

**Unitarian Universalist Society  
of the  
Daytona Beach Area  
Founder  
History  
and  
Former Ministers**

# *Looking to the Future*

With **your** help,  
The Unitarian Universalist Society  
of the  
**Daytona Beach Area**  
is going from this



to this



to this



View from Southeast



Building completed 2001



Solar panels added in 2008

## Founder

Herbert M. Davidson (1895-1985), owner of the Daytona Beach News Journal, founded the Unitarian Society of Daytona Beach in 1953. He also provided meeting space for the Society in his newspaper and radio facilities, and served successively in several of the officer positions of the Society Board of Directors. He was well known and respected throughout the newspaper industry.

## History

The Society was founded in 1953 with thirty-five members. The meetings were held in the News-Journal (our local newspaper) building on Orange Avenue in Daytona Beach with the Religious Education classes being held in the YWCA. By 1957, services were held in the Little Theater, now known as the Daytona Playhouse, and Religious Education in the firehouse at University and Halifax Drive. In 1957, the property at 56 N. Halifax Drive in Ormond Beach was acquired; and, by 1960, the Society was meeting in the new building and has been meeting there ever since.

In the succeeding years, the Alliance and the Congregation made many improvements to the property in general and the meeting area specifically, as well as a new parking area.

In 2000 we undertook a project of renovating/rebuilding the former building. On January 5, 2003 our congregation held its first Sunday service in the new building. We are now in a position to accommodate a larger membership as well as take advantage of our expanded Religious Education facilities for our growing Sunday School program.

## FORMER MINISTERS

Since our Society was formed in December of 1953, we have had ten ministers serve our congregation. They served under a variety of contractual arrangements and for varying periods of time. There were several periods when there wasn't a minister in our pulpit. Each of our ministers was attractive to us, and all were attracted to us for a variety of reasons, but mainly a common belief in the concept of all people being created equal.



The Reverend Dr. Kristen Lee Harper (1999 - 2002) Rev. Harper joined us in September 1999 for her first settled ministry. During her three years here she was recognized for her excellent sermons, participation with many of the Society committees and, particularly for her pastoral care and ministry to our membership. Rev. Harper left Ormond Beach in August 2002 to take up a new ministry in Barnstable, MA.



Ed Brock (1999) While he was with us only for eight months, his lighthearted approach to a religious life was an inspiration to the congregation. He seemed to enjoy giving his sermons from the middle of the aisle, rather than from the pulpit.



Clarke Dewey Wells (1998) In the four short months that Clarke spent with us, he broadened our horizons and showed us the true value of a Unitarian-Universalist religion. He particularly enjoyed the Society's monthly potluck dinners.

In Memoriam: The Rev. Clarke Dewey Wells, January 14, 1930 - November 8, 2006

The Unitarian Universalist Association is sad to report the death of the Rev. Clarke Dewey Wells. Wells, 76, died at home on November 8, 2006.

Clarke Wells was a graduate of the University of Chicago and Meadville Lombard Theological School, and was ordained in 1956 and served actively in ministry over fifty years in Oklahoma City; Cincinnati, OH; Portland, OR and Newton, MA. As interim minister he served churches in Bloomington and Muncie IN, Houston, TX, Santa Barbara, Santa Paula and San Luis Obispo, CA; Youngstown, OH, Pittsburgh, PA, and Asheville, NC. He also served in Lakeland, FL where he was named Minister Emeritus. Author of four books of poetry and well-known essays, Dr. Wells' reputation as a dynamic preacher and an excellent teacher led to many requests for these services following his retirement in 1995.

Wells served on the Board of Trustees for Meadville Lombard and as adjunct faculty and chaplain. He was a Special Lecturer at Starr King School (Berkeley). In 1977 he was chosen to give the sermon at the Service of the Living Tradition at the General Assembly of the UUA. He also served as a member of the first UUA Commission on Appraisal, the Commission on the Free Church and the Commission on Common Worship. He served as Vice President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (following merger of Unitarians and Universalists in 1961). Dr. Wells taught

classes in poetry, creative writing and the works of William Shakespeare. An avid athlete, he played football in high school and undergraduate school; he was an enthusiastic snorkeler, handball, and tennis player.

During the Civil Rights years Clarke Wells was an activist; he was among ministers who went to Selma to march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1967. Dr. Wells was with his colleague, James Reeb, and his wife, Marie, at a hospital in Birmingham, AL when Rev. Reeb (also a Unitarian minister) died after being attacked while participating in the struggle for Civil Rights.

Dr. Wells is survived by his sons, Jared St. John Wells of Tucson, AZ and Garde MacKenzie Wells of Eugene, OR as well as his wife and companion, Barbara Carlson of Bloomington, IN.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, November 18, 2006, 3 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, IN, the Rev. Barbara Carlson officiating.



Ron Mazur (1989-1997) The eight years that Ron spent with us were interesting. He came to us from a university staff, and his talks were more lecture than sermon. They always encouraged one to think. He organized and led an active men's group and offered strong encouragement to the Alliance.

Wyman Rousseau (1988-'89) He was the first to serve our congregation as an interim minister and took great interest in leading discussion groups and Adult Religious Education sessions. They were lively and thought provoking. If it could have been arranged, we would have liked to retain him; but in addition to regulations, wedding bells were calling him back to the north.

Frank Rivas (1984-'88) A deep thinker who delivered sensitive sermons. He was a student of the Old Testament and wove many of its texts into his sermons. He was the

one who encouraged the art gallery where our artistic members display their work on a rotating basis.

Max Coots (1982) While he was with us for only a short six weeks, Max's inspiring sermons and magnetic personality impressed the congregation. Some of our members are still exchanging correspondence with him. He has started a second career as a sculptor and has had at least one very successful show at a university.



John DeWolf-Hurt (1977-'81) He was the one who encouraged Blanche Fearn to start her art and crafts classes which proved to be quite successful. Rev. John and Mary Louise DeWolf-Hurt went on to serve as co-executives of the Florida District of the UUA. On January 1, 2003 John's Widow, Mary Louise DeWolf began serving the Nature Coast UU Congregation as their part time minister.

Albert Harkins (1966-'76) remained with us longer than any of our ministers, He was instrumental in increasing our membership by delivering Sunday morning radio sermons. The radio sermons were also a welcome source of financial support. This was also a time of considerable activity in the civil-rights movement.

Kenneth Mochel (1963-'66) He is a caring individual capable of delivering stimulating Sunday sermons. At about this time, there was considerable activity in the civil-rights movement. He took part in many of the local activities. The new General Electric plant in the area brought many new residents to the area, and this resulted in a big increase in our membership.

George Beauchamp (1958-'63) Was our first minister and a guiding light in the young Society's development. We benefited greatly from his many years of experience at the Ethical Culture Society of Washington DC. After his retirement, he continued to act as our advisor..