

Asheville Living Treasures, Spring 2016 Ceremony

Sunday, May 22, 1:30 p.m.

Reuter Center Manheimer Room

OLLI is always proud to host the recognition ceremonies for Asheville Living Treasures, an all-volunteer organization whose mission is to honor elders (people over 70) of Asheville and Buncombe County who have devoted their lives to making our communities a better place to live. The group publically honors recipients in two recognition ceremonies at the Reuter Center every year and also records recipients' stories for future generations. The next ceremony will be held on Sunday, May 22, 1:30 p.m. to recognize **Bob Burgin, Sophie Dixon, and Tom Sanders.**

Bob Burgin moved to Asheville in 1981 and served as CEO of Mission Health Center, bringing together staff, physicians, and board to improve the quality, morale, and vision of health care in our area and presiding over a period of growth and improvement that made Mission one of the most highly rated health care systems in the U.S. In retirement Bob remains active in the United Way and works in the community garden of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Sophie Dixon is a native of Asheville who worked as a customer service manager at Welch Allyn Tycos for 35 years. She has been a member of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church for 65 years and is a charter member of the board of the Mt. Zion Community Development Corporation. She is a life member of the NAACP and has served the Asheville-Buncombe County Branch as president and vice president. She is chair and volunteer office coordinator for the Empowerment Resource Center of Asheville Buncombe, Inc., a non-profit that helps provide opportunities for people of colors and those of low wealth communities to achieve homeownership, job readiness, entrepreneurship, and health awareness. She is also co-founder of WRES-FM 100.7, that was designed as "a small but powerful radio station that could help heal and transform our community through music and information."

Tom Sanders, one of the most popular and longest serving instructors in the College for Seniors, is being honored. Tom grew up in West Asheville, attended Duke University, and holds a PhD in history of religions from Columbia. He began his career as a tenured professor of religious studies at Brown University, but in 1968 changed fields, becoming for 20 years a specialist on Latin America for a consortium of universities. He later taught international studies at the University of Connecticut, Earlham College and the University of Tulsa. In 21 years of retirement in Asheville Tom has taught as a volunteer over 25 different courses on topics related to the Middle East, Latin America, American and European history and political science at College for Seniors, OLLI's lifelong learning program. Tom has led the World Affairs Council, been head of the WNC Duke Club and has led numerous hikes for the Carolina Mountain Club. Tom represents the dedication of so many instructors in College for Seniors who devote themselves tirelessly to provide intellectual stimulation for intellectually curious older adults.

Each Asheville Living Treasures represents the many retirees and "elders" who make our community a better place for members of all generations. Many thanks to Carmen Ramos-Kennedy and all of the nominators and members of Asheville Living Treasures for recognizing the contributions of people over 70 who make a difference in our community.