WOW! It’s been a very fast year of LIFE classes! We find ourselves ready to end with the LIFE Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on April 12. I hope we can plan to see every member as we honor those who have been with our organization for 10, 20 and 25 years! Additionally, we will have a tribute to Past President and many-year member, Ray Jones. The morning also allows us to recognize and thank the many volunteers who keep LIFE running smoothly. This year we have chosen to have cake, coffee and tea before the event begins and then, as we have in the past, Jeff Rupert with the help of UCF Jazz Students, we will be entertained ensuring that all of us leave the Pegasus Ballroom with a pep in our step! For the first time, we will have a few door prizes to round out the fun! Something for everyone! Plan on being there!!!! - Gail

Greetings LIFE Members,

I hope you have been enjoying our LIFE presentations as much as I have…we’ve had some great ones including some wonderful musical presentations/performances as we approach the end of our 2021-2022 year. And…we’ve got some more exciting presentations ahead to finish up our year.

We will have a “Preview of Shrek, the Musical” which is part of UCF Celebrates the Arts, on March 29th…can’t wait for that one. Also, for those members who were here in Fall 2019, you will remember the awe inspiring presentation by Alan Eustace who accomplished a world record free fall [ultimately with parachute 12] by jumping from a balloon in the earth’s stratosphere….and we were right there with him through the camera attached to his special suit….well, Alan will present for us again on April 5th, this time the adventure is, “Deep Sea Exploration.” And if that is not enough excitement, the last regular LIFE session on April 12th will involve a brief Annual Meeting where you will vote for some new and outstanding LIFE Board Members, we will have some treats, some surprises, and a wonderful performance by Jeff Rupert and the UCF Jazz Student group. Renewal for existing LIFE members is now right around the corner and we are already beginning to schedule some outstanding talks for the Fall 2022 term…hope everyone renews as soon as the opportunity opens. Thanks for all your support for LIFE. -Jack
August 2020 – July 2021 was a stressful year due to the pandemic. Membership levels were lower than the previous year resulting in less revenue and requiring the Board to adjust the budget’s expenses. ZOOM presentations became the NORM.

Three $1000 Gerontology Scholarships were awarded and funded from LIFE’s restricted reserves. Restricted reserves increased by $5,594 from membership donations.

Income from membership dues and interest totaled $128,336.03.

Expenses totaled $135,669.68. There was a deficit of $7,333.65 due to maintaining awards and grants at a higher level in support of UCF. The Board approved using reserve funds to make up for this deficit.

* Awards - $47,995.80 (35.4%)
* Curriculum - $7,248.86 (5.3%)
* General & Admin - $69,621.00 (51.3%)
* Membership - $10,804.02 (8%)
Your LIFE membership!
Zalpha Hashem, Committee Chair

We will soon embark on our LIFE Membership Drive for 2022-2023. During the next two months, emails will be sent to each current member inviting you to renew your membership for next year. Following the renewal time period, we will then invite new members to join LIFE. If you have any friends who may be interested in joining LIFE at UCF, please let them know to go to our website and provide us their name and email using our new member registration form on the site.

Each member will be asked to renew their membership by completing a membership form and paying the yearly dues. During the renewal registration process this year, you will be asked to create an account on our website with your own unique Account Name/User ID and Password. This will provide you the ability throughout the year to make any needed changes or updates to your personal information (phone number, address, email). It will also give us the ability to maintain your information up to date and secure on our website. Details will be in the invitation to renew email coming soon to your email in-box.

We look forward to another exciting year of programs and events offered by LIFE at UCF. LIFE will continue to conduct in-person lectures on-campus, and offering these lectures via on-line access Live Stream Webinar and/or recorded. By renewing your membership, you will continue to enjoy full LIFE Membership benefits with flexibility for you to participate either in-person or online, based on your personal situation and choices.

Food, Money and Professional Clothing Drive
April 5, 2022

We had a very successful drive in the Fall, but the needs don’t stop! Consider donating cash, women’s business clothing (for interviews) The Pantry requests, toiletries & Tide pods.

