



# Wedgworth Leadership Institute

## Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume 2, Summer 2009

### President's Letter

Here it is May already (I hope everyone has had a great spring) and there are lots of exciting things on the horizon. Class VII is in the final stages of preparation for their international trip and I am sure that nerves are starting to tingle and the excitement is building. I had the pleasure of having dinner with Hannah (Happy Birthday again) this past Friday and I could tell she was hearing the countdown in her head. I was glad to see she still had eyebrows as that was always the target during Class VI when the stress started to build. The Gold in her must be working overtime going over schedules and wondering where the hiccups will occur. It sounds like a grand adventure.

The international trip also means that Graduation is not far away. Nancy and I are looking forward to welcoming Class VII into the alumni association at our annual meeting following graduation. I remember very well this point in the Leadership Program where I was excited about the international trip, but also a little melancholy that two years have flown by and this part of the Wedgworth Leadership experience was drawing to a close.

The Alumni Meeting is really coming together and we have a great program lined up. Nancy and I are heading up the Silent Auction again and ask everyone to step up and bring something for the auction table. We expect this year will be bigger and better than last year, but not as good as next year! The reservation link should be in this newsletter if I can get Innisbrook to answer me in the next 15 minutes, so make those reservations early.

So here's a yī lù píng ān to Class VII and see you all at Innisbrook!

David McDonald, Co-President

### Wedgworth Alumni Association 2009 Annual Conference and WLIANR Class VII Graduation

August 6th, 7th and 8th

Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club  
Palm Harbor, Florida

<http://www.innisbrookgolfresort.com/maps-directions/index.cfm>

Come to the WLI Alumni Annual Meeting!!

*Highlights Include: Class VII's Graduation ~ Commissioner of Agriculture Candidates Forum ~ Speakers on Leadership, Economic Sustainability, Public Issues & Technology....Plus Bring Your Boots and Jeans for an Evening of Square Dancing!!*

Plans are firming up for our 2009 Wedgworth Alumni Association Annual Conference and Class VII Graduation, August 6th, 7th and 8th, at the Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida.

Innisbrook has an amazing selection of activities for children; adults; and families, both on-property and nearby. Recent facility renovations include a new Spa opening in January 2009, a new urban village with deli and restaurant opening in spring, 2009.

With four restaurants; golf courses; tennis courts; putting green; miniature golf; Spa; nearby beach and shopping excursions; nature trails; etc., you will have

a wide range of choices. The weekend's focal point for the families will certainly be the "Lochness Pool," complete with slides, beach areas, hot tub, snack bar, etc.

The conference and meeting facilities have all been recently renovated and are first class. Individual rooms and suites are in the process of being updated and the grounds are beautiful.

### RATES

	Thursday 08/06/09	Friday 08/07/2009	Saturday 08/08/2009
Rate	\$115.00	\$115.00	\$115.00

All rates are quoted exclusive of applicable state and local taxes, currently at 12%, if applicable. Room rates are based on single or double occupancy. Any additional occupants 18 years of age and older will be subject to an additional charge of \$20.00 per person, per night, plus applicable taxes. **Group rates will be offered 3 days pre and post scheduled event dates.**

### TO MAKE RESERVATIONS

Please call 1-800-456-2000 and be sure to mention you are with the Wedgworth Leadership Institute Alumni Association Group. You can also reserve rooms on-line by following this link: [http://reservations.ihotelier.com/crs/g\\_reservation.cfm?groupID=369828&hotelID=13416](http://reservations.ihotelier.com/crs/g_reservation.cfm?groupID=369828&hotelID=13416).

### RESORT SERVICE CHARGE

Inclusive in group rate

The Resort Charge includes self parking; use of the fitness center; in-room internet access; on property shuttle transportation; in-room newspaper delivery; local and toll free phone calls; in-room coffee service; use of the nature preserve; use of the miniature golf, volleyball, basketball, and six swimming pools; scheduled beach shuttle transportation; and 24-hour gated security.

