



Florida Institute of Technology
High Tech with a Human Touch

the silver panther

professors emeriti newsletter

Volume I, Issue 2

Spring Edition - 2008

Welcome to the Second Edition of the "Silver Panther"

The new newsletter by and for the professors emeriti of Florida Institute of Technology.

The Silver Panther: Some Ideas on Content

This is only the second edition of the newsletter for Professors Emeriti and as such, it is very much a work in progress. The main goal of the publication is to keep us all in touch with each other and with the major events of the university. Regular features will include a calendar of events of interest to professors emeriti and news of our members (much like news from the alumni). Additionally, we thought that it might be fun to do a profile on a professor emeritus in each issue. We have started in this issue with Bob Fronk, former Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. And then there will be the special features contributed by our membership. We need contributions from all of you. Write an editorial on something about which you feel strongly, describe the work (including volunteer work) you are presently doing, write an article about a trip you have taken or an adventure you have had, tell us about a hobby that has captivated you, and send us photos you have taken. Although these might seem mundane to you, they really are not.

We are all very interested in what one another are doing post-retirement. We also need your input regarding what you would like to see covered in the Silver Panther. So please let us hear from you. Send your comments, pictures, and articles to drgender@cfl.rr.com

Professors Emeriti Web Page Launched!

We now have a Florida Tech web site devoted to Professors Emeriti. Go to the Quick Links menu on the FIT home page and click on professors emeriti. You can also get there directly from the following address in your browser: <http://research.fit.edu/emeritus/>. Read about the adventures of professors emeriti in retirement in more depth than we have space for in the newsletter.

Professors Emeriti Office

A small office has been set aside in the Alumni House for Professors Emeriti. Harry Weber and Janet Woodyard are in the process of setting it up.

New Retirees To Be Honored at Spring Convocation

On April 10 at 3:30 P.M. the new Professors Emeriti will be honored at the Spring Honors Convocation in the Gleason Performing Arts Center. The names of new emeriti have not been released yet (imagine, some folks just have not made up their minds yet!) Please attend the convocation and the reception (details below) to welcome our new members.

Professors Emeriti Reception

On April 22 new Professors Emeriti will be welcomed at the Emeriti Faculty Reception in the Hartley Room from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. All Professors Emeriti AND spouses are encouraged to attend without charge courtesy of the office of the Executive Vice Provost in order to welcome our new members.

YOU are F.I.T.'s History

We Need Your Help. Write it down, dig it out of your files, recollect events, and get it to the History Committee. There is so much that is hidden simply because it is known only by individuals. Help us to put the appropriate faces on our history.

Think! What do you have? Pictures, resumes, letters, documents, anecdotes, information on friends who have helped, newspaper articles, and etc., etc. Put us on the trail. Send it to the History Committee and it will be documented in our archives.
Harry Weber, Chair, History Committee
C/O Alumni Affairs

Emeritus Faculty Luncheon Held on February 21



On Thursday, February 21, twenty five professors emeriti and guests attended the annual luncheon on campus. Dr. Catanese welcomed the group and painted a positive view of campus activities and outlined areas of future growth. Dr. Terry Oswalt, department head for Physics and Space Sciences, was the guest speaker at the luncheon meeting. He gave a short presentation on the new astronomy telescope followed by a tour of the new telescope and facility in the Olin Physical Science Building. For photos of the event, go the Photo Gallery on the Professors Emeriti web page.

News From the Silver Panthers

Juanita Baker missed the Professor Emeriti luncheon because she was on another bird watching trip, this time in Trinidad. She sends word of several publications recently published.

Brannon, Y., Levenson, J. S., Fortney, T., & Baker, J. (2007). Attitudes about Community Notification: A Comparison of Sexual Offenders and the Non-offending Public. Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research & Treatment, 19(4), 369-379.

Baker, J. & Amandolance, B. (2007). A Therapeutic Narrative: A Eulogy to His Father. A review of fatherless Sons: Healing the Legacy of Loss by Jonathan Diamond. PsycCRITIQUES-Contemporary Psychology: American Psychological Association review of books, VOL 52 (No 33)

Dave Clapp writes from Orlando that he and his wife have enjoyed cruises to Alaska, the Caribbean, and the Panama Canal and will be heading to Bermuda in April. Nevertheless he continues to teach on-line courses for Florida Tech.