Items may be dropped off at:
Garage H
The bus stop outside the Student Union
At the table outside the Pegasus Ballroom
For over 27 years, LIFE at UCF was totally a member-run organization with no paid staff aside from several part-time student assistants. With the continued growth of LIFE, now at about 800 members, the Board wisely decided that it was past time to hire a professional administrator. Fortunately, we were able to recruit Leslie Collin on a half-time basis almost 4 years ago. At the time, we were not sure what to call the position, but after just a year of working with Leslie, it was clear that we had hired an “Executive Director”, and the Board awarded her that title. Since then, we have faced many logistical challenges, mostly due to the COVID pandemic, and Leslie, working closely with the Board and Committee Chairs, has provided leadership and coordination for LIFE to continue to provide excellent professional presentations, now with the addition of live streaming via Zoom webinar, and a YouTube-based recording. Leslie also recognized the history of LIFE and the role of volunteers in the organization. While Leslie is the new “face” of LIFE at UCF, and making a big difference, she understands and appreciates that we are still largely a volunteer organization.

LIFE at UCF has been blessed over our 31 years to have extraordinary volunteers to carry out the operational structure of the organization. In April, as we do at the end of each academic year, LIFE will be recognizing the many volunteers who have contributed their time and talent to the various committees and programs which make LIFE such a vibrant organization in partnership with UCF. This year, I want to highlight one member who has been the model of an active and effective volunteer.

Although I am not the most chronologically gifted of our LIFE members, I have been a member since we started in 1991. Thus, by default, I have a unique historical perspective of the program. In all my years, I can think of certain members who have made special and extraordinary contributions to LIFE in many different capacities either as an officer, Board member, committee chair, or committee member. Of course, my judgment of one’s contribution is tempered by the amount of personal involvement with an individual over a long time. Until 3 years ago, I attended almost all the monthly Board meetings in my role as UCF Liaison, as an advisory and non-voting contributor. I also had frequent contact with the Curriculum Committee and the Awards Committee. While it is almost impossible to pick out a single member as the most valued volunteer, I am very comfortable highlighting one person who has made so many different contributions for over 20 years, and only in this last year, has asked to reduce the level of his involvement. That person is Ray Jones.

Ray joined LIFE in 2000 following his 34-year service in the U.S. Navy, retiring as Rear Admiral. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1960, and, while in the Navy, obtained a master’s degree in Industrial Engineering from Rensselaer in 1969. Most of Ray’s naval service was with nuclear submarines. His long service included taking on many administrative roles.

-Tribute to Ray Jones, cont. on next page
Ray’s background and experience, along with his continued willingness to serve, was immediately recognized by LIFE, and he was soon elected to the Board of Directors, where he served for two 3-year terms.

As a Board member, one of his first contributions was developing a partnership agreement with UCF, given that we were clearly in a highly valued, mutually rewarded association. While we operated as a valued “partnership” with UCF when we started in 1991, there had never been a formal agreement. Ray had been very active in the Central Florida Astronomical Society (CFAS) which had been affiliated with UCF in building the Robinson Observatory. While the early partnership of CFAS with UCF was instrumental in highlighting the field of astronomy at UCF, the financial needs of the observatory moved UCF to take full responsibility.

During Ed Haddad’s presidency, when Ray was Vice-President, the first formal partnership was approved by UCF. In addition to drafting the agreement, Ray and the UCF Liaison tracked the document through the approval process, including with the Legal Counsel. It was approved in 2004 for five years. Ray subsequently was instrumental in revising the agreement when the partnership was renewed in 2009, and then extended to a 10-year renewal in 2014.

When we moved to the Pegasus Ballroom soon after Ray joined LIFE, there were concerns about the size of the ballroom and the challenges facing those with hearing loss, something that Ray could personally understand. He led the efforts to improve the audio system in Pegasus Ballroom for the LIFE meetings.

