

Susan Yelton, immediate past president of OLLI at Florida State University, has been making headlines in recent months for OLLI and for her work as a volunteer in the Tallahassee area.

In February, Yelton was selected as one of the Tallahassee Democrat's 2012 "25 Women You Need to Know." In April she was honored as the Tallahassee Democrat's Volunteer of the Year in the Education category—representing lifelong learning and students over 50—a unique choice for a contest that typically honors public school volunteers who serve youngsters.

She won these recognitions despite tough competition, vying against over 180 nominees in the "Women You Need to Know" contest and 44 candidates in the Volunteer of the Year contest.

According to John Reynolds, director of the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy, which supports OLLI at FSU, "Under the joint leadership of Susan Yelton, the Executive Board, and the director, OLLI at FSU's accomplishments in the past year have been simply stunning. In the past 12 months, OLLI at FSU doubled its membership, greatly expanded its course offerings to historic levels, adopted an online payment and registration system, and qualified for and received a \$1 million dollar endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation in California. There is no doubt that this year has been one of the most significant in the history of adult education at FSU, and Susan was instrumental in pulling off these feats. She has been 'on site' so many hours of the week and so many weeks of the year that it is hard to believe she is not on the payroll. OLLI at FSU would not be the thriving organization it is today without her."

Yelton was also instrumental in establishing the first-ever OLLI Scholarship program in an effort to give back to FSU for its tremendous support. The first three recipients have been awarded under her guidance.

In addition to her work with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Florida State University, Yelton founded Paws in Prison, a canine and prisoner training program at Wakulla Correctional Institution Work Camp. Through the program, undisciplined, euthanasia-bound, abandoned, often-abused dogs are paired with prisoners, who train them to become obedient, family-friendly pets. The program is a win for the dogs and for the inmates, who must learn patience, discipline, responsibility and sensitivity in order to train the dogs.

Yelton has also served as a board member, Boys and Girls Club of the Big Bend; a volunteer with the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra; and an active and generous booster in FSU's Hoop Troops, supporting women's basketball. Blending her volunteer efforts, Susan led an OLLI project to collect shoes for one of Coach Sue Semrau's favorite charities, Samaritan's Feet, collecting athletic shoes for athletes around the world. She is also a member of the board of the Leon County Humane Society.

