

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ACLD FOUNDATION, 1989-2019**

**The Beginnings:** The Alachua County Library District Foundation, Inc., was birthed through the cooperation of the Library Staff, the District Board of Trustees, and with the blessing of the Board of Governors. The following citizens were selected to act as a temporary board until elections could be held: Chairman Thomas D. Rider, Secretary Ann W. Williams, and Treasurer Cornelius H. Bonner, Jr. Additionally, Margaret Eppes and Stanley West were selected as temporary board members. The first and very important task was the preparation of the organizational documents necessary for being a 501-(c)(3), which established our Foundation as a non-profit corporation in 1989. The ACLD Foundation was in place when the Headquarters Library was opened in 1991. Our Foundation developed slowly but surely, and in 2009 we formally established our endowment fund, providing the necessary financial stability needed for our growth and work. An Associates' organization was established early on and is important to the success of our foundation. Dues paid by Associates more than provide the necessary funds for administration of our foundation leaving all donations received available for our support of the library system.

**History of Katherine's Tree:** Katherine's Tree is an impressive oak and glass structure at the head of the Headquarters Library stairs, greeting library patrons as they enter. Katherine's Tree is named for Katherine Anne Tubb, a young woman who was an avid reader and library user. Upon her death in 1991, at the age of 15, her family asked friends to donate to the Alachua County Library; Katherine's Tree was the result and was dedicated in 1995. Our Foundation has received numerous gifts from supporters and friends and at this writing, nearly 200 of the 399 leaves contain the names of honored persons. Our Foundation receives a donation of at least \$2,000 for each inscribed leaf, and the funds received enable us to enhance library services and facilities. In 2014, the Foundation established an annual reception for our Associates and friends honoring the new leaf designees for the year, one of which is an outstanding Library District staff person, several outstanding volunteers selected by the Friends of the Library organization, and others honored or remembered by family or friends.

**Major Projects of the Foundation:** The construction, furnishing and equipping of the Foundation Room in Headquarters Library was our first big project after Katherine's Tree. A dedicated, nicely furnished room was needed for meetings, small conferences, and training sessions for library staff. The room is also available for use by the public upon appointment, and the Board of the ACLD Foundation holds most of its meetings there. The lovely Arts & Crafts style room was completed in 2007, with Eve Ackerman, long-time member of the Board, as chair of the project.

In 2008, our Foundation began a cooperation with the Library District to assist financially the long-range building/renovation of various library branches along with needed construction within the Headquarters Library. We have restricted our assistance to services for the youth of our community, namely the Snuggle Up Centers and Teen Zones/Spaces. We have supported the building, equipping, and decoration of these dedicated areas in Alachua, Millhopper, Cone Park, Newberry, High Springs, Tower Road, first in the rented space for the Community Partnership and several years later in the newly built Community Partnership, the previously mentioned Headquarters renovation, and finally the Waldo Branch.

**Financial Support Received from Grants:** Our first major grant for \$100,000 was received in 2005 from the Maren Foundation and additional funds were provided in the next several years by them. These funds and the interest earned from their investment dedicated to the exclusive use for the Snuggle Up Centers and paid for much of the expenses of the appropriate décor, furnishing, and specialized computers for children. The Maren grants were acquired during the chairmanship and by the work of Laura Shaw.

The Ehrhart Family Foundation has given us yearly grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to assist us in our partnership with the Library District in the long-range building program. The Ehrhart Family Foundation is located in Venice, Florida, and we are extremely grateful to local resident, Carol Higman, a member of the Ehrhart family and a Board member of their foundation, for her enthusiastic support of our requests for funding from them.

The Kosman Foundation provides the funding of the Guy Hudspeth Award, which honors an outstanding staff member annually by placing a leaf on Katherine's Tree. This award, which provides \$2,000 annually for our Foundation, was first given in 2007 in honor of Guy Hudspeth, who was then the Manager of the Archer Branch. The Kosman Foundation is represented locally by Paul and Rudy Rothseiden, and Dianna Kosman of Alachua, Florida, and our sincere thanks go to them.

The B.J. and Eve Wilder Foundation provided us with a direct grant of \$5,000 for our activities in 2015. Additionally, they have funneled several \$10,000 grants through us to provide designated materials to the District Library.

**Major Fundraising Activities:** Between 2004 and 2010, the ACLD Foundation sponsored a series of well-attended community events known as our Galas. These Galas served both to raise funds and to bring recognition of the community to our Foundation. Nationally known authors which appeared were Frances Mayes, Alexander McCall Smith, Erik Larson, Diana Gabaldon, and Michael Connelly, the last two foregoing their usual fees. These galas occurred under the leadership of Laura Shaw.

In 2012, the Foundation began a new annual fundraising event, conceived by Mitzi Austin, Cecilia Caton, and Eve Ackerman and under Foundation Chair Marjorie Alexander. This activity, the Non-Event Gala, has featured Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Patrick O'Brian, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, Franz Kafka, Henry David Thoreau, and Mary Shelly, and has proved to be financially successful without the effort required for an actual event.

The "Ensuring our Legacy" Campaign in 2013-14, under the leadership of Hunt Davis, Jr., was a major campaign to raise adequate funds for our endowment and succeeded in bringing in donations of more than \$100,000. Reaching to members of our Board, our Associates, and the general public, the campaign ensured the financial health of our endowment. Under Marjorie Alexander's leadership, we were also welcomed to participate in the UF Community Campaign, a continuing activity that provides funds for our activities.

We are also the recipients of many small and not-so-small donations given regularly by citizens wishing to support their library and using us as a means to do so. Our sincere thanks!