Tom Stephens, Ed Everette and Russ Graves (Aeronautics) are off again this spring to teach in the FIT/UTP (Universidad Tecnologica de Panama) aeronautics degree program in Panama.



Florida Tech College of Aeronautics professors teach all of the aviation specific courses in the four year curriculum by a combination of on-site lectures and distance learning.

Andrew Zborowski



Professor Zborowski (Ocean Engineering) writes from his home in Moindal, Sweden, that he would like to work (even though he has retired) as a Naval Architect, but can't because shipbuilding in Europe is largely non-existent. Even if it weren't, the government there doesn't allow people over 70 to work! Andrew says, "This isn't America where you decide, not the State."

Robert Henry Fronk *a profile*



When Bob Fronk accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Science Education at Florida Institute of Technology in 1974, he thought he'd give it a couple of years and see how he liked it. Thirty-three years later he retired as Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, having served the university in a variety of capacities. Clearly, he must have liked it. He came to Florida Tech because he and his wife had enjoyed Florida when he taught science at Manatee Junior College in Bradenton several years earlier, and the position here was exactly what he was looking for. Like so many other long time faculty members at Florida Tech, he discovered that despite the normal frustrations of academia, faculty here were treated very well comparatively, and there was nowhere else he'd rather be. Besides, at Florida Tech, the science education department was part of the College of Science and Engineering and not housed in a College of Education, thus providing him with the stimulation of interaction with other faculty who were scientists. For Bob, who holds a BA in Biological Sciences from Whittier College and an M.S. in Marine Biology from the University of California, this was a unique benefit.

In 1977, when the then-current department head left the school, Bob became acting head of the Department of Science Education, a position which became permanent shortly after, lasting until 2003. In 1984, he also took on the position of Coordinator of the Computer Education program which he held

simultaneously until 2003. When the university conducted the SACS study in the early 1990's, it was discovered that the Institutional Effectiveness Program we had promised SACS we would develop, had never been implemented. Because Bob was a senior faculty member who knew the university well and had a background in assessment, President Weaver selected him to fulfill that obligation, adding Assistant to the President to his growing list of titles. When President Catanese came aboard, Bob continued to hold that position, volunteering to conduct the next SACS review, an offer that the president could hardly refuse. In typical Florida Tech fashion, Bob had become a faculty member/administrator with many hats! All of that ended in 2004 when Provost Dwayne McKay was hired and Bob's position became that of Assistant Provost for Institutional Planning, Research, and Assessment. It was then that he dropped his other duties and devoted his time completely to administration, becoming Vice Provost for Academic Affairs in 2005.

During his academic career, Bob co-authored a textbook, *Earth Science*, published by Holt and produced an interactive educational video disc for the State of Florida Department of Education. His proudest accomplishment is obtaining a \$1,000,000 donation to establish the Sarkis Acopian Endowed Chair in Environmental Education, the first endowed chair at Florida Tech. When asked which position he most enjoyed at Florida Tech, Bob pointed out that different positions offered different positive effects. He remembers fondly his stimulating interaction with graduate students and the group of Saudi Arabian Muslim women, spouses of students, who attended his computer education courses when they discovered he was teaching something they would actually be allowed to use upon returning home. His position as Assistant to the

President expanded his world from outside his department across the university. He got to know many more faculty and administrators and his vision of the institution became much broader. As conductor of the most recent SACS Review, he is in the unique position to share how Florida Tech compares to other universities. Our strength, he feels, is the quality of our faculty which is as good or better than that at other universities. Our weakness is money. Florida Tech began living paycheck to paycheck and survived a long time in that manner. More recently we have begun to increase our endowment, but have a long way to go. Bob also reflected on his career development with the bemusement that often comes with age. "You know, it wasn't something I could have planned. The opportunities just happened." Who was it who said, "Life is what happens to you while you are planning something else"?

Bob retired at the end of the 2007 spring semester and, after training extensively, participated in the Great Mississippi River Ride, biking 1784 miles from New Orleans to Minneapolis.