Ray also served as co-chair of the Curriculum Committee. Given his background, he was especially helpful in LIFE’s interactions with the natural sciences, engineering and optics/lasers. Ray had also served as an adjunct faculty member in Physics, teaching a course in Astronomy. Given the growth of Astronomy at UCF and the expanded relationship with the space program, combined with the division of the College of Arts and Sciences into separate colleges, more faculty were hired, stimulating more presentations in this area to the LIFE program. When Jack McGuire was Associate Dean in the College of Sciences, he built upon Ray’s efforts with the natural sciences.

In 2006, when Ray was serving as President of LIFE, he was hired by the US Navy to be Director, Undersea Warfare Research Center at Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, California; a position he held for three years. Doug Garner moved up from Vice President and kept in close contact with Ray during his presidency. Ray continued his membership in LIFE during this time and often provided valued feedback on various issues, in essence serving as an “advisor” to the President, the Board and several key committees. Upon his return to Orlando, Ray was again elected to the Board of Directors, to begin to serve another six years, thereby making him the longest serving member of the Board in the history of LIFE at UCF.

During the Presidency of Judy Thames, LIFE embarked on developing a strategic plan which still guides our planning. Basil Pflumm chaired that committee, but Ray was an important contributor attending all the meetings and helping to draft the final product.

As a Past President, Ray served as a member of the Awards Committee during the period when there were both the “appreciation” awards and the general awards program open to all departments. He kept an EXCEL sheet of all the applicants and this formed a valuable record during the review process as well as a lasting record of the outcomes. He also coordinated with the Board the transfer of funds to the UCF Foundation for the grants to be sent to the specific department accounts.

-Tribute to Ray Jones, cont. on next page
LIFE was fortunate in our relationship with the UCF Foundation in that we were never charged for any of these accounting services.

Upon his return, LIFE utilized Ray’s WEB expertise to revise and update our WEBpage. He was fortunate to have student assistants who were quite knowledgeable with the WEB and he supervised their work. A key part was keeping the curriculum schedule updated, especially when there were unexpected changes to the schedule. The various grant programs were also listed with dates for application. He also worked closely with a WEB expert in the College of Sciences in a major conversion of the home page. That expert is still working with our home page.

The Board decided to review the philosophy of our grant programs, now putting a specific emphasis on research in the field of applied gerontology. Many departments, such as nursing, social work, physical therapy, psychology and sociology, were adding faculty with expertise in gerontology. They still wanted to keep the appreciation awards, but wanted a significant amount of LIFE’s grant money to support this new effort. Ray assumed leadership of developing this program. At first, the general grant program was kept in place, but after several years, the decision was made to phase out that program.

Ray was the chair of the gerontology research awards committee and made all the arrangements to announce the request for proposals, disseminate the proposals to the committee, schedule the meetings, and then the interviews of the finalists. He served as chair for 8 years, and recruited Bill Myers to take over as chair this year. Ray remains an advisor to the committee.

As an offshoot to the gerontology awards, Ray recommended that we start a LIFE Scholarship Program for students who were studying gerontology and working with a family member for mentorship. By that time, UCF had formed a number of “faculty cluster initiatives” of excellence, and one of those was in the area of Disabilities, Aging and Technology. Ray worked with the scholarship committee and Rich Sloane agreed to chair the implementation of that program. The first two scholarships were awarded in 2021.

Finally, I have to mention a very special way that Ray voluteered his service. For many years, Ray was married to Sandy Lee Jones, who also faithfully served LIFE as a Board member, Secretary and Treasurer. When Sandy died of cancer in 2014, we all mourned this loss. Ray found special solace in the LIFE program and continued in his many roles. In that context, Ray agreed to serve as Vice-President for one year when Vonnie Bradbury became President. As they worked together on LIFE events, including planning for the 25th anniversary of LIFE, that relationship grew, and in 2017 they were married. Over the years, LIFE has had several members who met at LIFE and subsequently married. This was the first time that we had a union of two Past-Presidents.
The finally renovated UCF Student Union LIFE members entered on August 31, 2021 was very different from FTU’s original student gathering location. In the early years, most student activities were based in the Village Center, a small collection of buildings near the first dorms. LIFE president Jack McGuire, an early FTU faculty member, remembers “the student union area when we arrived in the summer of 1972 was in a little rectangle of building spaces over near the original cafeteria. The largest room was where all students also registered for classes each semester.... Faculty rotated turns in our departments manning desks to answer questions and assist students. This same space served as the entertainment venue when FTU brought acts to campus. During that first year, Sharon and I saw Don McLean, and he sang "American Pie”. Very cool.”

