

UWF REA NEWSLETTER

Fall 2024



REA 101 Meeting Attendees on August 8, 2024

REA MEMBERSHIP

Regular REA membership is open to all UWF retirees as well as the spouses of retirees, or the surviving spouses of deceased employees.

First Time Member

If you wish to become an Active REA member for the first time, there is no cost for the first year. Please submit the Membership Form at the link below and select, "first year of membership."

[Membership Form](#)

Renewing Member

If you are a returning Active member, please make your donation of \$50 or greater to the UWF REA Foundation account by following the link below.

[Payment Link](#)



Retired Employees
Association
UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings REA Members,

I'm pleased to be serving as President of the UWF Retired Employees Association this year. In fact, it actually feels like destiny to me. I've known I would become a member of REA and perhaps have the opportunity to serve on the Board since my dear friend and mentor, Tom Henderson, helped to create the organization more than 20 years ago. Time, being what it is, has passed quickly and now I'm there (or here). It is my pleasure to be working with REA and seeing former co-workers and other friends and also meeting people whose names I always heard but didn't meet during my employment years.

The REA Board this year is amazing. We have the right mix of returning Board members and new Board members, retired faculty and staff, and different interests and skill sets. All together we have a Board that is excited, committed, participative, and just so darn nice! I appreciate each of them.

We are off to a good start this year with our first ever REA 101 event. We had a packed house with interesting speakers who provided information about University services available to REA members. We had our first Dutch treat lunch for the year with all seats filled as we heard from Rob Overton, Executive Director of the UWF Historic Trust. We have plenty more events coming up this year and have tried to keep the focus on activities that were of high interest in the survey we sent out over the summer.

Please be sure to check out the article written by Joy Ward on the UWF Camellia Garden. For those of you who wonder about REA's ongoing involvement with the Garden, this article will explain why it is important to us. Check out Bill Healey's travel pictures from Ireland and England. In our Member Spotlight, Tom Henderson shares with us his interest in woodworking and we get to see pictures of his beautiful creations.

If you have not already done so, remember to renew your membership or join for the first time. Some of our upcoming Fall events require Active membership in order to participate at no charge. Information on membership can be found on the first page of this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you at the theatre, a football game, the Oktoberfest event, our holiday social, or on the trip to Bellingrath Gardens.

With best wishes,
Ellen Till,
UWF REA President

FALL 2024 EVENTS

REA Dutch Treat Lunch

Mon. September 9

11 am

@ Taylor's Breakfast & Lunch

Camellia Garden Work Day

Sat. September 28

9 am

@ UWF Camellia Garden

You're a Good Man

Charlie Brown

September 27-29

October 4-6

UWF Theatre Production

President's Tailgate

Sat. October 5

1:30 pm - Tailgate

4 pm - Game

*Does not include ticket to the game

REA Oktoberfest

Sat. October 19

12 to 3 pm

@ UWF Aquatic Center

Courtyard

President's Tailgate

Sat. November 9

11:30 am - Tailgate

2 pm - Game

*Does not include ticket to the game

Camellia Garden Work Day

Sat. November 9

9 am

@ UWF Camellia Garden

Bellingrath Gardens Magic Christmas in Lights

Tues. December 3

3 to 9 pm

A Leisure Learning Event

REA Holiday Social

Wed. December 11

11 am to 1 pm

@ UWF Conference Center



Retired Employees
Association

UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

REA EVENT RECAP - COCOA & CAMELLIA

February 14, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - DAY AT THE BALL PARK

April 6, 2024



REA EVENT RECAP - ANNUAL MEETING

May 9, 2024



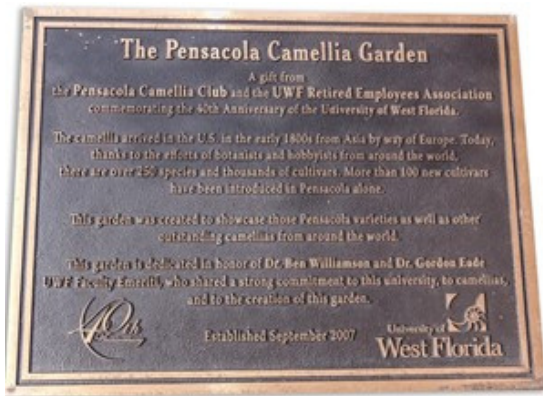
CAMELLIA GARDEN HISTORY

By Joy Ward

Who doesn't love flowers...