### CUT-OFF DATE

The "cut-off date" for accepting reservations into this guest room block is **07/15/09**. Reservation requests received after **5:00 p.m.** local time at the Resort on

the cut-off date will be accepted at Resort's prevailing rate, based on availability

We are looking forward to seeing each of you August 6th, 7th, and 8th, 2009 at the Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida! If you have any questions, please contact WLI Alumni Association President David McDonald at # (352) 267-9658 or at [DMcdonald@farmcreditcfl.com](mailto:DMcdonald@farmcreditcfl.com).

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## Calling All Sponsors

We rely on sponsors each year to put together outstanding programs at our alumni meetings. If you, your company or one of your suppliers would be interested in a sponsorship this year it would greatly appreciated. All of the sponsors' names will be displayed on the Sponsor Board at all events and acknowledged during the Annual Banquet. In addition, all of our sponsors will be recognized in the Annual Meeting literature, WLI website and the Alumni Association newsletter.

Sponsorships are available at the following levels:

<b>Platinum</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>Gold</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>Silver</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Bronze</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Contributor</b>	<b>\$250</b>

Attached is a Sponsorship Registration form for you to complete and return if you can assist us this year. I hope that you will strongly make plans to attend this year and also take the time out to call a few of your close alumni friends and encourage them to join you for a great weekend of fun, education and fellowship.

Please contact WLI Annual Alumni Meeting Sponsorship Chair Richard Schwab, [Richard@marigoniinc.com](mailto:Richard@marigoniinc.com). Richard's mailing address is: Richard Schwab c/o WLI Alumni Association 2365 North US 19 Perry, FL 32347

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# Annual WLI Alumni Meeting Schedule

## Thursday, August 6th

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Reception – Social Hour  
7:00 p.m. Dinner  
Graduation Ceremony for Class VII

## Friday, August 7th

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast  
8:45 a.m. Welcome  
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Candidates for Commissioner of Agriculture Forum  
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Break  
10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Public Issues Education – What does Industry Need & What Can We Do?  
12:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Lunch and Recreation on your own  
6:00 p.m. Social Time  
7:00 p.m. Dinner  
8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. “Dancing with the Squares” – Square Dancing WLI Style!  
10:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open – Silent Auction Bidding

## Saturday, August 8th

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast  
8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Welcome  
WLI Business Meeting  
9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Break  
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. “Enhancing Your Leadership and Technology Skills  
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. “Economic Sustainability for your Organization During these Tough Times”  
12:00 p.m. Adjourn  
12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Lunch and Recreation on your own. Golf, spa, shopping, swimming, etc.  
Hospitality Suite will be open  
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Social Reception  
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Annual Banquet  
10:00 p.m. – Midnight Hospitality Suite Open

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## WLI Alumni Association Silent Auction

Bid Early! Bid Often! We will be having a silent auction in the hospitality suite again this year during the weekend and hope to shatter the grand total of last year’s auction! We are asking everyone to donate at least one item. It can be something they make, a commodity they grow or something special they pick out. It really livens up the weekend and it helps us to raise funds to support our association. For more information please contact David & Nancy McDonald at # (352) 267-9658 or at [DMcdonald@farmcreditfl.com](mailto:DMcdonald@farmcreditfl.com) or [ngmpro@aol.com](mailto:ngmpro@aol.com).

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# Nominations for the Eugene Trotter Leadership Award

The Wedgworth Leadership Institute Alumni Association is proud to sponsor the Eugene Trotter Leadership Award, an award for leaders in Florida's agriculture and natural resources industry. Created as a tribute to Dr. Eugene Trotter, founding director of the Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources (WLIANR), the Eugene Trotter Leadership Award is intended to:

1. Honor leaders in the agriculture industry who have exemplified personal values, performance, and achievement in Florida;
2. Recognize high standards of conduct, leadership, innovation, and accomplishment for agriculture;
3. Publicize and build more awareness for excellence in agriculture, while establishing role model's for young people entering the industry; and
4. Promote more individual leadership, innovation, and desire to excel in the agricultural field.