Expansion of the Village Center to create a true Student Union was to include 10 bowling lanes, a 5,000 square foot conference center and an arts and crafts center. That never happened because it was felt the Student Union needed to be in a more central part of the campus. The Village Center buildings remain as part of the Jimmie A. Ferrell Student Services Commons.

Plans for a Student Union located between the site of a planned expansion of the library and a new performance arts building (now called the “rehearsal hall”) were announced in April 1978 amid complaints about the anticipated loss of parking spots. When it opened in 1979 that Student Union included an expanded bookstore, meeting rooms, lounges, restrooms, and a snack bar. Those buildings also remain, now called the John T. Washington Center and home to the bookstore and other businesses.

Discussions about funding a much larger Student Union started in 1985. Promoted benefits included a better location for events, improved services for commuter students and the student government as well as “more relaxed eating facilities”. Proposed components were recreational services, an arts and crafts room, an art gallery and a weight room – none of which were in the final plans. While all agreed it should be located near the center of campus there was support for other locations. One suggestion was the area just south of Gemini opposite the site where, many years later, the Additions Arena was built. However, this site had a problem - it would have resulted in loss of the marching band’s practice field. Another location, and the one chosen, was at the campus’s center next to the forest now called the “Cyprus Swamp” on what is now the Student Union’s north side. While approved in 1989 by then UCF President Altman, financial issues pushed the completion date from 1991 to the Spring of 1997.

On opening, most doors of the building opened from the north or south side and led to a grand atrium. Looking up from the atrium area, you could see the circular walkways around the floors above, which lead to offices of the UCF Student government and, over the years, would be used to display flags about student organizations and activities. The second and third floors had large meeting rooms primarily used by the Student Senate and the Faculty Senate. Smaller rooms of varied sizes lined the outer walls.
In its early months, there was no furniture in the Student Union and only one vendor, a Java Express in the atrium. By start of fall classes, other vendors including University Floral, Wendy’s, Sbarro’s, and Subway were open. A large dining room filled with seating connected to the atrium and the boardwalk next to the forest provided outside seating were often full.

Initially, the large inlaid Pegasus in the atrium’s center was not roped off so many people walked across it. A superstition soon spread that, if you walked across the Pegasus, you would not graduate. Shortly later, a decorative rope was put up to protect the Pegasus and, presumably, students desiring to graduate. In 2001 the Pegasus became the site of an annual Eternal Knights ceremony to remember students who died in the prior year. Additional memorials have taken place there, including the UCF One Pulse Vigil which overflowed the atrium as members of the UCF and Central Florida communities came together to mourn and remember the 49 individuals murdered doing the Pulse nightclub attack.

Construction of the second phase of the student union which included space for additional vendors, more offices for student groups was in the original plan and began almost immediately. This included the Pegasus Ballroom. When completed, LIFE at UCF was able to move class onto the UCF campus for the first time.

In the years to come, LIFE members saw the student union evolve as areas were renovated and vendors and services came and went. Additions included two murals on the building’s exterior - one, along the building’s side a memorial to those killed at Pulse and the other located at the entrance opposite the library expansion depicting Pegasus flying through the sky.

LIFE members got to observe the most recent Student Union renovation and expansion up close as they navigated around the multi-year, ever-changing construction site on the way to class. This was not without challenges as walkways were closed and construction materials and equipment filled the site. But, they did not get to experience the final construction year after the COVID shutdown required LIFE to move classes to ZOOM during the 2020-2021 school year.