Especially southern grown camellias with blooms featuring a stunning array of sizes, colors and petal formations. Just imagine a garden full of heritage varieties that were propagated and registered right here in Pensacola! Finding a public space for such a garden was the dream of the Pensacola Camellia Club. At the same time, the newly formed UWF Retired Employees Association Board was searching for a gift to celebrate the University's 40th Anniversary. As serendipity would have it, a few REA members were also camellia enthusiasts and thus the connection was made. The idea was presented to the UWF administration, and a formal agreement was signed.

Over the years, the UWF Camellia Garden has become a source of pride for UWF and the Pensacola community. It provides a quiet place for students to study as well as a campus destination for visitors.



When REA members help maintain the UWF Camellia Garden, we honor the memory of two UWF retirees who were the first to search for Pensacola's "lost" camellias. Dr. Ben Williamson who served in the Health, Leisure, and Exercise Science department for 34 years. Dr. Williamson passed away on June 24, 2008. Dr. Gordon Eade joined the faculty at UWF in 1968 and served in the Department of Education until his retirement in 1990. He passed away at 97 on August 1, 2022.

To assist you on a self-guided tour of the garden please visit the [Pensacola Camellia Club](#) website.

UWF Camellia Garden Milestones

Sept. 2007 – Pensacola Camellia Club and UWF Retired Employee Association established a permanent camellia garden at UWF with the primary purpose of housing and protecting one specimen of every known variety that had been registered by Pensacola camellia growers. Currently, over 100 of the approximately 125 Pensacola originated varieties are growing at the UWF Camellia Garden.

Feb. 2017 – With the completion of the Camellia Garden Enhancement Project in recognition of the University's 50th anniversary, the three-fourths of an acre garden was rededicated. The garden was transformed with paved walkways, lighting, memorial benches and bricks to honor loved ones in an enduring reflective space.

March 2020 – The American Camellia Society named the UWF Camellia Garden as an American Camellia Trail Garden, becoming one of 57 in the U.S. and only three in the state of Florida.



Feb. 2024 – February 14th of 2024 was not just Valentine's Day, but the formal presentation of funds from the Pensacola Camellia Club and University's Retired Employees Association totaling \$25K. Those funds were matched by an anonymous UWF REA member donor, for a total of \$50K to establish the UWF Camellia Garden Endowment. Now we have financial support to maintain the existing garden and leave a beautiful legacy on the University of West Florida campus. Let's take care of it!



CONNOR'S CORNER



HAPPY HALLOWEEN everyone! I love this holiday 'cause my mom lets me forget my diet and gives me lots of extra treats.

I just celebrated my 12th birthday in June (that's 84 in human years) so now I'm a year older than my mom. LOL! My arthritis has kept me away from Airport PUP Patrol duties, but I still get to help with the Caring Canines visiting Nursing & Retirement homes, Fortis Institute and my favorite, of course, the Paws and Play days at the UWF library. On those visits, I get to sit next to folks and get petted. Mom and I are also working to become a R.E.A.D. Team (Reading Education Assistance Dogs). Once we complete all the paperwork, we will be spending time reading to, or listening to youngsters read, at some of the local libraries.

A few good woofs from me to you...

*I wish you all the best,
As '24 comes to an end,
May you find happiness.
May '25 bring lots of love,
Good times, good health and all,
And with the folks of the REA,
You are sure to have a ball.*

Connor
REA Mascot



MEMBER SUBMISSION

Bill Healey visited the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland and Stonehenge in England.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

An Interview with Tom Henderson on Woodworking

Tom Henderson's fascination with woodworking began long before his retirement. "I've always had an interest, from shop class in school to making small household items," he reflects. "As I neared retirement, I realized that fishing forty hours a week wasn't going to be enough to keep me occupied. That's when I decided to get serious about woodworking." Tom's learning journey was a blend of self-education and hands-on experience. "I read woodworking magazines, joined internet forums, and, of course, made a thousand mistakes along the way," he shares.



