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**ALUMNI**  
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# Sandpaper

February 2026 Volume 88 Issue 1

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## **SECOND CHANCE**

If you missed the last one put this date on your schedule!

**Tuesday, February 17th**

**BOB ADAMS COMMUNITY YMCA**

3620 Cleveland Heights Blvd  
Lakeland, Florida

**\$21 million expansion and renovation**

**TOUR AND YMCA ALUMNI MEETING**

12:00 N—Continental Lunch and YMCA Alumni Meeting.

2:00 PM—Tour of the 40,000 sqft Jenkins Field House and state-of-the-art exercise facilities/equipment; review multi-million dollar renovations/expansion of existing adult/youth program areas, child care and aquatic facilities.

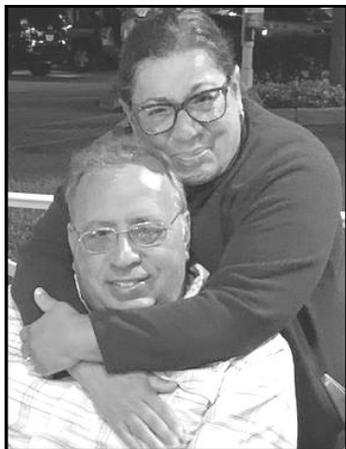
**RSVP by Email prior to Wednesday, February 11th to**  
**Arlinda Quinones/Mike Santos—Co-Presidents at:**

**[yalumni.willis.pres@gmail.com](mailto:yalumni.willis.pres@gmail.com)**

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# Co-Presidents' Message

## Arlinda Quinones/Mike Santos



Happy New Year Y Alumni. As we begin 2026 we are looking ahead to see what the year will hold for us. We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and are thankful that this past year's hurricane season was not as bad as it could have been.

We will be asking for a volunteer from C.B. Willis Chapter to represent us at the 48 Hours in May Conference in St. Louis. Mike and I are unable to attend due to a prior commitment. We will let you know more information at the Y Alumni Annual Meeting. Travel,

lodging and most meals are all reimbursable, so there is almost no expense to the member.

We need a chapter member to volunteer for the International Service Corp (ISC) to replace **Bob Martin** who is unable to continue with his representation. There are a lot of new projects being discussed in the ISC with projects in Mexico City, Paraguay, and other locations worldwide.

We also need a chapter representative for the National Service Project (NSP). The NSP will be starting Phase Two of the building of the "Twigg", the Y Center in South Dakota.

Both of these incredible opportunities can be the same person and they mainly entail being on the monthly or quarterly zoom meetings and reporting to the chapter at our meetings.

Congratulations to **Larry Garvin** who accepted the position of Eastern YMCA Alumni Vice President. He will be reaching out shortly on strategic plans to continue growing Y Alumni.

Also, we are excited to report that the Lakeland Y will host our 2026 Annual Meeting at the Lakeland Y on February 17 at noon time, and with it a tour of the \$21 million extension that has recently been opened to the community. There is a free continental lunch with deli sandwiches and salad, fresh fruit, and tea/lemonade/water provided. Please RSVP by email.

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## IMPORTANT NOTE:

### It is membership renewal time for 2026!

You should have received notifications for your YMCA Alumni Assn annual membership renewal. The easiest way to renew is to go on line to [ymcaalumni.org](http://ymcaalumni.org) ... you can do everything there, even pay your National \$25 dues ... nope, the Willis Chapter doesn't have dues, we count on your voluntary support through your generous annual donation. So, please take a moment, donate and renew for 2026. Thank you!!

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## CONNECT-TRAVEL-SERVE

## Editorial: Blessed!

Phil Wortman—Sandpaper Editor, Stahl Award Recipient

Just sitting here thinking. Another year has passed since we've retired from our Y career. Weren't we blessed! Just how fortunate can one be to have been able to spend a career working as part of the greatest human service organization in the world.