Any individual who has been involved with the agriculture and natural resources industry for a minimum of 10 years is eligible for this award. Nominees should have made significant contributions to Florida's agricultural and natural resources industry, beyond the local level and beyond the nominee's paid profession. Candidates will be evaluated in three areas: contributions to agriculture, civic contributions to the state, and statewide or national recognition.

The award winner will be recognized with a plaque and monetary gift during a ceremony at the Wedgworth Leadership Institute Alumni Association annual meeting.

Deadline for award nominations is Friday, July 10, 2009. If you know of a deserving individual for this award, please forward that individual's name to Hannah Carter at [hscarter@ufl.edu](mailto:hscarter@ufl.edu) or call 352-392-1038.

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# Alumni in the News

## **Mike Branch named President of the Florida Ag Council**

Mike Branch (Class III) was recently named as the President of the Florida Ag Council. The Florida Agricultural Council, Inc. is an organization of leaders who generate legislative support for research and education in agriculture and related industries.

## **Halsey Beshears named FNGLA Farm Credit Nursery Professional of the Year**

Halsey Beshears, (Class V) with Total Landscape Supply has been named the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association's Farm Credit / FNGLA Young Nursery Professional of the Year for 2009. This was noted in the April issue of Ornamental Outlook magazine.

## **Ray Gilmer Named United Fresh Produce Association Vice President for Communications**

United Fresh Produce Association (United Fresh) President and CEO Tom Stenzel has announced the appointment of Ray Gilmer (Class IV) as vice president of communications, where he will bring more than 20 years of combined experience in agricultural issues management, public relations and crisis management to United's senior management team.

"Ray is well known to many throughout the produce industry, due to more than a decade heading up communications and public affairs at the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association (FFVA)," Stenzel said. "We are indeed fortunate to add him to our team."

Gilmer joined FFVA in 1994 as director of communications and education and was named director of public affairs in 2000. While at FFVA, he led communications initiatives on issues such as international trade, farm labor, pest eradication, social responsibility and food safety. Further, Gilmer has worked closely with United and other industry groups

on multiple farm bills and country-of-origin labeling initiatives, providing leadership for outreach to key stakeholders, such as lawmakers, news media and coalition partners.

Gilmer has served on the Board and Executive Committee of the Produce for Better Health Foundation, where he contributed to development of the “Fruits and Veggies: More Matters” program. Other industry leadership includes serving as president of the Agriculture Institute of Florida and Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, as well as vice president for the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida.

Gilmer’s prior experience includes serving as group manager of communications for BASF Crop Protection in the U.S., where he led marketing and crisis management programs for several business groups, including crop protection and plant biotechnology. He has also worked in his career in broadcast journalism and in a public relations agency capacity serving clients that included Monsanto and Kodak.

Gilmer holds a bachelor’s degree in Radio/Television from the University of Central Florida and a master’s degree in Broadcast Administration from Boston University. He will join United Fresh April 20 and will be based at United’s headquarters office in Washington, D.C.

## **Foundation To Help Farmworker Community**

Florida growers have launched a new foundation to benefit farmworkers, announcing March 24 that an initial round of \$160,000 has been earmarked for three programs related to child care, health care and education for the farmworker community in South Florida.

For its inaugural projects, the Farmworker Community Support Foundation has chosen to work with Collier Health Services and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, both in Immokalee, and with Homestead-based Women United in Justice, Education & Reform (MUJER).

FCSF has raised more than \$300,000 from Florida

tomato growers so far.

Orlando attorney Brad Hester (Class II) serves as chairman of the FCSF board. Other members of the foundation’s board of directors are Bob Spencer, vice president of sales and marketing for Palmetto, Fla.-based West Coast Tomato; Wes Wheeler (Class V) a Winter Haven attorney; and Reggie Brown (Class I), executive vice president of the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange.

