

# 50 YEARS

## SOCIETY OF FELLOWS

This year the Society of Fellows program celebrates its 50th anniversary. This important program has provided both an access point for individual engagement with the Institute and vital financial support. Founded in late 1964, the mission of the Society of Fellows was to “sustain and strengthen” the Institute’s programs. Among the 33 members who joined that autumn were **Herbert Bayer**, **Elizabeth Paepcke**, and **Paula Zurcher**. Over the past 50 years, the Society of Fellows program has raised over \$40 million in unrestricted support for the Institute. Additionally, Fellows have contributed to special projects, ranging from capital improvements and scholarships to new programs. Here are some highlights of the decades gone by — and Fellows who joined and have stayed with us through the years.

At the start of the Society of Fellows in 1964, Fellows were invited to audit any session or event held at the Institute. The first summer, the topical focus was Technological Change and Social Responsibility, and included **R. Buckminster Fuller** and **Thurgood Marshall**. By the end of the decade, the new president, **Joseph E. Slater**, proposed a new programmatic direction with a series of “thought leading to action” programs in communications and society, the environment, education, justice and society, and international affairs. The number of Fellows grew to approximately 100, contributing over \$125,000 annually.



“About 35 people from all around the world attended **Mortimer Adler’s** seminar How to Think About God. Mortimer had each participant write what their faith (or lack thereof) was: atheist, agnostic, believer, member of an ecclesiastical institution, or uncommitted. At the end of the seminar, which I think lasted four or five days, we wrote down our answers to the same question. Interestingly almost everyone, certainly the majority, had changed his/her affiliation!”

— **Paula Zurcher** | Joined 1964

1964-1974

The second decade of the Society of Fellows began with a summer workshop conference, Television as a Social and Cultural Force. It was followed by seminars on Women and Men: Changing Roles, Relationships, and Perceptions, and Monotheism and Moderation, led by president of the University of Notre Dame **Father Theodore Hesburgh**. Many Fellows attended the burgeoning Institute programs, notably the Justice and Society Seminar co-founded by Supreme Court Justice **Harry Blackmun**. Membership in the Society of Fellows experienced rapid growth, climbing to more than 200 members during its second decade. Annual giving rose to nearly \$300,000 during this time.



“Matthew and I first experienced the Institute by attending a seminar in Japan led by **John** and **Kimiko Powers**. A considerable amount of reading was assigned beforehand and discussions took place each morning. Each afternoon there were visits to cultural sites or participatory demonstrations. Imagine this, **Matthew Bucksbaum** (and his fellow industrialists) conscientiously arranging live flowers by the strict rules of ikebana.”

— **Carolyn Bucksbaum** | Joined 1976

1974-1984

By the eighties — under the leadership of the new president, **Colin W. Williams** — the Society of Fellows program matured into members-only summer seminars. Each multiday offering would address various topics. In 1986, the seminars' overarching theme was Ethics in Society, and explored government, media, business, environment, and law. The 1993 seminars featured rights and the democratic process, health care issues, the deficit dilemma, a federal budget exercise, and Russia and US policy. Programs included morning sessions, afternoon activities, and evening social events. By the Society of Fellows' 30th year, the program had over 300 members and raised over \$500,000 annually.



“When I became CEO of Hilton International Co., I decided it was time to broaden my brain beyond hotels. I signed up for a two-week executive seminar moderated by **Bill Moyers** and his wife, **Judith**. From Mortimer Adler's presentations to our very diverse group's production of Sophocles' *Antigone*, it confirmed my suspicion that there was a world beyond hotels — and I could find it in SOF.”

— **Curt Strand** | Joined 1987

1984-1994

Through the turn of the 21st century, Fellows continued to provide important financial support and engaged participation in the Institute. A weeklong summer seminar drew as many as 20 experts and 125 participants. Subjects included The Social Contract, philanthropy, arts and society, and faith and power. New membership levels were added, including the Gold Leaf, Chairman's, President's, and Aspen Leaf Societies. In 2003, former *Time* magazine managing editor and CNN chairman **Walter Isaacson** became president and CEO. Many Fellows first saw the new direction for the Institute when they attended the 2004 festival, *Einstein: A Celebration*. By its 40th year, the Society of Fellows program raised over \$1.3 million annually.



“When we initially joined the Society of Fellows it was a small, similarly minded group of Aspenites, rather social, mostly conservative, many of them already friends. It was not like the Society of Fellows today, which is much larger, more diverse, and still very interesting. In a way, it mirrors the changes in Aspen and in the Institute. Under Walter Isaacson's leadership the Institute has grown, all for the better.”

— **Richard & Sylvia Kaufman** | Joined 1995

1994-2004

The Institute has grown exponentially, bringing new energy and ideas, while honoring the Society of Fellows' role as a central part of the Institute community. Fellows have helped achieve the leadership's goal to open the Institute to a broader audience and improve the facilities, with projects such as the art installation by **Andy Goldsworthy**. While public events like the Aspen Ideas Festival have expanded the public's awareness of the Institute and its work, donor-exclusive programming has widely expanded. With the addition of the Vanguard Chapter for younger supporters, membership grew to over 1,400. The Society of Fellows raised \$3.5 million in 2013 alone.



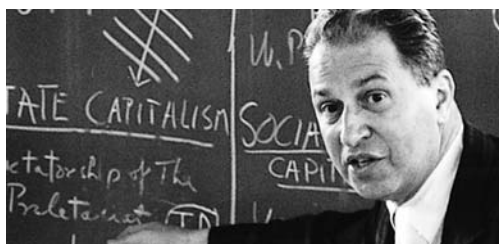
“In 2011, we launched The Vanguard Chapter of the Society of Fellows with the goal to create a portal for a younger generation to engage in the work of the Institute. In 2013, we opened our Vanguard Washington Chapter in DC, and we are working on our San Francisco chapter this coming year. With well over 300 Vanguard fellows, coming from all over the world, we are building an incredible network and the next generation of leaders for the Institute.”

— **Lauren McCloskey Elston** | Joined 2011

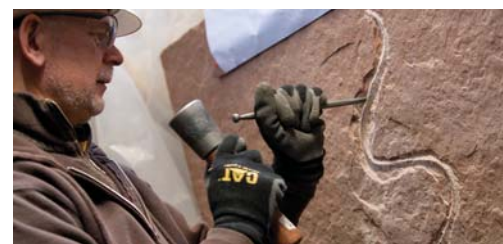
2004-2014



The Buckminster Fuller Dome on the Aspen Meadows campus. Photo by Ferenc Berko.



Mortimer Adler. Photo by Ferenc Berko.



Andy Goldsworthy. Photo by Dan Bayer.