

## Some Reflections on the Formative Years of Senior Professionals

Ernie Hoffman – 2009

1. Charlie Bolen was the singular driving force in selling the ISU administration on the idea of Senior Professionals. He devoted his early retirement years to assuring its success. One of Charlie's main talents as the Dean of College of Fine Arts was the selection of people – and he showed that same talent in recruiting and attracting competent people to the founding board of Senior Professionals.
2. Charlie Bolen asked Ernie Hoffman to chair the Education Committee and give leadership to the Mornings with the Professors and Academy of Seniors program creation. Charlie as well as Walt Friedhoff, were particularly adroit at identifying professors to teach the classes and give lectures.
3. Charlie Bolen, in response to the “no-fat” nutritional craze, introduced Snack Wells as coffee break treats. It didn't take long for class participants to have their fill of Snack wells!
4. Ernie Hoffman was elected by the board to replace Charlie when he stepped down from the joint role of Board Chair and Director. Key developments during Ernie's administration were:
  - a. The hiring of Norma Ashbrook as Director of Senior Professionals after an extensive Selection Committee process.
  - b. The holding of the first Board Retreat at Lake Bloomington with the brainstorming leadership of Stacey Marshall Kern, the Director of Conference Services.
  - c. The creation of the original group of committees with the objectives of creating more participation by Senior Professionals in planning, the development of future board prospects, and reduction of workload of the Director.
  - d. The addition of the Committee Chairs to the Board during their chairperson tenure, thereby enlarging the Board. As it turned out, Committee Chairs became proving grounds for Board leadership positions as the years went by.
  - e. Strong emphasis placed on expanding the gender diversity of Senior Professionals. An import Focus Group was formed consisting of the Chair, Director, and the few female Senior Professionals members at the time. The group focused on identifying potential female members in the retired or soon-to-be retired community who we could target for membership in Senior Professionals. History has proven that this early identification effort has led to dramatic results in meeting our diversity objective.