

It's with a heavy heart that that I must report the passing of founding CSUCI OLLI Program Director, Marty Kaplan. It was in 2003 that Marty along with others at CSUCI that petitioned the Bernard Osher Foundation to bring a great new program – the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute to Ventura County. As we all know, Marty's petition was successful, and in the Fall of 2004 our first classes began. Under Marty's leadership we became known nationally for our high quality, academic courses and wonderful selection of instructors. By 2008 Marty had grown the program to over 500 members which allowed CSUCI to apply for and earn a \$1 million endowment from the Osher Foundation – a funding source which helps with the running of our program today.

It was in 2008 that I came to CSUCI from a past career at UC Santa Barbara. One of my first duties was to assist Marty with the running of the OLLI program. Immediately I noticed how easily Marty was able to play the role of the gruff professor to those that didn't know him. He had a reputation for being combative with anyone that got in the way of making OLLI successful. What I came to quickly realize is that under that gruff exterior was a very intelligent, funny, dedicated, wonderful man who had a love of academics and lifelong learning. Marty cared deeply for our OLLI program. For him, every semester of courses he constructed was a labor of love. I remember how proud he was when he received the giant \$1 million dollar cardboard check from the Osher Foundation. While some commented that keeping the giant check was "silly", getting us to 500 members was a huge accomplishment for him and he proudly kept that check on the wall in his office. When he left the program in early 2012, he gave me that check. I now keep it displayed (next to his Margaret O'Brien record, another gift!) in my office to not only honor Marty's work, but to remind me that sometimes one needs to be a little gruff and combative on the surface when fighting for what you believe in. When a blacksmith shapes a piece of crude iron into art, there will be sparks.

I will always value the time I got to spend with Marty. Not just time spent working, but the personal time as well. Some of my favorite memories of him were the personal conversations we had about family. Sometimes over a glass of wine, sometimes over a pipe or a good cigar. Marty had an incredible life professionally, but the thing that always touched my heart was hearing him talk about his love for his wife and children. He would share stories about crossing the United States with the family in his van and all the adventures they had along the way. He would very proudly share stories about what his kids were doing and what they had accomplished. Something Marty always made clear was his love and devotion to his wife, Lydia.

Marty – you will be missed.

*Nick Fuentes*

---

Operations Director, Extended University  
Program Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
California State University, Channel Islands

<http://ext.csuci.edu/>

P: 805-437-2698

F: 805-437-8859