



Dr. George Lensing Jr.

Dr. George Lensing Jr. was born in Vicksburg, MS.; he received a BA in English from Notre Dame, and a PhD in English from Louisiana State University, and spent time in Brazil as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching literacy. As a young professor arriving in Chapel Hill to teach English at the University of North Carolina in 1969, George took a part-time volunteer job delivering used furniture. This work helped him become aware of the problems that low-income people faced finding housing in Chapel Hill; he joined the Interchurch Council (now called the “Interfaith Council”) and worked with Reverend Jim Riddle of the Community Church, members of the Church of Reconciliation, and other community leaders, to find solutions to these problems. The result was the creation of the Interchurch Council Housing Corporation (INCHUCO), which, beginning in 1974, built and managed the Chase Park and Elliott Woods apartment complexes, comprising a total of 79 units of affordable housing. INCHUCO operates as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation under federal and state law, and provides subsidized rental contracts under U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations.

George is a long-time member of the Board of INCHUCO, and, since 1996, its President. In 2011, the organization completed a full renovation of the housing units. George has continued to be engaged in solving the problems faced by occupants of affordable housing; recently he has worked on efforts to prevent drug trafficking near the apartments by installing cameras, improving lighting, and holding community meetings with police officers.

In 2005, George Lensing and INCHUCO resident manager Edna Heath were the recipients of the “Bridge Builders Award,” presented by the University/Community Martin Luther King Jr. Planning Corporation, “in recognition of work and leadership to remove barriers of race/ethnicity, religion, and social and economic conditions among the diverse communities of Orange County.” His involvement with INCHUCO has been his most fulfilling experience in community service. “It’s not about us,” he insists, but rather about fulfilling an important need for low-income housing in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro community.

He retired from the UNC Department of English in 2016, but still has fond memories of serving as Secretary of the Faculty in the 1990s. During this time, he wrote the citation for President Bill Clinton as part of the celebration of UNC’s 200th anniversary. His participation in the Office of Distinguished Scholarships enabled him to work with “Carolina’s best students.”

George feels that the Chapel Hill/Carrboro community is “a community one is proud to be part of,” in part because it is “governed by enlightened people who care about the needs of the community.” And when asked what his hope for the future was, his answer was short and direct: “more affordable housing.”