As I think back over those years I get flashbacks of things that happened to me and my family, and the times and people that made up those years. (*You probably do the same thing!*)

We got involved in so many people's lives over those years. It was that involvement that made everything we did matter. Whether it was that "crier" in the "Learn to Swim Campaign" that held on to us to feel safe and finally learned to swim ... and came back years later just to tell you "thanks." (*Yes, I remember his name.*) Or, the young lady who asked you to "give her away" in her wedding. (*A special time.*) It was times like those that made you feel like working at the Y was something different than just a job. Each occurrence helped to strengthen our commitment to our Y career.

We could fill pages with stories and happenings that built an affinity for the Y culture and the potential to do something that was over and beyond what was expected.

Our accomplishments had more to do with other's successes rather than our own. We were the enablers, teachers, coaches—we were the leadership that utilized our skills and talents to promote and instill Christian values into our programs and community. That's what made the Y different ... that's what made us different. That's why the relationships built and life experiences shared remain attached to our being today, even though they may have been formed years ago.

The Y gave us that community status to actually do ... not just talk about it, but to try and make things happen. (*And, we did!*)

So, enjoy thinking back, re-living those special times and enjoy those relationships you've built over the years. Be thankful that we had the opportunity to be part of making YMCA history. Our efforts have left a vibrant organization for those who follow ... they too will have life changing experiences in their career. Let's enjoy retirement and the memories it brings. (*I think we done good!*)

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# Who Are We?

Who makes up the C. B. Willis Chapter of the YMCA Alumni Association membership? The following is a current list of members.

Please note:

- Double listing indicates a Household membership.
- Single listing indicates an Individual membership.
- List includes those who were members in 2025 but have not currently renewed for 2026.
- Please contact Dave Patterson, National YMCA Alumni Membership Director for desired changes.

If you haven't "re-connected" and renewed your membership, please do so immediately at [YMCAalumni.org/re-connect](http://YMCAalumni.org/re-connect). It is quick, easy and you can pay your \$25 National dues online. Remember, there are no membership fees required for your Willis Chapter membership—but your generous donation would be appreciated to help with chapter operations. Thank you!

## MEMBERS C. B. Willis Chapter YMCA Alumni:

Bailey	Barbara	Mezile	Harold
Borton	Patricia	Mezile	Peggye
Connor	Barbara	Mierzykowski	Ken
Freeman	Millard	Mierzykowski	Ann
Freeman	Frankie	Quinones	Arlinda
Gaites	Alice	Santos	Michael
Gomori	Dorothy	Richardson	Melissa
Leichtfuss	Robert	Richardson	Lawrence
Leichtfuss	Joan	Rodriguez	Martha
Myers	John	Rodriguez	Eduardo
Baker	Jeff	Staley	Tim
Baker	Nazalene	McDonald	Joan
De Freitas	Kelly	Williams	James
De Freitas	Anthony	Williams	Sudie
Dooley	H. Eugene	Wortman	Phil
Kay	Denise	Wortman	Gail
Felichio	Francis	Adams	Richard E
Felichio	Julie	Cushman	Geraldine W.
Flaks	Gary	Dakin	Frank
Flaks	Carmen	Dreixler	Karin
Flynn	John	Houghtelin	Cheryl
Flynn	Ellen	Jerome	Pamela
Goyer	Scott	Kelly	Nancy C.
Goyer	Devon	Kovacs	Robert
Kaboth	Kurt R.	Markell	Dorothy
Cunningham	Katherine	Metzger	Debbie
Kiziu	Peter	Murphy	Dorothy
Kiziu	Nancy	Pollock	Richard W.
Lieving	Larry	Salvatore	Priscilla
Lieving	Carole	Shandorf	John
Macher	Donald	Sterling	Janis
Jabonite	Reile	Vodrey	Becky
Mercier	John		
Martin	Robert		
Martin	Donna		
McBride	Edward		
McBride	Terry		

[ymcaalumni.org](http://ymcaalumni.org)

