

UWF REA NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025



Camellia Garden Beautification attendees on September 9, 2024

REA MEMBERSHIP

UWF REA is open to all UWF retired employees and their spouses.
Not retired yet? You can still join as an Associate Member!

UWF REA Benefits

- Access to REA events and activities
- Campus parking privileges
- Recreation facility privileges
- UWF Pace Library access
- Access to all regular season home games other than football with your Nautilus Card
- Opportunity to serve on the UWF REA Board



Retired Employees
Association
UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear REA Friends,

This year as President of REA has flown by—and what a wonderful year it has been! We've enjoyed memorable events, exceptional turnout, and uplifting feedback from so many of you.

A group of us joined Leisure Learning for the “Magic Christmas in Lights” event at Bellingrath Gardens.

We're grateful to Leisure Learning—and especially to Julie Still-Rollin—for welcoming us and coordinating such a lovely trip.

Our annual Holiday Social was festive and full of cheer. President Martha Saunders stopped by to greet us, and we were pleased to be joined by Vice President Howard Reddy, Vice Provost Dallas Snider, and Foundation Director Dan Lucas for a wonderful meal.

So far in 2025, we've already enjoyed Cocoa and Camellias—which was fantastic!—an excursion to the CFPA's performance of Fiddler on the Roof, two Camellia Garden Beautification days, a Dutch Treat lunch at Founaris Bros., our annual Day at the Ball Field, where we were joined by friends from Azalea Trace for a fun and lively afternoon, and most recently, a tour of Azalea Trace.

We will wrap up the year at our Annual Meeting on May 8. We hope to see you there!

A heartfelt thank you goes to our incredible REA Board members. They have truly shown up this year—tireless in their support and generous with their time and energy. Their dedication has made it a joy to serve as President.

Most importantly, thank you to you, our REA members. Your engagement makes everything we do possible and helps us continue fulfilling our mission: to represent the interests of retirees, provide opportunities for connection, and foster a lasting relationship between our members and the University.

I look forward to serving as Past President in the year ahead and supporting all the exciting things to come under the leadership of our incoming President, Colleen Asmus.

With best wishes,
Ellen Till,
UWF REA President

UWF REA SPRING 2025 EVENTS

Cocoa and Camellia

Fri. February 14

10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

@ UWF Camellia Garden

Fiddler on the Roof

Sun. February 16

2:30 p.m.

@ UWF CFPA Main Stage

Camellia Garden Beautification

Sat. February 22

10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

@ UWF Camellia Garden

REA Dutch Treat Lunch

Tues. March 11

11 a.m.

@ Founaris Brothers

UWF Baseball/Softball Game

Sat. April 12

1 p.m.

@ Jim Spooner Field

Camellia Garden Beautification

Sat. April 26

10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

@ UWF Camellia Garden

Azalea Trace Tour

Tues. April 29

1:30 p.m.

@ Azalea Trace

REA Annual Meeting

Thurs. May 8

2 p.m.

@ Argo Athletic Club



Retired Employees
Association

UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

REA EVENT RECAP - REA 101

August 8, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - REA 101

August 8, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - CAMELLIA GARDEN BEAUTIFICATION

September 9, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - PRESIDENT'S TAILGATES

October 5, 2024 and November 9, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - BELLINGRATH GARDENS

December 3, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - REA HOLIDAY SOCIAL

December 11, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - REA HOLIDAY SOCIAL

December 11, 2024



C O N N O R ' S O R N E R



HAPPY 2025 everyone! Hard to believe we are already four months into the new year. Time is sure flying. I hope your year is starting out well.

I will be celebrating my 13th birthday in June. That's 91 in human years...wow! My arthritis is still keeping me away from Airport PUP Patrol duties, but thanks to much tender loving care from my mom and my Homeopathic vet, I am slowly getting better. Mom and I have been working on some tricks at home and since our little training room has small, safe agility obstacles in it, I am getting a little more exercise every day. I've even been letting mom pull me around on my skateboard. Yeah, that's lots of fun... when I can keep Kira off it. LOL! All in all, I think I am a very lucky dog!

