



## **What Paths Graduates Have to Say about Their Next Steps**

We want to thank those of you who have written in response to our January 08 newsletter invitation to share your stories of what's happened to you since attending the Paths to Creative Retirement workshop. So far, we've mainly heard from men! Ladies, we hope you will want to have your say. And we welcome additional comments from the men.

Here are a few excerpts from stories we were permitted to share.

### **Discovering Lacrosse – Larry Griswold**

On the final [workshop] morning I projected a photo of the Beatles' Ringo Starr and used the theme "When I'm 64" to discuss what I knew then [at age 59] about when I am 64, and what I didn't know. One point in the "what I know" list was that I would do things to stay physically active, and that one of my "wild fancy" ideas from Saturday's "making a dream list" session was to become a lacrosse referee and possibly be the oldest rookie ref in the U.S.

Though I knew a lot about sports (I had worked for Sports Illustrated since 1989), I knew nothing about lacrosse until my son introduced me to the sport in 2001. Well, one year ago I took the training course for lacrosse referees in NJ, passed the test, and wound up doing 11 junior varsity, freshmen and middle school games last spring. So now, in effect, I am retired, and when a former boss asked if I would like "to have a conversation" about a full time job with him, I politely declined.

A big part of my decision to move on from full time employment was having something else to focus on, and working with lacrosse helped with that. I don't know if I had thought about becoming a ref before we came to the seminar with you, but I definitely thought about it then, and acted on that within a few months afterwards. I am very, very glad that I did.

### **Togetherness – Mike Daubs**

The biggest challenge for me was how to "re-direct" my energy away from an office job (that I had for 40 years) to other endeavors. Building off of some of my other interests, my "new" activities are, in general, involved with helping others in some way. Teaching, writing, volunteering, mentoring, and spending much more time with my wife, my family, and the grandchildren are taking the place of work. I do enjoy having more control over my time! And I am learning to play the guitar and the game of golf!

The last thing I want to mention is that with retirement you are now spending much more time with your spouse. This has been a big change for both of us! Just like early on in your marriage, you have to communicate frequently, you have to "give and take", and be much more aware of your partner's needs and interests. And each of you need your

own time and space. In our case, it has been a great joy being able to spend more quality time with each other!

### **Carpe Diem – Herb Zucker**

My retirement had not been the fulfillment of a long-awaited fantasy of tennis and afternoon naps. For all its allure, for all the time I had spent daydreaming about it, the actual act of retirement had been a wrenching experience. Transition from working fulltime to no-time had been daunting. Deep down was the realization that no matter how much I planned my work free days, the ultimate result was the same.

What have I learned over the past two years? I try to avoid a “To Do” list that starts with a walk and ends with an afternoon snooze; that financial planners are okay but the ultimate responsibility for my money is me. And most important not to put my dreams and aspirations on hold indefinitely. For Joan and me, our dictum: “if not now...when?” has worked over the past two years. We’ve embarked on more than a dozen “adventures.”

### **Flexibility Is the Key – Rick Izard**

I decided to focus on four areas that I term Employment, Education, Hobbies and Travel. These four areas are listed in order of priority, from the most important and/or least developed on my part, to the least important and/or more developed.

During this process I’ve been reading books on retirement, aging and happiness, including Dr. Manheimer’s book *The Second Middle Age*. From this I’ve learned that relationships are more important than I ever realized. This includes my marriage, family and friends. I’m working to spend more effort and time with all of these to continuously cultivate a social network. In this regard I’ve started a Retirement Group with some friends.

In the meantime I’m conscious of the results of the MacArthur Foundation Study, which concluded that about three quarters of successful aging is due to lifestyle, and only about one quarter is due to our inherited genes. Items I include here are exercise, control of weight, blood pressure, not smoking, moderation of alcohol, etc. I’m approaching this as a journey and adventure, and an opportunity to sort of reinvent myself. I don’t know exactly how my effort will end up but I seem comfortable that I’m giving it my best shot. Nothing is set in stone, everything is flexible, and I’m very open to the other’s ideas and objective criticism.

**Please help us with our Institute for the Future of Retirement study by sending in your story.**

**Best wishes, Denise Snodgrass ([snodgras@unca.edu](mailto:snodgras@unca.edu)) and Ron Manheimer ([Rmanheim@unca.edu](mailto:Rmanheim@unca.edu))**