

Bio – short post CLO

Hugh Nicolay enrolled in UF College of Engineering in 1965, after four years in the US Navy and two years at Daytona Beach Community College. UF was the only possibility being the only public electrical engineering school in Florida. Private and out of state schools were way beyond his means. He had enough money for the first term with the help of CLO, which he discovered in the housing section of the UF catalog.

Four years later with the continued help of CLO, a part time job, scholarships and loans based on grades and need, and finally a graduated assistantship, he graduated with honors with a Master's Degree and an overall seven year GPA of 3.5/4.0.

He secured a position as a R&D engineer with Harris Semiconductor in Palm Bay, Florida. Twenty-seven years later at the age of 55 he retired. During his professional career he became the inventor or co-inventor of thirteen patents dealing with semiconductor device and manufacturing processes. He was also an innovative manager, introducing team oriented management and statistical process control, and new technology long before they were fully embraced in the industry.

When not working, Hugh was immersed in community organizations, particularly those dealing with environmental issues. He was particularly active in local and state Audubon. He served as local chapter president for four years. He was selected as Florida chapter president of the year and received numerous recognition awards. He was also active in local libraries, his church, town committees, civil rights and political groups. After retirement, when not traveling to the corners of the earth with his wife, he volunteers at the local soup kitchen as the Tuesday building manager.

Hugh related, "I had always been a champion of the underdog (or underbird). A few folks like the CLO gave me a helping hand up when I was at the bottom of the economic heap. I feel strongly that it is my responsibility to help where I can now that I have the time and resources."

My CLO Story

I first learned about the Collegiate Living Organization (CLO) in the Spring of 1965 in the housing section of the University of Florida (UF) catalog. I wrote a letter to them and was invited for an interview.

I easily qualified as "needy." I was the oldest of three children of a minimum wage single mom. I lived at home, worked part time, and attended Daytona Beach Junior College. The money I had saved during a four-year enlistment in the U.S Navy post high school

was long gone except for a few hundred dollars that I could apply towards my UF expenses. With the help of the CLO, small grants and scholarships and a part time job I was able to complete the requirements of a BS degree. Actually, I was probably one of very few UF students who sent money home to help my mom and high school aged brother and sister. My mom had also been diagnosed with breast cancer, but continued to try and work. My dad, who had brought his family to Florida in 1957 to look for construction work was around town but had become a full-blown alcoholic. He was an emotional and financial drain on his sometimes family.

Neither of my parents had graduated from high school. No one in our family had ever been to college. For me going off to the 'big' school in Gainesville was a pretty scary time. I didn't know a soul at UF until I joined my new family at CLO. Most of us were from similar backgrounds. I have made several lifetime friends. We just sort of clicked. While the buildings and facilities were marginal at best, the food was good. Besides, the main focus for me was getting that degree, which I did in 1967.

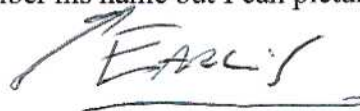
I went on to graduate school. With the help of a graduated assistantship, another CLO buddy and I moved out of CLO to a small apartment. After obtaining my MSE degree I started my profession career as an electrical engineer. So what does this retired engineer do now? I work in our local soup kitchen. I just have a compassionate heart for those on the bottom of the economic ladder. I was there once. With the help of institutions like the CLO, I was able to become someone who was in the position to give back a little. Thanks Professor Fulk for donating to the CLO your 15th Street property in 1933. Your mama, like mine, must have raised you right.

Some CLO Memories

When I arrived at CLO in the Fall of 1967 all the rooms were taken. A make shift room was created for me in the living room of the Brown House. This arrangement only lasted a couple of weeks, but it was pretty trying. My course work was very challenging. I had no idea if I could measure up at the 'big school.' Then I had no privacy as all the Brown House residents paraded through my space.

Soon I had a regular room located in the SW corner of the second floor of the White House. It was quite small. I often used the upstairs front porch as my primary study space.

I soon found myself on the board. I took on the job as summer president my first summer (maybe it was my second in 1967). I moved the downstairs NE corner of the brick house my second year. Frank Shepherd was my roommate. I spent the entire summer, when not in class, stripping the woodwork and windows in the living room and refinishing them. We also reupholstered the couches, replaced the drapes and added a few pictures and table lamps to give the room a little homey look. We also created a TV room in the south garage with a B&W TV and junk furniture from UF housing. As president, I had the most unpleasant task of firing our cook. I don't remember his name but I can picture him as a

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little round faced friendly guy who was stealing us blind. We interviewed and hired a replacement for the fall term. I saw her picture in the 1968 group photo recently distributed on email.

Another unpleasant task I had to deal with was a graduating resident who owed us several hundred dollars for long distance phone calls. I went over to UF and found out I could put a hold on his degree. He paid, but was not happy about it. We replaced the phone with a pay phone.

I remember the CLO food was pretty good. On Sunday's we were on our own. A favorite Sunday dinner was the Whataburger nearby on NW13th. Sometimes during the week when we really didn't want to study, we would load up in someone's car and head to Jerry's for strawberry pie. My downfall was the Crystal on University and NW14th where I would make a pit stop for a donut on the way to my engineering classes way across campus.

The best memories were some of the guys at CLO. There were no gals yet. There were only a few members who didn't hold their own or didn't belong. It was a trying time to be a student. The Viet Nam war draft hung over many heads. There was a lot of distrust of institutions from the government to corporations to UF administration. There were rallies and sit-ins. The civil rights effort was in the news. I often tell my friends that I am so old that I remember when Steve Spurrier was playing football and there were no blacks on the team.

I'll close with one thought that haunts me. I wonder what CLO member Ken Fisher's bio would have been had old men not sent him off to die in Viet Nam in 1967.