



# Learning Institute for Elders

February, 2011

[www.life.ucf.edu](http://www.life.ucf.edu)

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**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary      1991-2011**



Office of the President

20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

February 1, 2011

Dear Members of LIFE at UCF:

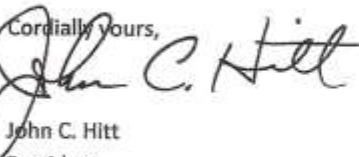
On behalf of the University of Central Florida community, I extend our warmest congratulations to the Learning Institute for Elders at UCF on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Since I arrived at UCF in 1992, one of my five goals for the university has been to be America's leading partnership university. Since that time, we have been successful in establishing many partnerships that have contributed greatly to UCF's standing as the nation's second largest public university. LIFE at UCF is among the pioneers of our university's partnerships, and the relationship between LIFE and UCF is unique among the more than 400 lifelong-learning programs across the nation.

While this university has provided LIFE with access to the many rich resources of our great university, LIFE has provided the university with a vibrant model of successful aging and lifelong learning. Faculty members from all of our colleges and several of our centers and institutes have offered courses to share their expertise and passion with LIFE participants. LIFE members, in turn, have provided our faculty members with their attentive engagement along with penetrating questions that mirror their rich life experiences.

The University has also benefited from the stewardship of LIFE members. Through its annual grants program, LIFE has contributed more than \$300,000 to our academic programs.

The 20-year partnership between UCF and LIFE has been extraordinarily successful, and both partners look forward to many more years of this dynamic relationship. Congratulations on this historic anniversary.

Cordially yours,  
  
John C. Hitt  
President



1991-2011

**PAST PRESIDENTS**  
**of**  
**LEARNING INSTITUTE**  
**for the**  
**ELDERLY**

1991	Roy Connally
1992	Richard O'Sullivan
1993	Al Dallago
1994	Al Dallago
1995	Ed Callan
1996	Hy Meltz
1997	Rosemary DeSamper
1998	Al Dallago
1999	Rosemary DeSamper
2000	Al Dallago
2001	John Pellosie
2002	John Pellosie
2003	Ed Haddad
2004	Ed Haddad
2005	Ray Jones
2006	Ray Jones
2007	Doug Garner
2008	Doug Garner
2009	Chuck Fritz
2010	Chuck Fritz

**A Congratulatory Message . . .**

Having just come from a community where Steve and I hosted Elderhostel groups on our former campus, I saw the value in enriching courses for seniors. So when Louise Franklin-Sheehy called to tell me about the idea to create a program at UCF, I was thrilled to do whatever I could to make it happen.

From that seed, LIFE blossomed into a vibrant and enriching organization for its members. People like Louise, Dr. Dick Tucker, the late Roy Connally and many others provided momentum and support. With our promise to make sure the program is run by seniors who plan, implement and evaluate it, I am not surprised that it has grown and become as successful as it has. I am very proud to have been involved in its inception. It's all about the quality of life/LIFE! Happy 20 years and many more.

*~Judy Altman  
 Charter Member, 1991*

**A Sampling**  
**LIFE COURSES**  
**OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS**

Life & Music of J.S. Bach  
 U.S. Presidents  
 Space Policy in 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
 Satire in Literature  
 Irish Poetry  
 Creative Writing: It was a time when . . .  
 Tiffany Art  
 Aerobics for Senior Citizens  
 Lifelong Sexuality  
 Mediation-Juries in American Courts  
 Psychology of Learning  
 Stormy Weather-The Lightning Stalkers  
 The World of Lasers  
 Central Florida Zoo  
 Having Fun w/ the Nervous System  
 Judaism: An Overview  
 Problems of Poverty in Richest Nations  
 Russian Contemporary thru Film  
 Latin American History  
 Role of Women in American History  
 Big Bands & Lullabies of Broadway



## 1991-2011 *A Brief History*

**IF** you are thinking about starting an organization for seniors, and

**IF** you want this learning experience to be affiliated with a college campus . . . it helps to have the wife of the University President in your corner.

The year was 1990 and **Louise Franklin-Sheehy**, director of programming at Canterbury Retreat Center, had just returned from a conference which featured a section on "Continued Learning for Seniors." Greatly impressed, she contacted **Judy Altman**, wife of then UCF President Steve Altman and presented the concept. Judy loved the idea. Together, they contacted **Dr. Richard Tucker**, chairman of Psychology and a gerontology expert, and started brainstorming.