*I told my mom the other day
I'm glad she's a member of the REA.
That way I can be a member, too,
And share some "golden" years with you.
So far this year I've had some fun,
Doing something I have never done...
A romp in the snow! What a surprise!
As our town glistened white
Right before our eyes!
What's coming in life, we just never know,
Let's just make it fun – and AWAY WE GO!*

*Connor
Your REA Mascot*



IN REMEMBRANCE

Mary Lloyd
August 2024

**William Lee
Mikulas**
September 2024

**Mary "Chris"
Whitworth**
September 2024

**Patricia Taylor
Edmisten**
November 2024

**Laura Dortch
Edler**
December 2024

John Platt
December 2024

Dolores J. Pat Howe
December 2024

Ralph Roberts
February 2025

John Markowitz
March 2025

David Blodgett
March 2025

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Bill Healey!



I retired from the University of West Florida in 2019 after 47 years of service, most recently as Executive Director of Student Life, overseeing Recreation, Athletics, and Student Activities.

My journey with UWF began in 1972 as Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, where I was responsible for Intramural Sports. Over time, we expanded to include the Leisure Class series, Sports Clubs, Aquatics, Fitness, and Outdoor Adventures. Before joining UWF, I earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Central Missouri and a Master of Science from the University of Illinois, which laid the foundation for my career in student affairs and recreation.

As many of you know, at UWF, everything happens by committee! I was fortunate to serve on several building committees that

shaped the campus, including the Aquatic Center, the East Sports Complex (Baseball, Softball, Soccer, and Track), the expansion of the Field House, and the Tennis Complex. My final projects included the Health, Leisure, and Sports facility and the Argonaut Athletic Club. I also approved the development of mountain bike trails on the west campus with one of our alumni groups, the Pensacola Off Road Cyclists (PORC) and even physically cut the running trails on the east campus—trails I now enjoy walking with my dog Birdie!

It was a pleasure to serve in leadership positions for Recreation & Wellness, Athletics and Student Activities which positioned me nicely to serve other associations as well. UWF gave me the opportunity to serve twice on the Board of Directors of NIRSA (National Intramural Recreational Sports Association) as well as its foundation board. I also served as President of the Pensacola Sports Association (now Pensacola Sports) in 2009. Even in retirement I continue to serve on various University and community committees including the REA Board of Directors.

While I take great pride in the physical growth and development of UWF's recreational spaces, what I'm most proud of from my time at the university is the commitment to student development. When I started in recreation in 1972, it was me and four student staff members. By the time I retired, we had grown to 10 full-time employees, 10 graduate assistants, and 266 student employees. In 1995, we launched an effort to recognize Outstanding Rec Sports Alumni who have achieved significant success after graduation.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT CONT.

Since then, we've honored one alum each year and our recipients have truly built up quite the resumes! We have had two UWF Board of Trustee members, four who served on national board of directors, eight doctoral graduates, four presidents of national associations, 14 Directors of Recreation or Athletics, six who own their own business, and 1 Olympic coach!

To further support student success, the William M. Healey Award was established to provide financial assistance to undergraduate students who demonstrate a strong commitment to the mission, vision, and values of Recreation and Wellness. To date, 27 recipients have earned the Healey Leadership Award scholarship.

And on a personal note, I couldn't be prouder that both of my daughters, Rachel and Mary, are UWF graduates.

UWF has been a community for me and my family for over 50 years and I am grateful for the opportunities it has provided. I encourage you to join the Retired Employees Association for service, fellowship, and adventures with those who developed our fine intuition of higher learning. Keeping informed and staying involved.

Go Argos!

REMEMBER WHEN

Snow on Campus



1973 - Students building snowmen.



2025 - Students having a snowball fight.

On February 9, 1973, a large snowstorm brought 1.8 inches of snow to Pensacola. On January 21, 2025, a freak snowstorm brought 7.6 inches of snow to Pensacola and 10 inches of snow to Santa Rosa County.

MEMBER SUBMISSION

UWF REA TRIP TO PANAMA

An Exploration of the Panama Canal and Beyond by Jim and Judy Weaver and Copliot



DAY 1: THE TRIP BEGINS

On January 20th, just before a snowstorm of the century hit Pensacola, Jacqui and Bob Berger and Jim and Judy Weaver embarked on an exciting journey to Panama and the Panama Canal. We arrived in Panama City about 3 PM and were amazed at the size of the city with a population of about 1 million people. It is a huge city with what seemed like hundreds of skyscrapers. Our adventure began with a meeting with our tour director on the evening of our arrival, setting the stage for a memorable trip.

