

1-3-1974

## Four Flats News Article

George Fox University Archives

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/fourflats\\_papers](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/fourflats_papers)

---

### Recommended Citation

George Fox University Archives, "Four Flats News Article" (1974). *Four Flats Papers*. 110.  
[https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/fourflats\\_papers/110](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/fourflats_papers/110)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the The Four Flats at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Four Flats Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolfe@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolfe@georgefox.edu).



Admiring "his" tree is GFC Chaplain Ronald Crecelius. Being preserved ever though it is in the middle of a parking lot, the tree was planted by Crecelius and his wife when they were George Fox students in 1947. The rest of the surrounding landscape has changed and the Crecelius's former apartment is gone but the tree is being saved out of sentiment.

## College Willow Tree Has Special Meaning

It's in the way. It's in a poor location and it's not a perfect example of its species. For GFC Chaplain Ronald Crecelius the 30-foot tall willow tree surrounded by asphalt near Pennington Hall has special meaning. He and his wife planted it 26 years ago while students at the college.

But its life is assured and it's being protected even though it stands in the center of a parking lot at George Fox College.

Now with a limb spread of nearly 40 feet and measuring nearly four feet around, the tree was just a two-foot branch when Mrs. Crecelius planted it near the back steps of the young couple's apartment.

"Plant" is not really the word, according to Crecelius. "She really just stuck it in the ground; she can make anything grow." And grow it did. That thin willow branch from Mrs. Crecelius's parents farm near Gresham is a full tree.

It was planted in June, 1947, shortly after the Crecelius's were married and moved into the next-to-the-end apartment in a chain of units of housing moved to the campus from surplus military housing after the war.

The old "vet's village" was razed in 1962 and replaced by a modern 100-student residence hall. But when the ground was leveled and other shrubs and trees bulldozed away the willow tree was spared.

The protection came from the then-president Milo Ross who remembered a casual conversation with Crecelius when he

returned to campus for a visit and mentioned the growing tree and why it was significant to him.

When Vancouver architect Donald Lindgren was hired to draw plans for the dormitory and surrounding area he was instructed by Ross to preserve the tree. He did.

"It wasn't the world's greatest tree, kind of beat-up," Ross recalls. "But it had some significance so we went around it and it's getting a bit more gentle upbringing now." During his presidency Ross also gained regional attention when he had two large redwood trees saved in an unusual project that involved excavating huge holes, preparing a sliding ramp and then pushing the trees by bulldozer along the slide into their new locations dozens of feet further away to make way for another new building. Both trees survived the move despite their size and age and still stand on the west campus.

"I was really amazed they kept it," says Crecelius, a 1948 GFC graduate, who discovered on a later visit his willow tree had been spared.

Crecelius returned to the campus as chaplain in 1968, coming from a position of chaplain at Azusa Pacific College and following a singing career as a member of the "Four Flats" and "World Vision" quartets.

The Chaplain's Tree has no plaque stating its quarter century of history and its start. But Crecelius jokingly says that might be an appropriate thing "for our beloved little tree."