Adirondack Chairs & Patio Furniture



Tackle Boxes

Tom's passion for woodworking led to the creation of his well-supplied workshop. "I initially worked in the garage, but the mess from sawdust on Barbara's car and the desire for more space and tools made it clear that a dedicated shop was necessary," he explains.

Woodworking has been more than just a pastime; it has been a central part of his retirement. "It gave me the chance to learn new skills and create items for family and friends. It also filled the time I previously spent at UWF," he notes. The craft provided both a creative outlet and a sense of purpose.

Tom's handiwork ranges from functional furniture to artistic turnings. "I've made furniture for my family and literally hundreds of bowls and hollow forms (vases)," he reveals. His approach to selecting projects is both practical and creative. "Furniture pieces are often made on request from family," he says. "Woodturning, however, is driven by fun and challenge."

When asked if he had advice for those new to woodworking, Tom advises: "Read woodworking magazines, participate in internet forums, join a club, and make things."



Bowls and Snowman



Dining Room Table

Thomas Henderson's journey through woodworking is a testament to the joy and fulfillment that can come from pursuing a passion. Whether crafting functional furniture or artistic turnings, his dedication to the craft continues to enrich his retirement and inspire those around him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

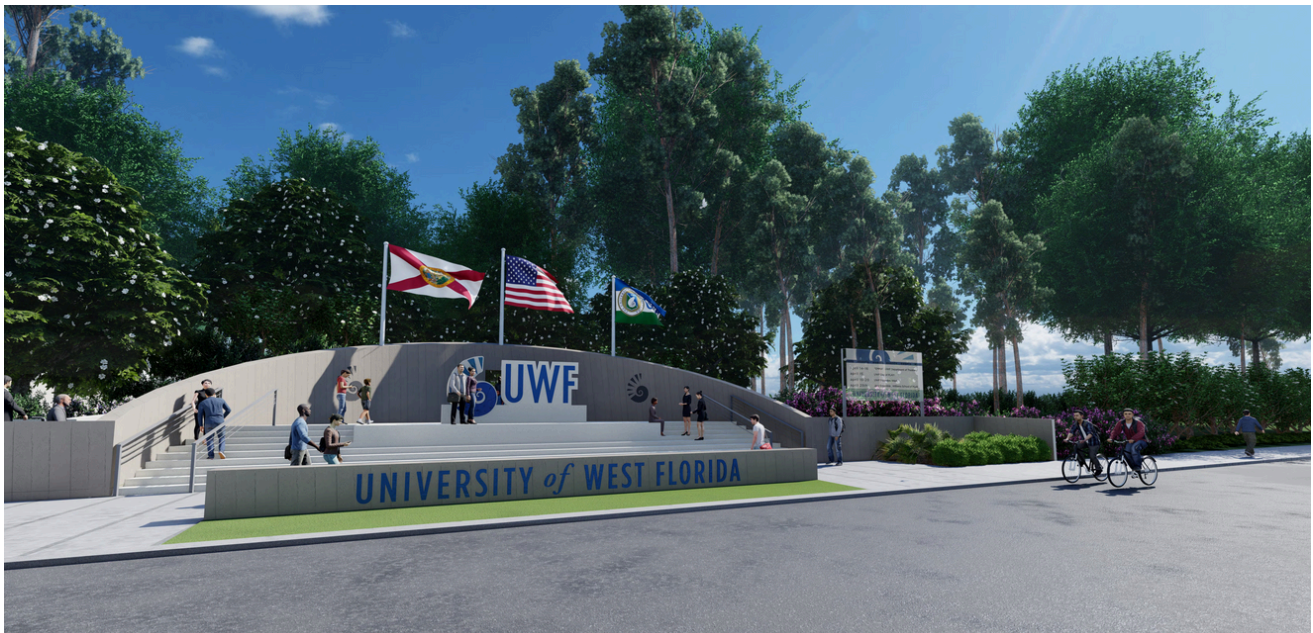
UWF Alumni Travel Opportunities



The UWF Alumni Office has invited REA members to participate in the Alumni Travel program. In partnership with Collette Travel they are offering travel opportunities for 2025-2026. Some of these trips are filling up quickly. Information about pricing, deadlines and other details can be found at this link: [Alumni Travel](#)