We "gathered up a task force that kept growing at each meeting," said Sheehy. "We certainly determined early on there was a need for a lifelong learning institute here in Orlando." [*Winter Park Observer*, 1/24/91]

Fashioned after the Elderhostel model, the biggest deviation was their idea that classes would be taught by faculty rather than EH students/peers.

Planning meetings, research, discussions ensued as a plan developed. Ads were placed inviting seniors to an Open House. The organizers had no idea how many to expect, if any. 200 people showed up and 125 signed up to join that very day.

On Tuesday, February 5, 1991, classes began. Dr. Trevor Colbourn, President Emeritus and Professor of History at UCF, presented the first lecture: "Looking to the Past: The Atlantic Connection."

In thanking Dr. Colbourn for delivering the first lecture series, Roy E. Connally, president of the Steering Committee and the first president of LIFE, wrote as follows: "The members of LIFE At UCF form a rare group. They pay their own tuition, they fight traffic and parking, and they earn no course credit. They don't have to come to lecture and they don't have to pay attention to the lecturer if they do come."

In the beginning classes met Tuesday and Thursday for 1 1/2 hours, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with a break for lunch. Students met in various buildings on campus and finding the room where classes were being held was sometimes a challenge.

Tuition was set at \$125 and provided these senior students with greater access to the UCF community, a UCF student ID which allowed use of the library, bookstore, admission to sporting events, discounted tickets, etc.

Needing a designated space, LIFE found a home in one of the theaters across the street from UCF where undergraduate students were also taking classes. In addition, there was a monthly lunch and lecture series on Thursday and a discussion group on Tuesday afternoons.

Changes were coming, however. In 1992, there was a change in leadership at UCF. Fortunately, the new president, John Hitt and his wife, Martha, were every bit as supportive of LIFE as the Altmans had been. That support and enthusiasm continues to the present day. [See newsletter cover letter.] Martha attends LIFE board meetings as the President's liaison and the President attends LIFE functions on many occasions. Both are card-carrying LIFE members and pay annual dues.

Over the next few years, LIFE membership fluctuated. Considerable effort went into marketing the organization. (And, no, there was not a waiting list!) Members set up a booth at a Senior Fair during "Older American Month" in '94. Brochures were printed, ads were run. Membership was steady but slow in growing those first few years.

In a report submitted by Marna Williams, historian, a list of some of the activities of LIFE members between 1994-1996 shows a busy bunch. Members participated in UCF research projects. They attended theater performances as a group. They manned phones at a NPR fundraiser. They made presentations to various organizations, including the Conference of Institutes for Learning in Retirement in Charleston, SC. They attended a Symphony Under the Stars concert, bringing their picnic lunches to eat together. LIFE members Evelyn and Jesse Stone contributed to Diversity Week with a concert. The rolls showed 116 members.

In 1997 LIFE went to Tuesday only classes at the request of the membership who had indicated the schedule was "just too much." Tuition dropped to \$75. That same year half-year memberships were canceled. Big news on campus? Completion of the new Student Union in Spring, 1997. Three years later, LIFE made the Student Union its new home. Membership stood at 237.

September 11, 2001-- a Tuesday-- and LIFE members were attending class. Meanwhile, in New York City . . .

Ed Haddad, president of LIFE at the time, wrote about the horrific event a year after the fact in the newsletter and I quote: "... do you remember where we were one year ago? Tomorrow? Sept. 11? We were all here . . . in class . . . a law enforcement officer teaching our class . . . the news coming through on his cell phone? The World Trade Center hit by a plane? Some of us left class (me included . . . to digest the news . . . my son and his wife working in Manhattan, often at the WTC . . . I was frantic for news of them . . . they were trying to call me on their phones,

unable to get through) . . . the screens set up right outside here in the Student Union . . . Students . . . faculty . . . gathering in awe and emotion . . . to see the horrific events? Many of us . . . LIFE students . . . younger students . . . arm in arm, gathered in prayer circles . . . tears . . . prayers . . . a defining moment of our time . . . We share many things as LIFE students . . . September 11 was one of them. For some of us, Pearl Harbor was a moment of our time . . . For others of us, September 11 was our Pearl Harbor . . . As we study together, we learn to make sense of these events . . ."

In 2003 LIFE established a five-year plan to give \$100,000 back to the University. That has been done. LIFE, now boasting 400 members, also capped its enrollment for the first time and created a waiting list. A "partnership agreement" was executed with UCF.