DAY 2: EXPLORING OLD PANAMA AND THE MIRAFLORES LOCKS



Jim & Judy at part of the old Panama City from early times!

Our first full day in Panama was packed with exciting sights and experiences. We embarked on a Caravan bus tour that took us through the historic streets of old Panama. The city, with its rich history and vibrant culture, was a sight to behold, offering a glimpse into its storied past. We marveled at the architectural remnants and the lively atmosphere of the old quarter.

The highlight of the day was our visit to the Miraflores locks, a crucial part of the Panama Canal. The locks are an engineering marvel, allowing ships to traverse the canal by lifting and lowering them to different water levels. As we stood by the locks, we were fortunate to witness a large cargo ship making its way through. The sight of the massive vessel navigating the locks, connecting the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, was awe-inspiring. The intricate mechanics and the sheer scale of the operation left us in awe of human ingenuity.

DAY 3: VISITING THE EMBERA VILLAGE AND FORT SAN LORENZO

The next day, we ventured into the heart of Panama's rainforest to visit the Embera village. Our journey began with a ride in a motorized dugout canoe, navigating the lush waterways and immersing ourselves in the natural beauty of the rainforest. The canoe ride was an adventure in itself, offering breathtaking views of the dense vegetation and the tranquil waters.

Upon reaching the Embera village, we were welcomed by the community of approximately 72 inhabitants, ranging from infants to elderly people in their nineties. The villagers shared their rich cultural heritage with us, showcasing their traditional dances and crafts. We were honored to join them for lunch, savoring the local flavors and enjoying the warm hospitality. The experience was further enriched by the opportunity to dance with the villagers, creating cherished memories of our time in the village.

In the afternoon, we visited Fort San Lorenzo, a historic fortification that stands as a testament to Panama's colonial past. The fort, perched on a cliff overlooking the Caribbean Sea, offered stunning views and a glimpse into the strategic importance of the region. We explored the ancient walls and learned about the fort's role in defending the area from pirates and invaders.



Judy Weaver and Jacqui and Bob Berger at San Lorenzo National Park

MEMBER SUBMISSION CONT.

DAY 4: BIRD WATCHING AND WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

Our third day in Panama began with an early morning bird-watching excursion on the Chagres River. As dawn broke, we set out on a boat, gliding along the river's calm waters. The rainforest came alive with the sounds of chirping birds and rustling leaves. Our guide pointed out various bird species, some of which were endemic to the region. The sight of colorful plumage and the melodic calls of the birds made for an enchanting experience.



Later in the day, we visited a sloth rescue center and a butterfly garden. The sloth rescue center was a heartwarming experience, as we learned about the efforts to rehabilitate and protect these gentle creatures. We observed the sloths up close, marveling at their slow and deliberate movements. The butterfly garden was equally captivating, with vibrant butterflies flitting about in a kaleidoscope of colors.

DAY 5: SCENIC BOAT RIDE AND CANAL EXPLORATION

On the fourth day, we embarked on a boat ride through the most scenic portion of the Panama Canal. The canal, an engineering wonder, stretches through the heart of Panama, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. As we cruised along, we encountered monkeys living on the protected islands within the canal. The sight of these playful creatures added a touch of excitement to the journey. One of them actually jumped on and off our boat.

We also witnessed massive cargo ships navigating the canal's artificially created Gatun Lake. The sheer size of these vessels, coupled with the intricate logistics of their passage through the canal, was a remarkable sight. We observed the huge dredging equipment at work, ensuring the waterways remained open and operational. Our journey continued as we crossed the Centennial Bridge and gazed over the Panama Canal's Gaillard Cut, a significant section of the canal that cuts through the Continental Divide.



The lights are ships in the Pacific Ocean waiting to go through the Panama Canal

DAY 6: A DAY OF LEISURE

After several days of exploration, we enjoyed a day of leisure at our resort hotel. The Westin Playa Bonita Resort offered a perfect retreat, allowing us to relax and unwind. We spent the day indulging in the resort's amenities, basking in the tropical sun, and reflecting on the incredible experiences of the past few days. The serenity and comfort of the resort provided a perfect balance to the adventure-filled days we had enjoyed.