In the fall of 2021 LIFE members returned to a Student Union with a new, beautiful, light-filled two floor expansion with additional seating, and a fully opened food court. The Charge On Chamber, a tiered meeting space used by both the student government and Faculty Senate has been added to the third floor. This complex has an electronic voting center plus state-of-the-art projection and sound systems. One of the newly renovated sections of the third floor has a large room filled with lots of interesting “toys” including arcade games. May be a fun place to check out next time LIFE has to hold class on that floor’s Cape Florida Board Room!
LIFE TRIPPIN’ CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

APRIL 1:
Orange County Courthouse Trippin’ SOLD OUT (sign up for waitlist)
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/life-trippin-orange-county-courthouse-tour-tickets-283717957047

APRIL 6:
TRIPPIN’ AT THE LIVE OAK CONSERVATION CENTER
SEATS STILL AVAILABLE
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/life-trippin-white-oak-conservation-tour-tickets-191352519537

APRIL 27:
TRIPPIN’ ON THE WATERS OF LAKE DORA
SEATS STILL AVAILABLE
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/life-trippin-on-the-water-in-mount-dora-tickets-302060861167
Honoring Indigenous Expression with Natalie Diaz
Tuesday, April 5, 6pm, Online
Natalie Diaz, a Mojave-Latina MacArthur Foundation fellow and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet of Postcolonial Love Poem, will virtually present her work.

Character Animation Shorts
Select Character Animation shorts will be shown in the theatres before select events throughout the week!

Celebrating the Costumes of Dan Jones
Theatre UCF remembers costume shop manager Dan Jones with a display of his designs and constructions from over the years.

UCF Coastal Vision: Resilient Coastal Communities & Ecologies
Experience the cutting-edge research being undertaken by UCF Coastal, a bold new research center comprising a stellar group of core interdisciplinary faculty.

Spectral Evidence
This exhibit features expressions by artists on the autism spectrum, who see life from a different perspective.

Illuminating the Darkness: Our Carceral Landscape
This exhibition from the Florida Prison Education Project presents a selection of work from artists whose practice is informed by their experiences with the criminal justice system to shine a light on the ways in which mass incarceration affects us all.

Visual Tales
Can you guess the fairy tale that inspired each of the 6-ft. sculptures in this visual storytelling exhibition?

The Beethoven Project (A New Light)
Experience phenomenal artworks presented by the students in the Animation and Visual Effects MFA.

SNAP! CITY UNSEEN AR[T] Experience
Four augmented reality public art installations to be experienced outdoors on the Seneff Arts Plaza prior to entering Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

OUC Rain Barrels
Rain barrels, designed by local students as part of OUC’s Water Color Project, teach the importance of water conservation through art.

HOW TO CELEBRATE

- Select the events you want to attend at arts.ucf.edu/celebrates.
- All events require a ticket or reservation for admission.
- Tickets are sold/reserved through the Bill & Mary Darden Box Office at Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.
- A valid student ID is required for student discount.
- Ongoing exhibitions do not require a separate reservation and can be viewed with purchase/reservation of event ticket. Event ticket is required for admission to Dr. Phillips Center lobbies.
- All patrons are expected to follow the health and safety protocols set in place by Dr. Phillips Center.

Tickets, schedule and more at ARTS.UCF.EDU
Events are subject to change. Visit arts.ucf.edu/celebrates for event updates.
UCF Percussion Ensemble featuring Escape Ten Duo
Wednesday, April 6, 7:30pm
This concert will feature performances by the UCF Percussion Ensemble and guest artist Escape Ten Duo.

Flying Horse Big Band: Jazz and the American Spirit
Friday, April 8, 7:30pm
Join UCF’s chart-topping Flying Horse Big Band for an evening of music and celebration of the vibrant “American Spirit.”

UCF Opera presents Mozart First and Last!
April 8 & April 10
Journey with UCF Opera from the maestro’s early period to a piece composed in his final year.

Orlando REP presents ‘Yo, No, Ho! Let’s Go!’, Theatre for the Very Young
Saturday, April 9, 12pm
A 30-minute adventure of the high seas for our youngest theatre-goers.