## **Mark Wheeler Elected to AgFirst Farm Credit Bank Board**

Mark Wheeler (Class III) of Bradenton, Fla., was elected to the AgFirst Farm Credit Bank board of directors for a four-year term. Born in Winter Haven, Fla., Wheeler is a graduate of Winter Haven High School and Troy State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance.

Wheeler is chief financial officer of Wheeler Farms, Inc., headquartered in Lake Placid, Fla., which grows citrus on approximately 2,910 acres in Brevard, DeSoto, Glades and Polk counties in Florida. He also serves as a director of Wheeler Brothers, Inc., a family-held citrus contract-harvesting corporation. Wheeler is president of Hardee Livestock Market, Inc., a beef cattle operation. He also serves as president of Boston Mining Company, a citrus, real estate and cash investment organization. Wheeler also serves on the board of directors for Farm Credit of Southwest Florida, headquartered advisory committee for Gulf Citrus Growers Association. He is a member of the Peace River Citrus Growers Association.

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## **Congratulations to Gina Mazzie (Class VI) & Tom Kownacky. They were married April 25th in Orlando.**



# Class VII's International Trip

Follow Class VII to China, Vietnam and Hong Kong during their international trip June 5th-22nd by visiting the Class VII blog at <http://wlianr.blogspot.com/>. Our goal is to post to the blog every day we are on the road, please remember though China is 12 hours ahead of Florida, so be patient with us as we try to bring the international trip "home" to WLI alumni and friends. Wish Class VII a bon voyage!

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## WLIANR Receives Grant from the Farm Credit System Foundation, Inc.

WLIANR applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the Farm Credit System Foundation Douglas D. Sims Fund for Rural Leadership. This Fund was established for programs that focus on the development of rural leaders, particularly those who are committed to making their communities better places to live and we are pleased that the WLIANR was recognized for our contribution for rural leadership with this grant award.

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## WLI Alumni Continuing Her International Experience



Stacey Wood, Territory Manager for Manna Pro

Have you ever wondered where your next meal will come from, or if you will have clean water to drink? This is not something most of us have to worry about, but in many parts of the world this is a daily problem.

That is why I am going on a mission trip this summer with Blessed Trinity

Church of Ocala, to Uganda Africa and I need your

help. There will be 14 people from all walks of life going for two weeks to help in our different areas of expertise.

I will be working with their livestock and farming operation. They have established a co-op to farm, raise cattle, hogs, chicken and goats, but without a consistent supply of water, proper nutrition, vaccinations and medicine many of the animals have not survived. My goal is to educate them and raise funds to purchase needed supplies so they can have a constant supply of food and fresh water.

The co-op is now farming by hand, but this is soon to change. Blessed Trinity has raised the funds to purchase a tractor and we are hoping to buy different implements needed for planting rice, corn and other crops. I will be teaching them how to operate and maintain their tractor.

Blessed Trinity has already done so much for the community. They have built a church, school, medical facility and a home for the elderly. In the past they have taken them seeds and purchased cattle to improve the local breeding stock. With the additional resources and education, we are going to try to continue to improve the community's ability to feed their families.

If going on a mission trip is not for you, but you would like to do something, you can help to financially sponsor this trip. Checks of any amount (which are tax deductible) can be made to Blessed Trinity Church and sent to Stacey Wood, 2902 Albert Road, Yeehaw Junction, FL 34972. Please call me if you have questions, at (407)973-3818.

Thank you for your support,  
Stacey A Wood (Class VI)

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## Mason G. Smoak Foundation

The Mason G. Smoak Foundation is up and running! The Foundation epitomizes Mason and is dedicated to supporting education, preserving and protecting the environment and fostering opportunities for leadership development. Please check out: <http://www.masonsmoakfoundation.org>.