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# Generation to Generation: Green Family Tree Has Deep Roots in Cedarville

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# *Generation* to **GENERATION**

**GREEN FAMILY TREE HAS DEEP ROOTS IN CEDARVILLE**

**BY CLEM BOYD**

Fifteen hours. That's the time it takes by car to get from Lakeland, Florida, to Cedarville, Ohio. If you're planning a trip to Lakeland, situated halfway between Tampa and Orlando, that information might be helpful. But if ever you want to know more details, like the best places to eat, interesting side trips, or good hotels, you should contact the Green family. They know the route between Ohio and Florida very, very, very well.





Any gathering of Greens also means a Yellow Jacket reunion, as occurred at last year's wedding of Jenna (Green) Berkey '13 to Zach Berkey on New Year's Eve 2016. The ceremony took place at Heritage Baptist Church in Lakeland, Florida.

So far, 27 Green family members, or related family members, have attended Cedarville University. Or are still attending. Because the Green team keeps sending new recruits to Yellow Jacket territory.

If you ask the first generation that sent multiple kids to Cedarville, it all started with their uncle Ray Erickson '57. "Our family attended Euclid Nottingham Baptist Church in Euclid, Ohio," noted Dan Green '80, the second Green to attend Cedarville and one of the University's newest trustees.

"Some of the leaders of the Baptist Bible Institute (BBI) were leaders in the circle of churches up there. Ray was looking for a Christian school, so he attended Cedarville." In 1953, BBI, located in Cleveland, merged with what was then Cedarville College.

Even though the Green family tree runs deeply through Cedarville's history, by the time Dan considered going to college, his parents had uprooted a number of times — from Cleveland to Florida, then Boston, back to Cleveland, then finally to Florida again when Dan started seventh grade.

"When I graduated from high school, I was planning to attend the University of Florida," he explained. "I had been accepted and I was ready to go, with some friends coming with me. But my parents (Doug and Gail Green), requested that I attend a Christian college for at least one year, and that was OK with me."

Mom and Dad Green suggested Cedarville. "So, sight unseen, I applied, was accepted, and I drove with my folks to the cornfields of Cedarville, Ohio, in 1976."

Dan and his parents met with then-President James T. Jeremiah, who offered encouragement to the would-be Gator about his decision to try his wings at Cedarville. "I moved into

Cedar Park, which is married housing now, on the other side of the railroad tracks (now the Prairie Grass Bike Trail)," he said. "My parents dropped me off, and my mom left crying. But within a week, I knew it was the place for me.

"I had no desire to go back to a state school or to transfer out," Dan continued. "Cedarville was exactly right for me." Dan graduated with bachelor's degrees in accounting and Bible and is a partner at Wheelock Street Capital, a real estate investment firm.

Several years later, Dan's younger brother Alan '82 would follow, then sister Sandy (Green) Nilius '86, and last of all, baby brother Mike '88. "Three of us found our spouses at Cedarville," Dan said. "My wife, Julie (Hutchins) '81, and her brother Barry '83 went to Cedarville. My brothers and brother-in-law found their spouses there. My brother's kids have attended Cedarville; all four of my kids attended, and three of them found their spouses at Cedarville. Julie and I have a nephew and a niece attending there right now.

"It's been a good run."

## DEEP-ROOTED REASONS

But what was it? What exactly convinced four siblings to attend the same school? Of course, having the influence of an older brother can be big. But was it something more?

"Dr. Dixon used to come to our church and speak," Alan said. "When he was named president, we knew we'd be in good hands."

Also, Dan played tennis for Cedarville. "The team would come down to Lakeland during spring break," Alan continued. "My dad was a developer, and one of his developments was

a tennis center, so they'd go there. Some of the team would stay with us, along with their coach, Dr. Murdoch. He's a special guy. It helped to meet other people involved in athletics."

The last kid can sometimes be the maverick, choosing to go his own way. But for Mike Green, the experience and example of his siblings made his college choice extremely easy. "I trusted my brothers and sister implicitly," he said. "If it was good enough for them, it was good enough for me. I never even considered another school."

And it worked out pretty well for Mike. He met his wife, Missy (Hall) '88, his second week on campus. "We dated for the rest of my freshman, sophomore, and junior years, then we married between junior and senior year," he said. "We graduated as a married couple. A Christian college is a great place to meet your mate." He graduated with a bachelor's degree in accounting and is a partner with his brother Alan in their Lakeland-based construction company, Green Construction.

For some students, making their own way apart from family is one goal of the college experience. Not so for Sandy, who earned her bachelor's degree in education and teaches third grade at Lakeland Christian School. "My cousin Brian Green '85 was attending at the same time, and his unit in Lawlor and my unit in Printy really hung out together," she said, noting the halls housed other class years besides freshmen then. "It was great just having that person I could call and say, 'What time are you having lunch today?'"

Older brother Alan, and his wife, Donna (Dennis) '82, who married between sophomore and junior year, lived in a home near campus. "I would go to their house and take my friends along," Sandy said. "Being that far away from home, it meant a lot to have someone familiar nearby. I had friends, too, but I loved having family there."

For all the Green siblings, and their extended family, Cedarville's unwavering commitment to integrating Scripture in every discipline has been a strong pull.

"Academics are always important, but you can get that at many good universities," Dan said. "That biblical integration was critical, and we wanted to put our kids in that environment, too."

"Everybody that graduates from Cedarville has that Bible minor," added Alan. "That's a great foundation for kids to understand and own their faith. And that's not just a hope; that's an expectation based on history. I came out of Cedarville owning my faith.

"It goes beyond career. We know that God's going to direct their careers, but that biblical worldview goes with them throughout their entire lives."

And there are the people who have impacted the Greens. "To be around other Christians, that's a good place to cultivate those relationships with people of like mind," Dan said. "This saying created a couple years ago — friends for life — I believe that. Some of our closest friends went to school with us, and our kids grew up with their kids, and then we'll rendezvous back at school because their kids chose Cedarville as well."

What about the next Green wave — the grandkids? Will Cedarville roots reach into their generation?

"My kids are 7 and 9, and I'd like to see them go there," noted Dan's oldest son, Matt '05, who earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and is CFO at Lakeland Christian School. "I know it's a great environment for kids to grow into adults and chew on different ideas while also being in a familiar place. I know how important my time at Cedarville was in shaping me and who I am in Christ.

"Cedarville is so ingrained in who we are as Greens," he continued. "As I look to the future, to know there is this solid school, a place that we can all look back on and see how Cedarville has shaped our family through the lens of the Gospel. Cedarville is part of our family's story."

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**Clem Boyd** is Managing Editor of Cedarville Magazine.

The Green family has ties to Cedarville that start in 1953, when their uncle first attended. Here's a list of all the Green connections:

- Ray Erickson '57
- Mark Warren '79
- Sharon (Green) Warren '79
- Dan Green '80
- Julie (Hutchins) Green '81
- Alan Green '82
- Donna (Dennis) Green '82
- Barry Hutchins '83
- Brian Green '83
- Rose Mary (Rasmusson) Hutchins '84
- Steve Erickson '85
- Sandy (Green) Nilius '86
- Mike Green '88
- Missy (Hall) Green '88
- Kelly (Issakainen) Green '05, M.Ed. '15
- Matt Green '05
- Joel Green '07
- Terri (Schenk) Green '08
- Nicole Green '09
- Tim Green '11
- Alison (Scharold) Green '12
- Jenna (Green) Berkey '13
- Bethany Green '14
- Stephen Green '17
- Kaylee (Andreas) Green '18
- David Green '19
- Abigail Nilius '19