- **Sunny Portugal** - February 2-11, 2025
- **Iceland's Magical Northern Lights** - February 25 - March 3, 2025
- **Canadian Rockies & Glacier National Park** - June 24-30, 2025
- **Spotlight on the French Riviera** - February 20-28, 2026
- **Irish Splendor** - March 7-14, 2026
- **Classical Greece** - March 22 - April 1, 2026
- **Alaska Discovery** - September 2026

New University Entrance



The University has been working on a new grand entrance. The project was designed by Architect/Engineer: Marquis Latimer + Halback, Inc. The construction contractor is Wescon Corp. The new University Parkway entrance is expected to be completed in Fall 2024.

REMEMBER WHEN

Dying for Charity!

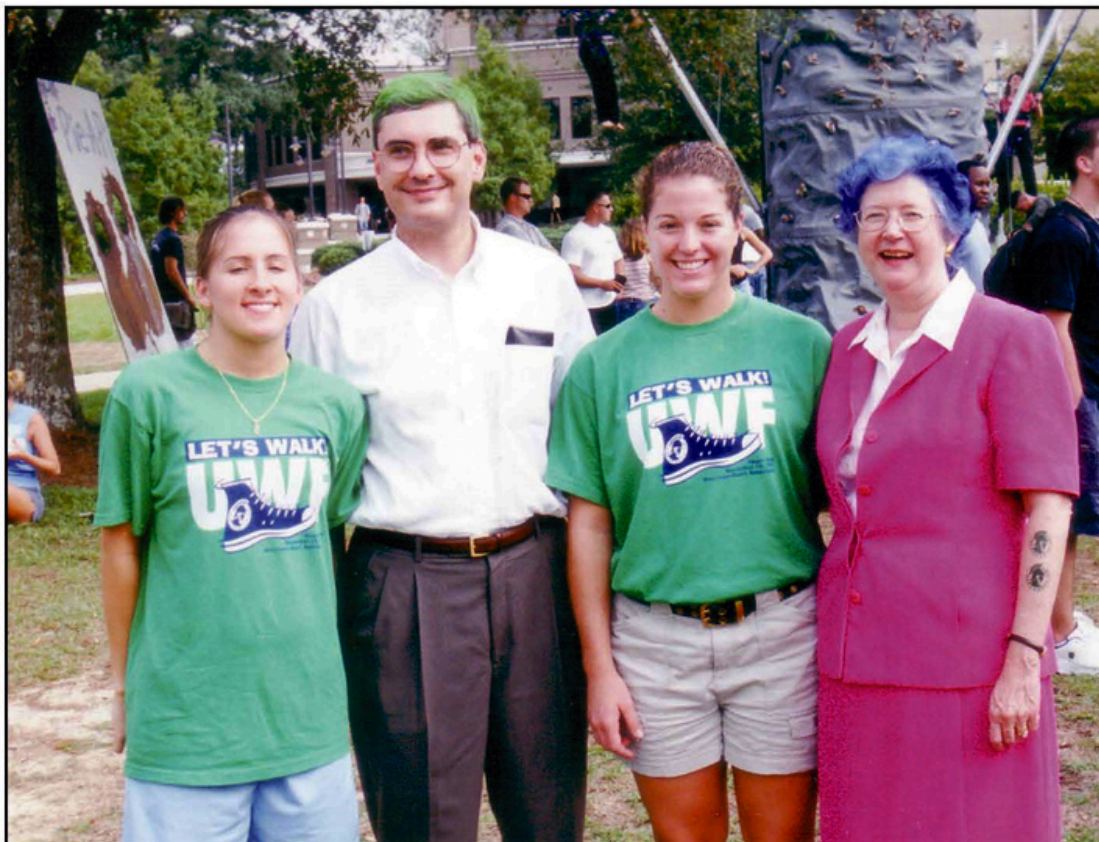


Photo by Ron Besser

John Cavanaugh, President, and Linda Dye, Vice President for Student Affairs, dyed their hair school colors to celebrate UWF students successfully raising more than \$10,000. (Circa 2002)

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 Spring 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 January 15, 2025.