL, Sue and George Driesen of Maryland eagerly greet new friends and welcome back the many Guarantors for whom the Festival has become a longstanding tradition, which often includes bringing others from their circle of friends and family. Two of their children love Bach and attend with their spouses.

Guarantors since 1971, Sue and George have been joining us at Festival since they were first introduced to The Choir by a friend, Selma Levine. A lawyer and music lover for whom the Levine School of Music is named, Selma told the Driesens about the Bach Festival and encouraged them to come. They note, “...one spring about 56 years ago, we came to the festival to see for ourselves and loved it. During that first visit we sat on the lawn at intermission and sang rounds and madrigals with Selma. We’ve only missed one year since.”

Certain Festival memories stand out for Sue and George, who note the performances of the Paul Taylor dance group and the recent performance of She-e Wu on the marimba. They add: “Our most special memory is when Arlene Auger was a soloist in the Mass. That was unforgettable.”

Just this past June, Sue and George celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary with their three children and six grandchildren. Sue shared that she and George first met at a summer camp when they were around 15. As the saying goes, the rest is history.

Sue is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and was a modern dance teacher, actress, and singer before becoming a copyeditor



at the policy journal *Health Affairs*, where she worked for 20 years. Sue now freelances as a copyeditor. In addition to sharing George’s love of Bach’s music, she still enjoys singing, mostly from the American Songbook.

George is a graduate of Harvard College, Yale Law School, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. He worked as a labor lawyer for 33 years before becoming

a rabbi. He is a senior scholar at Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, MD. George has found the music of J.S. Bach to be a source of religious inspiration and ideas that he uses in a culturally transformed manner in his work, especially in the area of interfaith relations.

George is also a nature lover with a strong interest in science. He established the Institute for Science and Judaism in the Washington, DC area and has travelled to see many of the natural wonders of the earth. He shared a photo of the Northern Lights, which he captured during a recent visit to Churchill, Canada, reflecting that “The Northern Lights are never still. The eerie feeling these soundless motions impart suggests dancing.”

In response to our thanks for their generous and increasing support of The Bach Choir, George and Sue commented that “The experience of hearing the choir and the other special performers nourishes us, and we must do our part to keep the music playing.”

(Note: To read George’s complete reflections and see photos from his trip to Churchill, Canada, please visit Bach.org)