

Linda (Leslie) and Rick Murphy
Morristown, NJ



Current club: Reelers
Former club: Rutgers Promenaders

How did you start square dancing?

Linda: I think most of us can remember square dancing during gym class. But I first learned that square dancing could be a club activity while I lived at Scott AFB in Illinois. My parents wanted me to do an activity to meet people and signed me up. One of the sergeants on base was a caller and he had organized a club for teens. That was my introduction to what I guess I would call “organized square dancing.” The club fell apart during Operation Homecoming, the return of the Vietnam POWs, as the sergeant was heavily involved in it.
Rick: Other than gym class, as Linda mentioned, my first involvement was seeing an advertisement for the Promenaders’ Hi-Lo dance in the college newspaper during my freshman year at Rutgers. I went to the Hi-Lo’s at the beginning of each semester freshman and sophomore years, and bit the bullet and took lessons at the beginning of junior year.

What year did you meet? 1980 And marry? 1981

[Square dancing wasn’t a part of our wedding.] Our wedding was very small (less than 40 people). But the church, which was very small, looked filled to capacity. The reception was very informal and held at Linda’s parents’ house.

Circumstances of your meeting and dating?

Linda: During my senior year at Douglass College I had a friend who was a member of Rutgers Promenaders. She talked my roommate and me into going to the Hi-Lo at the beginning of the fall semester. That was the first time I saw Rick. I didn’t really get to know him until the lessons. Rick was one of the angels.

Rick: I danced at Rutgers starting my junior year, and continued going to the Promenaders dances as an alumnus after I graduated. It was about 1½ years after my graduation that Linda and I met.

Favorite square dance memories?

Linda: One of my most memorable experiences was a Hi-Lo (intro to square dancing) at Rutgers. We had our dance in the multi-purpose room of the Rutgers Student Center. I believe the caller for the tip was Alan Gopin. He put on a loud disco song and had us dancing so fast and furious. Students were coming into the room to see what was going on. I’m pretty sure they never expected to see square dancing going on to a disco song. Another great memory was my first convention in Charlotte, NC. I had expected to feel self-conscious walking around in public in square dance attire. But when there are how-many-thousands others doing the same thing, it seemed very normal. Then the dance halls! It seemed like we should all have felt squished, there were so many of us. It was wonderful. And it was non-stop. It amazed me how many people were from outside of North America. We danced with people from England, South Africa, Germany, Japan – the list could keep going.

Rick: Probably the most memorable experience for me was the first national convention I attended in Milwaukee in 1979. It was memorable for the same reasons Linda mentioned: the crowds of people on public streets in square dance attire, the sheer number of people in the dance halls, from everywhere, and the fun of all the dancing.

Anything else?

Rejoining square dancing was one of the best decisions we ever made. The people we have met have been some of the kindest, nicest, and friendliest. The best squares we have been in have been those that can laugh at the breakdowns but keep on dancing. We can't help but dance with a smile on our faces as we twirl, bump hips, and dosado with everyone!