

People service at Plant Services

Celebrating Barry Wilson & Ron Norton's years of dedication

FROM AN EARLY AGE, BARRY WILSON helped his uncle and grandfather with electrical and repair jobs. Consequently, his uncle tried to convince him to work for Andrews University. After two years of college and three years of marriage with Dianne Wilson, he applied to work at Andrews University, and began working on the construction crew in 1978. In 1982, after his construction job concluded, Wilson's life took a different turn. During this time, he taught swim lessons and lifeguarded at the YMCA, helped with the YMCA maintenance, and completed electrical/construction/maintenance side jobs for various clients.

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One summer day, five years later, the University called and asked if he would return to work at Andrews. Fast forward... Wilson has worked a total of 35 years at Andrews University, 27 of them as electrical foreman, and the rest as an electrician and HVAC technician.

When asked what he admired and appreciated about working at Andrews, Wilson said, “I really enjoyed the fact that if I needed to take time off for family, I could do it. We adopted our daughter from Brazil, and the adoption process took almost 18 years.” Throughout this process, he described Andrews University as being helpful and understanding. “We were treated as if she was our daughter already.”

Wilson also appreciates how he can mention God on campus, specifically the way that God has protected him throughout his life. “I've worked places outside of campus where you mention God's protection and you get ridiculed.” He described an experience with the high voltage system where he barehanded 2,400 volts and lived to tell about it. “The Good Lord saw fit to keep me around...I know

several times he's protected me and others I was with. He's still got something for me to do.”

Ultimately, Wilson refuses to take God's protection for granted, and he actively continues to serve others. Rooted in God's promise, “I will never leave you or forsake you,” he desires to show others this promise as well. “You can always find someone in worse shape, and you can always find someone in better shape,” he says. Although he retired in December, Wilson still holds to this mentality of helping others. He still teaches swimming lessons at Andrews University and serves with the local fire department in Berrien Springs.

Another serving individual for Andrews University is Ron Norton. Before retiring in December, he worked at Andrews for about 28 years as a plumber, operator of the wastewater treatment plant, and lastly as an HVAC technician.

Much of Ron's life has revolved around Andrews and the surrounding area. He originally came to Andrews as a student, but after various interests fell through, he ended up pursuing a career in maintenance, which led to his first job at Andrews.

He says, “One of the interesting things is, I have never gone out and looked for a job. The Lord just kind of put them there. It felt like that's where the Lord wanted me to be.”

When asked about his experience at Andrews University he says, “One thing I appreciate about working in a Christian institution is if you don't know something for sure there are people that you can ask...I've been in places where not knowing is a way for the next person to get ahead of you. I've appreciated working at the University because it is a team and you work together to solve problems.”

Norton also enjoyed talking about spiritual things in the work environment.



Barry Wilson



Ron Norton

Many of his days were spent working in student apartments or dormitories. While working, he loved to talk about God to any willing audience. “When I would get done, I would have prayer with them before I left.” Praying is one way that Norton has consistently tried to follow one of his favorite, guiding verses, Proverbs 3:6: “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (KJV). Now that he is retired, Norton strives to continue ministering to others by finishing a book that he began seven years ago. The book is centered around the Bible passage of 2 Chronicles 7:14, and he has felt impressed by God to finish it.

Overall, Norton's reflection captures the steadfast dedication that both he and Barry Wilson have put into Andrews University. “Because you're just going by, year by year, you don't think that you're going to retire here...Time flew.”