UCF Animation Premieres
Saturday, April 9, 3pm
Enjoy a series of award-winning short, animated films from UCF students in the School of Visual Arts and Design.

A Celebration of the Orlando Peet Laureate
Saturday, April 9, 6pm
Hear from some of UCF’s finest poets and spoken word artists.

UCF Symphony Orchestra: An Exploration of Sea and Land
Saturday, April 9, 7:30pm
A performance of Beethoven’s Pastoral and Okeana, a new multimedia piece by UCF composer Stella Sung.

“Boricua Soy Yo”
History, Identity and Culture
Saturday, April 9, 8pm
A film and discussion about Puerto Rican history, the island’s relationship with the United States, and the cultural identity of Puerto Ricans living on the mainland.

National Young Composers Challenge Composium
Sunday, April 11, 12pm
Meet the next generation of composers!

Earth Explorers: Choose Your Own Expedition
Sunday, April 10, 12pm
Elementary-aged kids can explore and celebrate our earth, its resources and our relationship with our environment in a devised theatre show.

Stage Combat Demonstration
Monday, April 11, 6pm
Peek behind the curtain to see how fights and dramatic scenes are created on stage.

Knight to Shine 2022: A Musical Theatre Showcase
Monday, April 11, 7:30pm
The spotlight is on our graduating Musical Theatre students as they take the stage for an evening of cabaret-style performances!

Orlando Shakes presents Fairview
Monday, April 11, 8pm
A popular Playfest play comes to life in a staged reading featuring professional actors and UCF theatre students.

Architecture Showcase & Awards
Tuesday, April 12, 6pm
A talk with a guest architect, plus a weeklong showcase of work from UCF, UF and Valencia architecture students.

UCF New Music Ensemble
Tuesday, April 12, 7pm
Explore what’s next in music in a concert of new works composed and performed by UCF musicians.

Cellaboration 2022
Tuesday, April 12, 8:30pm
Join the UCF Cello Choir in a celebration of the cello, featuring works of Villa Lobos, Faure, Fitzhughen, Beethoven, Michael Kamen and even Michael Jackson!

Lidia’s Kitchen: A Conversation with Lidia Bastianich
Wednesday, April 13, 7pm
Celebrity chef and TV host talks about her new cookbook, inspiring personal story and the role food has played in her life.

UCF Bands: Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band
Thursday, April 13, 7:30pm
Enjoy an exciting evening of diverse and expressive music, including two world premiers.

Brass Chamber Ensembles
Thursday, April 14, 6pm
This concert features UCF Brass student chamber ensembles: trumpet, horn, trombone, tuba/euphonium, the Colburn Brass Quintet and the Pegasus Brass Quintet.

Pegasus String Quartet and Beethoven Septet
Thursday, April 14, 7:30pm
The Pegasus String Quartet, UCF’s graduate string quartet, makes its Steinmetz Hall debut.

Cast in Bronze and Chiseled Out of Stone
Friday, April 15, 6pm
This entertaining presentation offers a flash course in Caribbean history as told by the region’s statues in eight mini-chapters.

UCF Choir Concert
Friday, April 15, 7:30pm
The UCF Chamber Singers, SoAl and TeBa choirs, and the University Singers, along with the new UCF Community Choir and Children’s Choir, sing songs of unity, joy and friendship.

Woodwind Chamber Ensembles
Friday, April 15, 8pm
This concert features UCF’s student chamber groups from the woodwind area, including the oboe trio, woodwind quintet, bassoon ensemble, flute choir, saxophone ensemble and clarinet choir.

Creative Clash
Saturday, April 16, 5pm
Artists armed with black markers race the clock to create large-format artwork. View the 2021 display all week.

Graphic Design & Experimental Animation Showcase
Saturday, April 16, 7:30pm
A pop-up event showcasing the work from graduating seniors in the emerging media programs.

UCF National Choir Festival
Saturday, April 16, 7:30pm
Artistic journeys start with education! High school students join together in song.

Project Spotlight presents As It’s Written
Saturday, April 16, 8pm
Project Spotlight is producing a new work by theatre student Caroline Hull.