He learned from this experience that he actually could participate in a cross-country bike trip, if he so chooses, despite lightning and dogs. That may be in the future. For sure, he and his wife will travel in the west. But then there's not much point in detailed planning. Life will just happen, anyway. An excerpt from the story is printed below.



My Commencement into Retirement: The Great Mississippi River Ride

By Bob Fronk

I decided that I wanted to begin retirement with a special event. So I signed up for a 1748-mile bicycle ride from New Orleans to Minneapolis that started one week after Spring Commencement. I figured retiring after a commencement ceremony was appropriate --- I would start a new part of my life along with all our graduating students.

The trip was with 30 other cyclists from all over the country. We were the class-of-2007 riders for the "Great Mississippi River Ride," a trip organized by America by Bicycle (AbBike). The company runs fully supported cycling trips up and down the U. S. and coast to coast across the country.

The Great Mississippi River Ride was organized into three segments: New Orleans to Memphis, Memphis to St. Louis, and St. Louis to Minneapolis. Since my brother lives in Minneapolis, the plan was to ride to his house at the end of the trip. We would then have UPS ship the bike to Melbourne and I would fly home. It almost worked out that way!

Editor's Note: To find out what happened, visit the professors emeriti webpage and read Bob's complete article.

Thirty-seven Cents!

Everyone has heard the story that the first donation to Florida Institute of Technology founder Jerome P. Keuper (1921-2002) was the 37 cents found in the donor's pocket. From such humble beginnings, Keuper founded Florida Tech in 1958 to meet a critical need for scientists and engineers in America's race for space. Florida Tech quickly attracted the world's foremost rocket scientists and engineers. It awarded its first honorary doctorate in 1962 to Virgil "Gus" Grissom. Among its first visiting professors were the legendary rocket scientist Werhner von Braun and Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb. Over the years, Florida Tech expanded its course offering while maintaining internationally recognized excellence and ties to the space program. It counts among its graduates five astronauts, including two who flew together on Space Shuttle Discovery in December, 2006, Joan Higginbotham and Sunita Williams. During the university's Golden Anniversary, Dr. Keuper's legacy will be celebrated with the dedication of a life-size bronze statue. Led by Denton Clark (retired President of RCA), Gene Fetner (retired RCA administrator), Gene Buzzi '65 Chair of the association's Alumni Relations Committee and daughter Melanie Keuper, the committee's vision is to honor the founder and first president of our university in perpetuity. If you would like to make a gift to this historic project, gifts may be made payable to the Florida Tech Alumni Association or online at:

<https://www.merchantamerica.com/fit/ec/hopay/>.

Welcome Center to House Archives

Florida Tech is a rich resource for local, regional, national, and international communities. This resource is under used because we have no single place of welcome and no organized archives. There is no single place or organization for visitors to campus and virtual visitors to experience Florida Tech's history and current programs, and to be given directions or answers to their questions

The Florida Tech History Committee has developed the concept of the Florida Tech Welcome Center, an outcome of the Committee's initiative to develop the Florida Tech Historical Archives. The Archives, enabled by leading edge information technologies, will provide the physical and electronic materials that will form the basis of displays in the Welcome Center.

To our knowledge, combining the functions of a reception center and an archive, forming a place of welcome that will celebrate the university's past, present, and future, is a new approach to preserving the past in the light of present accomplishments and future directions. The Welcome Center, as we conceive it, will be the Archives of the Future.

The first and most pressing need for development of a history-based Welcome center is to capture the past: to identify, collect, and preserve university memorabilia, publications, photographs, documents and other items of historic value that are not currently in the university's possession or are distributed throughout the campus.

Initially, the Florida Tech History Committee has set a goal to hire an archivist and to continue planning for a Welcome Center that incorporates historical archives and electronic and multimedia displays.

Assistance of the Professors Emeriti is welcome. Let us hear from you.

Harry Weber hweber@fit.edu

Calendar of Events of Interest to Emeriti

April 10 - **Honors Convocation**
3:30 -5:00 Gleason Performing Arts Center

April 22 – **Emeriti Faculty Reception (Professors Emeriti and Spouses)**
3:00 – 5:00 Hartley Room

October 18 – **Homecoming Alumni Banquet** To be held in the Clemente Center this 50th anniversary year. Stay tuned for details.

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