# Friends, Old and New

## Joseph Parry

Make new friends, but keep the old;  
Those are silver, these are gold.  
New made friendships, like new wine,  
Age will mellow, and refine.  
Friendships that have stood the test –  
Time and change – are surely best;  
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow gray;  
Friendship never knows decay.  
For 'mid old friends, tried and true,  
Once more we reach and youth renew,  
But old friends, alas! may die;  
New friends must their place supply;  
Cherish friendships in your breast –  
New is good, but old is best;  
Make new friends, but keep the old;  
Those are silver, these are gold.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*It is very important to maintain a column expressing the core Christian values of our organization's Mission Statement, and of the YMCA's founding purpose. If you would like to assist in providing a message for this column, please contact me at [wortmanii@aol.com](mailto:wortmanii@aol.com).*

## Worth Today?

Been retired for a while? Ever wonder what the Y's salaries are in today's world? I have, so I decided to go on line and see what is today's compensation standard.

Found it interesting. For instance, according to Zip Recruiter, as of January 22, 2026, the average salary for a Y President in the United States was \$ 69,923 a year. In Florida the average salary was \$65,184 or \$4,739 (6.8%) less than the national average.

Nationally, the average salaries range from \$30,000 (25<sup>th</sup> percentile) to \$64,000 (75<sup>th</sup> percentile) with the top earners making \$142,000+ (90<sup>th</sup> percentile) with some exceeding \$255,500+.

Glass Door states that the average salary for a social agency President is \$268,309 per year (estimate) in United States, which is 65% higher than the average Y President salary of \$162,290 per year (estimate).

But, what about the President of Y-USA? Over the past several years the Paddock Post has the annual salary paid for that position exceeding \$855,000. The 208 Y-USA employees receive over \$32 million in annual salaries.

Interesting figures, but you really can't compare today to back when, times change, but it's fun to see what today's salaries are.

# ymca ALUMNI connect-travel-serve

The Florida Sandpaper  
5122 Sheffield Road  
Lakeland, FL 33813



## YMCA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MISSION

To provide opportunities for members to Connect, Travel, and Serve while nurturing a worldwide Christian fellowship.

### C. B. Willis Chapter Officers

#### Co-Presidents

**Arlinda Quinones**

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**Mike Santos**

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#### Treasurer

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#### Secretary

**Kelly DeFreitas**

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**Bob Martin**

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*The Florida Sandpaper* is the newsletter of the C. B. Willis Chapter of YMCA Alumni and is published six times a year.

#### Sandpaper Editor

**Phil Wortman**

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## *A New Year Beginning!*

We'd like to begin 2026 by inviting all the YMCA retirees living in Florida\* to be connected with past Y colleagues and friends as part of the **C. B. Willis Chapter of the YMCA Alumni Association**.

If you haven't already joined or reconnected through the National YMCA Alumni Assn Re-Connect Membership Campaign, please take a moment and click online to **YMCAalumni.org/re-connect** and scroll down and fill out the form. In the space for "Membership Dues" only fill in the \$25 National Dues as the Willis Chapter does NOT have membership dues. Willis Chapter membership is FREE.

In the space "**Donate to Chapter**" we would appreciate your consideration of financial support for the operation of the chapter. Please be generous as your charitable gift allows the chapter to continue to connect with you and all our Florida\* Y retirees through group outings/meetings at places of interest, Zoom meetings, "Sandpaper" newsletter, emails, etc. The last several years the average individual gift was about \$50. You can donate on line by credit card.

If you prefer, you can also print out and use the re-connect-by-mail form. Please include your check made out to "YMCA Alumni Assn" and mail it to Lowell Nees, YMCA Alumni Assn, Assistant Treasurer, P.O. Box 621, Bowling Green, OH 43402.

If you've already re-connected and contributed to the Willis Chapter on the National Membership form and wish to make an additional chapter contribution; or, just want to make a special gift for chapter support, please make your check payable to "C. B. Willis Chapter YMCA Alumni Assn" and mail to Don Macher, C. B. Willis Chapter Treasurer, 27449 Amelia Isle Ct., Wesley Chapel, Florida 33544

\* The Weatherford Chapter services the Florida Panhandle.