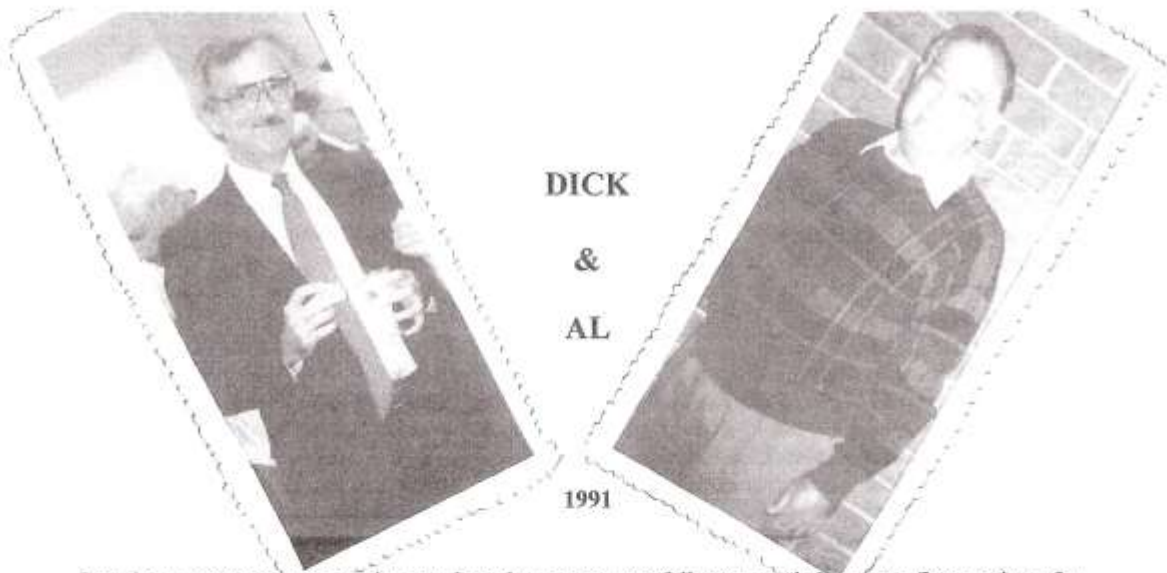
LIFE gained a lovely office (with a window, no less) in the Psychology building in 2007 where the files and archives are now stored. At that time, LIFE made a pledge of \$20,000 to the department and members later donated \$15,000 toward its auditorium.

In 2008, LIFE members agreed to sponsor a 1/2 scholarship for one entering medical school student in the amount of \$20,000.

Last year awards and grants of over \$31,000 were given out to students, faculty and staff at the Annual Awards Luncheon, a tradition which dates back to 2003. A total of \$300,000+ has been awarded to deserving individuals over the last 8 years.

In 2011, we look back over the past twenty years and celebrate where we have been. Those who dreamed big dreams back in 1991 have seen those dreams come true 500 strong and growing, it is dynamic and it is alive. It is LIFE At UCF!!!

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY,  
LIFERS!**



Just about twenty years ago, give or take a day or two, two fellows attended the very first session of a new organization called Learning Institute for Elders (LIFE). They came from very different backgrounds. One was a professor and the chairman of Psychology at UCF. The other, a Jersey boy, had recently retired after a 40-year career as a Sears store manager. Both believed in lifelong learning. Both were excited about the potential for seniors to have this opportunity to learn and grow in an academic setting.

Today, **Dick Tucker** and **Al Dellago** are two of the few charter members of LIFE still actively involved in the organization. Dick, now retired, still serves as UCF liaison for LIFE and is an invaluable resource for the organization. Al, who wore many hats over the years including several stints as president, still attends class sessions faithfully.

I sat down and talked with them about those early days recently. Dick had been on the ground floor of the planning stages. A small ad was placed in the *Orlando Sentinel* announcing an Open House for all senior citizens interested in lifelong learning. 200 responded and 125 signed up to join at that meeting. Al was one of those who signed up, looking to start a new life after having been widowed. It worked out better than he could have hoped—he met his wife, Jane, at LIFE!

The first classes were scattered around campus—the arena, the fine arts building, the President's dining room. “It was a mess,” chuckled Al. “People had to go all over campus to find their meeting rooms.”

Eventually, LIFE moved to the theater across from campus which provided a central meeting place but they had to provide their own audio equipment. It wasn't until the new Student Union was built that they moved back on campus.

Dick spoke of the unusual relationship LIFE has with UCF. One of the few programs without an administrator, we are not housed in continuing education nor are we run by the University. Instead, we are hosted by them. An important distinction.

