

History of the American Leisure Academy

The American Leisure Academy (ALA) came about as the result of the efforts of Dr. Marcia Carter, Dr. Roger Coles, Dr. Christopher R. Edginton and Dr. Larry Neal. Their vision was a simple one ~ they wanted to acknowledge the good works of their colleagues as they related to the American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR). They wanted to honor others who they believed had provided leadership in the form of scholarship services to AALR and excellence in their professional careers. In 1995, ALA received an endorsement from the Board of Directors of AALR at its meeting in San Antonio, Texas. The inaugural meeting and luncheon of ALA was held in 1997 in St. Louis, Missouri at the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) national convention.

ALA was framed to serve as a forum for the promotion and advancement of the quality of life of individuals through leisure and recreation, and to acknowledge the contributions of educators, practitioners, and others credited with advancing leisure and recreation. Specifically, its initial objectives were to: 1) to recognize and honor the achievements of those wishing to associate with the Academy; 2) to operate programs such as the publishing of learned or scholarly works of a journal or creation of seminars, workshops or forums; 3) to serve as the forum for the sharing of new ideas, concepts or for the dissemination of new pertinent information regarding a particular endeavor; 4) to serve to advocate on behalf of particular interests, concerns or issues of public importance; and 5) to provide wise counsel to others to assist them in the decision making.

At the inaugural meeting and luncheon of ALA, the agenda was simple and straightforward. First, founding members were inducted into the Academy. Second, an interim "Constitution" was adopted in order to operate the business of the Academy. Using the "Constitution" adopted in an interim fashion, elected officers were voted upon including President, President Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. Dr. Roger Coles was the first elected President; Dr. Susan Hudson was the first President-Elect and Pat Fehl as the Secretary Elect. At each subsequent meeting and luncheon of ALA, new Fellows were inducted into the organization and a presentation was made by a distinguished member of the group. A number of these presentations were subsequently published as *Papers of the American Leisure Academy*.

Founding members of the American Leisure Academy included: Joseph J. Bannon, Gaylene Carpenter, Marcia Carter, Roger L. Coles, Dale L. Cruse, Christopher R. Edginton, Gerald S. Fain, Patricia Fehl, Norman Gilcrest, Howard R. Gray, Edward H. Heath, Susan D. Hudson, Hilmi Ibrahim, Daniel MacLean, Joel Meier, Tony A. Mobley, Larry Neal, Douglas Sessoms, S. Harold Smith, Randy B. Swedburg, Betty van der Smissen, George Wilson and Carlton E. Yoshioka. Over the life of ALA, 79 individuals were inducted as Senior Fellows into the organization. In 2013, the membership of ALA endorsed an initiative to dissolve ALA and invite its membership to join the Academy of Leisure Sciences (ALS).