

OLLI at UNC Asheville's Alice Green: On the art of fundraising

Continued.

Alex recalls that there was a real urgency to the campaign. The College for Seniors was in desperate need of more classrooms and was running out of options. He believes the campaign would not have succeeded were it not for the commitment of Alice, Art, Dorothy Murfree and their committee. Alex clearly remembers that whenever things looked bleak, Alice would emphatically say, "We can do this!"

Alice believes the campaign, entitled '*A Place to Call Home*,' succeeded for a number of reasons. She explains, "A new building was a tangible necessity. We then recruited volunteers who truly believed in the cause. With this foundation, we began reaching out to the community through coffees, parties, and dinners. It was fun and it worked."

With publicity and interest growing, the 'asking' began. Alice did underscore one important aspect about soliciting donations. "If you are asking folks to contribute, you have to demonstrate your commitment by doing the same." To that end, Alice and Art consulted with their son and, with his support, made a substantial donation from their savings.

The campaign was gaining momentum, but the committee continued to look for ways to ensure their goal was reached. One suggestion was to contact the Janirve Foundation. Eventually this resulted in a combination of outright gifts and matching funds totaling \$1,750,000. Another idea was to take advantage of the booming stock market. Donors were encouraged to donate stock, and many did. In order to recognize substantial donors, it was decided to put up a display in the entrance foyer listing donors, and the level of their donation. This proved so successful that some contributors increased their gift to reach a higher level. The result was an outpouring of support from almost 400 donors and two generous donations from the Janirve Foundation.

The happy ending to this effort is OLLI's Reuter Center, which is at the heart of our OLLI programs. Alice and her committee truly became experts in convincing people to give. As Alice says, "This building is a testament to work of the volunteers who believed in the cause and to the donors who were convinced to share their belief." Alice also believes that the spirit and energy required to build the Reuter Center can be generated again if and when the need arises. All of us at OLLI are forever grateful to Alice and Art Green and the other generous donors and committee members who made the creation of our Reuter Center possible.