So, what has LIFE meant to them? “Fabulous! Far more than I expected,” Al replied. “The most satisfying thing I have ever done,” Dick chimed in.

V.B.

## Highlights of Board Meeting

January 10, 2011

Meeting called to order by new president, Phil Easterling. He introduced new members: Steve Hall, Norman Sandhaus, Frank Burgos, Lucy Palido and Judy Thames. Letters of resignation were accepted with regret for Dee Burke, Kermit James and Doug Garner. One Board vacancy will not be filled immediately.

### EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORTS

#### Secretary – Alice Reinhardt

Minutes for November meeting(s) were approved with minor corrections.

#### Treasurer – Ian King

Permission given to purchase a PC Emulation package for the treasurer's MAC computer. Financial statements ending December, 2010 were approved.

#### Vice-President – Marty Wiener

150 members have signed up for tours of the UCF medical school. VP also investigating a virtual tour of the campus on DVD. Campus tours will be offered again to LIFE members.

#### President – Phil Easterling

President raised three issues of concern: 1) Shortening the waiting list, 2) Increasing attendance at Annual Meeting Luncheon, and 3) Creating a long-term legacy on campus.

### STANDING COMMITTEES

#### Curriculum – Frank Burgos

Discussion of space issues, particularly a problem in classroom scheduling in January 2012. Marty and Dick will seek solutions.

#### Membership – Betty Ingham

147 on the waiting list. It was decided that the LIFE application would be removed from the website and replaced with the message, "No applications accepted until further notice."

#### By-Laws/Policies – Ray Jones

Board members asked to review the existing by-laws and to offer any proposed revisions.

### AD HOC COMMITTEES

Vacancies on several committees were filled as follows:

**Safety – Judy Thames** Needs an assistant.

**Audio-Visuals – Steve Hill/Burt Blau** Will handle Web Master and Tuesday morning AV needs. Third person needed.

**Tuesday Greeter – Lucy Palido** Will welcome members, check for name tags and record attendance.

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**Newsletter – Vonnie Bradbury** February issue will be devoted primarily to 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Honors College – Marty Wiener** Dates and events with Honors students will be announced shortly.

**Past Presidents – Chuck Fritz** Only immediate past president has a vote on the Board.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

LIFE membership waiting list will receive e-mail asking if they still want to be included, with a deadline for replies.

### NEW BUSINESS

Ian King appointed chair of committee to investigate establishing an award for outstanding research.

President Phil asked for input into establishing a LIFE legacy committee to leave a major footprint on campus.

Ray Jones would like to funnel all official board correspondence to the LIFE computer into a PDF file. Further study needed.

**UCF LIAISON** Dick Tucker reminded the group that LIFE members can attend basketball games at no cost.

LIFE will celebrate its **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** on Tuesday, February 1, during the second session. Dee Burke has compiled a booklet of all curriculum topics since the first session, some of which will be presented visually. Faculty presenters will be invited to the celebration. Refreshments will be served.

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You can call him Mr. Sunshine. Chuck Fritz is in charge of sending get-well and sympathy cards to LIFE members. Contact him at [Pafriz65@bellsouth.net](mailto:Pafriz65@bellsouth.net).

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## TWENTY YEARS AGO . . .

The Dow Jones average topped 3000 for the first time.

The average income was \$29,430.

A gallon of gas was \$1.12.

A pound of bacon cost \$1.95 and a dozen eggs 85 cents.

You could mail a letter for 25 cents.

\*\*\*\*\*

George H. W. Bush was the President of the United States.

Gorbachev was out; Yeltsin was in . . . and the Soviet Union no longer existed.

Journalist Terry Anderson was released after 7 years of captivity in Beirut.

Operation Desert Storm drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

A cyclone in Bangladesh killed 200,000.

Gandhi was assassinated in India.

In Israel, the Dead Sea Scrolls unveiled.

Rodney King arrested; police brutality caught on film.

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NY Giants won the Super Bowl.

John Updike's *Rabbit at Rest* won the Pulitzer Prize.

Best Picture of the Year: "Dances with Wolves."

Top films: "The Silence of the Lambs," "Thelma & Louise," "Father of the Bride," "Terminator 2," "Adams Family."

Inventions: airbag, internet made available, MS-DOS 5.0 released, web browser introduced.

Top Musicians of the Day: Phil Collins, Garth Brooks, Cher, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Pearl Jam, Van Halen.

