

CONNIE HODGES

UNITED WAY PRESIDENT STEPPING DOWN AFTER THREE DECADES WITH THE ORGANIZATION

In the fall of 1983, Connie Hodges began her relationship with United Way as a graduate-student intern while attending the University of Kansas. It didn't take long for her to realize that she found her life's career path. This year she celebrates 30 years with the organization and 16 years as president of United Way of Northeast Florida. In January, she announced her plans to retire as of December 2014. Making a difference in Northeast Florida since her arrival in 1986, Connie will leave an indelible mark on the region, especially impacting some of our community's most critical issues—education, income and health.

What do you consider to be the most significant accomplishment during your term as president of United Way of Northeast Florida? Leading the evolution from primarily a fundraising organization to the current community impact model was a huge transformational change and extremely gratifying. We focused on root causes to complex social issues. Our volunteers and staff developed and implemented proven, research-based initiatives that keep students on track to graduation, prepare children to start kindergarten, assist families in achieving financial stability and help people to lead healthier, more productive lives.

What is the most significant change you have seen in the nonprofit community during your tenure? The nonprofit community is now recognized as an integral part of the social and economic fabric of our community. In addition, we have created successful collaborative partnerships which have resulted in measurable and lasting change in Northeast Florida.

What has been your favorite part of your career? Working alongside dedicated volunteers, generous supporters, exceptional community partners and trusted, talented colleagues has made my work exhilarating and very rewarding.

Are you staying in Northeast Florida? Absolutely! Jacksonville is home, and it is where my husband, Bill, and I raised our two sons.

What are your future plans? Bill and I are planning a long overdue anniversary trip. After that, I will find time to remain engaged in the community, volunteer and begin exploring Life Act 2. ■

Part of a series of business leader profiles sponsored by United Way of Northeast Florida.