Our trip to Panama was a remarkable journey, filled with diverse experiences and unforgettable moments. From the historic streets of old Panama to the engineering marvel of the Panama Canal, and the cultural richness of the Embera village to the natural beauty of the rainforest, every day brought new discoveries. The memories of this trip will stay with us, a testament to the wonders of Panama and the incredible journey we embarked upon.

DAY 7: RETURN TO PANAMA CITY

On the 7th day we returned to Panama City via the Bridge of the Americas. As we drove along the Causeway we had a spectacular view of the Panama City skyline and we also visited a Kuna tribal marketplace.

DAY 8: RETURN HOME

On the eighth day we returned home after having a wonderful trip. As a couple of side notes we would like to say that our tour guide was excellent, and he arranged for two evenings of entertainment by Panamanian groups who did cultural dances. It was incredibly beautiful, and the music was lively and fun!

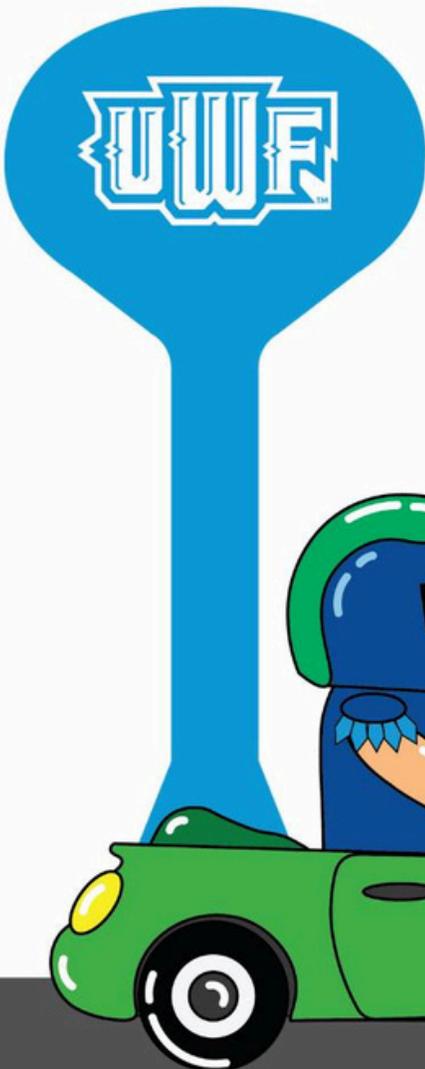
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bagelheads is coming to Argo Village in May



The popular restaurant features homemade bagels and house roasted coffee. Enjoy delicious sandwiches as well as other deli and bakery items. Argonaut Village is located at the East entrance of campus. Bagelheads will be in the location that previously housed the Starbucks.

UWF Parking Services News



UWF Parking and Transportation Services is moving to a License Plate Recognition and Virtual Permit System. With the new system, your license plate serves as your permit. You will no longer need to use the hangtag you were provided when you retired. The information attached to your current permit will be captured in the system so there is no action needed on the part of current retirees.

Folks who retire after the system goes into effect or who did not obtain a Retired Employee hangtag will simply stop by Parking Services in Building 20W, Room 151, and provide their vehicle information.

Beginning October 1, 2025 you can discontinue using your existing Retired Employee hangtags. Please note that you will no longer be permitted to back into parking spaces.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UWF Postal Services - Passport Acceptance Facility



Are you ready for an adventure?
UWF has your passport covered!

Call to book your appointment today
850.474.2436

 Postal and
Passport Services
UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

UWF Postal Services is now an authorized Passport Acceptance Facility. The facility is located at UWF Postal Services in the Commons (Building 22). Appointments are required and can be made by calling 850-474-2436. Appointments are available Monday-Friday, 9am to 3pm. For more information, visit the [Postal Services website](#).

UWF REA FACEBOOK GROUP

Join the UWF Retired Employees Association Facebook Group to stay connected!

 Facebook Group

REQUESTING NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please let us know if you would like to include a submission in the Fall 2025 newsletter. We would be happy to include news and pictures about travel, hobbies, or other experiences that would be of interest to other members. Please send your information to rea@uwf.edu by October 1, 2025.