Greetings from the NRC

June 2022

As Osher Institutes wind down their spring terms, summer programming and fall plans are blooming. While pandemic precautions vary widely, many OLLIs are taking advantage of outdoor venues and in-person events. Fall planning continues in the “new normal” of being ready for anything. We’ve become adept at changing directions, turning from online to in-person or to hybrid on a dime. But it has not lessened our interests in learning and socializing. We celebrate being together again, albeit with precautions, and are delighted to renew our friendships and contribute to the success of our Institutes more personally.

This month, two of our stories feature long-term members who made significant contributions of time and treasure to their OLLIs. From two island Institutes (in Hawai‘i and the Channel Islands of California) we introduce you to brothers who shared a love of learning throughout their lives, and how they continued to honor it into their retirements and beyond. From Washington University in St. Louis, we pay tribute to a member and U.S. Marine Corps veteran whose popular writing courses led him to write a poignant historical memoir in his 90s. And from OLLI at University of California, Davis, an instructor reflects on classmates who share memories, diverse perspectives, and above all else, friendships.

Some Osher Institutes use a tag line of “come for the classes, stay for the friends.” There are abundant examples of the relationship and community building value of OLLIs. We celebrate that spirit this month and welcome your submissions of similar stories in future months. Along with our summer gardens and plants, let’s work to keep our friendships blooming and growing, too.
With best wishes from your friends at the Osher NRC,

Steve Thaxton, Executive Director

OLLI National Resource Center for Osher Institutes

OLLI AT UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MANOA and
OLLI AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS

Generous Brothers and Supporters of Osher Institutes
Brothers Donald and Neil Matsumori shared many interests along with a generosity of spirit toward their universities and Osher Institutes. Both were accomplished scholars, respected professors, and academic leaders with long careers. After their respective retirements, each gravitated to Osher Institutes near their individual residences – Donald in Honolulu and Neil, north of Los Angeles – to continue their lifelong love of learning.

Elder brother Donald is remembered for his leadership at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Libraries, as a professor of library sciences, and as a gifted pianist and organist. In 2005, Donald honored the occasion of the first Osher Foundation endowment to OLLI at UH Mānoa with a concert on the magnificently refurbished 300+ metal pipe organ of the Epiphany Episcopal Church in Honolulu. With his wide range of course interests – dating back to the early 2000s – Donald took courses on cinema, history, art, politics, cuisine, and quantum physics. Over the years, he also taught several classes. Dr. Matsumori continued to recognize the importance of the Osher Institute with an estate gift to the program after his death in 2019.

Longtime OLLI supporter, colleague, and dear friend to Donald, Dr. Michael Cheang remembers, “He used to walk his St. Bernard on campus and would stop by the OLLI office to have a quick check in and chat in the early morning.” His engagement with the Institute was substantial and personal.

Younger brother Neil served as the Assistant Dean of the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California but joined the OLLI at California State University Channel Island (CSUCI) after retirement. Now 87, he continues his association with OLLI, having just completed a course last month via Zoom. Neil’s curiosity in the world remains strong. While he
established a scholarship at USC in the Education Department in his name, he is also a founding member of CSUCI's President’s Circle – encouraging philanthropy toward the educational mission of the university in its community, prominently including the Osher Institute.

Friends remember the brothers, relishing world travel together, and talking about their many learning adventures. Neil mentioned that in their daily telephone calls, Donald would often greet him in a new language, even studying Tagalog, an Austronesian language of the Philippines in his final months of life.

The Matsumori Brothers ongoing generosity and deep engagement with two Osher Institutes is inspirational. They have and continue to make an impact on lifelong learning indefinitely with gifts that will outlive them and benefit learners for many years to come.

OLLI AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS
Honoring the "Hilltop Doc"
In the spirit of Memorial Day, OLLI at Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) honors a long-time member and facilitator who passed away earlier this year. Leonard Adreon began his time at OLLI over a decade ago taking classes, including a memoir writing class. In this class, at close to 90 years old, he opened up to his classmates about his service in the Korean War. This was the first time he had shared with anyone, including his family, about his time serving as a medic in the Marine Corps. As he began to write about his experience, his fellow classmates encouraged him to continue sharing. He had believed, incorrectly, that no one would care to hear his stories. At the conclusion of many semesters in the memoir writing class, Leonard published his memoir "Hilltop Doc: A Marine Corpsman Fighting Through the Mud and Blood of the Korean War."

