

St. Francis of the Salvatorians

Br. Roger Nelson SDS

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Animals have been a big part of life for Br. Roger Nelson SDS. "There were always animals in our house when I was growing up. I fell in love with the milkman's horse," he said. Not surprisingly, during the summer months away from his teaching, he found his way to Camp St. Charles and was affectionately deemed the St. Francis of the Salvatorians.

His first assignment took him to Phoenix City, Alabama where he taught for seven years: History class at first until a science position opened up. "First thing I did was get a gerbil for the classroom," he said. Teaching opened the

door to working at camp during the summer months. "We loaded camp with alligators, monkeys, snakes and ponies. People thought we were a circus," he laughed. "The hard part was finding a home for the horses once camp closed for the season." The other animals tended to travel with Br. Roger and became a part of his academic year lesson plan and classroom fun until they could return to camp.

For a period he worked at a group home in D.C where his animals were therapeutic. That year-round ministry meant giving up camp. It wasn't long before another teaching position opened and Br. Roger and his animals were invited to apply.

He was back at camp the following summer. The horse program developed. He became a certified instructor and riding bare back was the norm. "Kids would take the horses into the water so far that their legs would float back. It was a marvelous sensation for them."

"I loved camp. Was there for nearly 40 years," he said. "The best part is they'd come back as adults, come see me and share with their kids and grandkids the stories and all about the 'unique' Brother Roger."



Br. Roger enjoyed sharing the wonder of "Igg" the iguana with campers.



As director of the "Nature Wagon" Br. Roger was rumored to be the St. Francis of the Salvatorians.

Asked how he felt about being called the St. Francis of the Salvatorians, he said, "I'm honored. I loved him. He lived a simple life."



Br. Roger back for visit at camp.