Leonard’s memoir, filled with descriptive prose and poetry, depicted the poignancy and horror of war. As a medic, Leonard’s duty was to jump out of his foxhole to tend to the injured, administering everything from morphine to tourniquets, all while in harm’s way. Steve Radinsky, chair of the Executive Committee at OLLI at WashU, said “Leonard fortunately returned from war and built a wonderful life with his dear Audrey and children. In the last few weeks of his life, he wrote one more very poignant and haunting poem of the war. Leonard will always be an exceptional man and hero in my eyes.”

Leonard continued to serve as a facilitator of a memoir class until his passing in February 2022. He used this role to encourage others to share their stories. He also served as a guest lecturer in other Osher classes focused on the Korean War where he was able to again share his personal experience. It is clear that Leonard left an impact on many at OLLI at Washington University in St. Louis.

Submitted by: Steve Radinsky, Chair, Executive Committee, OLLI at WashU

---

OLLI AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Between Friends: What I Learned in the Class I Taught
Marion Franck has been a columnist at the Davis Enterprise for many years and writes on subjects related to aging. She recently taught for OLLI at University of California Davis (UCD) and subsequently shared her experience as an OLLI educator in her weekly column.

The director of OLLI at UC Davis, Lisa Smith-Youngs notes, “It’s a wonderful read and I hope it inspires you as much as it did for me.”

Excerpts from Franck’s article in the Davis Enterprise:

“I was teaching a class for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute that I titled “Hide and Seek: Exploring Personal Writing.” This was my first return to teaching since my years as an English composition instructor at UC Davis during the ’80s and early ’90s.

In those days, my students were between 18-20 years old. This time they were mostly retired, like I am, some recently, some long ago. That’s quite a difference.

The “hide and seek” in my course title acknowledges that when people write about themselves, they often have to make tough decisions about what to include and what to leave out, especially regarding family members and friends. Sometimes compelling stories end up omitted.

That’s the same problem I face today because I’m eager to tell you what I learned from teaching older students but — and it’s a significant “but” — I promised my class that I would not share their personal information. Fortunately, I am realizing that I can share some things that are universal.”…

“Here’s the thing about older students, the thing I most want to tell you.

I am both their teacher and their equal. They are both my teachers and my equals. This is not the same as teaching college students, where I find a big gap in life experience.
Sitting in a room full of gray-haired students, I realize that everyone is wise. We are wise in our individual ways, depending on what life has handed us in terms of career or family, good luck or misfortune. We have learned on purpose, or sometimes in spite of ourselves, but we have learned.

I have experience with writing, so I teach that. Others have different expertise and, if they want, they could teach, too.

The feeling of equality in the room moves me. The personal sharing does, too.”

Submitted by: Lisa Smith-Youngs, Director, OLLI at University of California, Davis

THE OLLI INSIDER

WOO-HOOS FROM THE 2022 OSHER INSTITUTES NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Bradley University Supports Local Restaurants

What is a Woo-Hoo? A Woo-Hoo is one of those wonderful, amazing, out of the box experiences at an OLLI. All Osher Institutes have the opportunity to submit and showcase their Woo-Hoo for the Osher National Conference. The Woo-Hoos are shared during general sessions at the conference, and attendees vote on their favorites. The following is one of the winners from the 2022 Osher Institutes National Conference.

Bradley University Supports Local Restaurants
OLLI at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, is civically minded and cares deeply about the survival of local restaurants. At the start of the pandemic, staff developed a program called Support Local. This program featured price fixed curbside meal delivery followed by a virtual presentation from the business owner. In the first 18 months of the program, 1,735 members supported 50 local businesses. The city honored OLLI with a proclamation applauding the innovative approach to learning while supporting local business.
CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK

Job Board

Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
University of South Florida

Lifelong Learning and Community Engagement Specialist  
University of North Texas

Manager, Community Programs - College of Professional Education  
Kennesaw State University

Is there a staff opening at your Osher Institute? Please send it to us at oshernrc@northwestern.edu