



History of the World Leisure Organization: a 50-year perspective and analysis

Christopher R. Edginton

To cite this article: Christopher R. Edginton (2013) History of the World Leisure Organization: a 50-year perspective and analysis, World Leisure Journal, 55:3, 264-297, DOI: 10.1080/04419057.2013.820506

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/04419057.2013.820506>



Published online: 02 Sep 2013.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 589



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

GUEST CONTRIBUTION

History of the World Leisure Organization: a 50-year perspective and analysis

Christopher R. Edginton*

World Leisure Organization, Cedar Falls, IA, USA

(Received 18 February 2013; final version received 12 July 2013)

For more than 50 years, the World Leisure Organization (WLO) has engaged in providing technical support, advocacy and research activities to promote recreation and leisure on a worldwide basis. The purpose of this historical review is to provide a 50-year perspective and analysis of the activities of the WLO. The historical inquiry has been framed around seven (7) research questions focusing on: factors leading to its establishment; leadership; major policy statements; programmes, services and events; sources of financial support; and major publications. Initiated as an offshoot of the National Recreation Association in the USA, the organization was supported by its parent organization and the philanthropic generosity of industrialists and others. Located in New York City, New York (USA), the organization had close ties to the United Nations (UN) and its programmes during its formative years. Subsequently, changes in leadership required a relocation of the World Leisure Secretariat to the location of the Secretary General. Over time, the Secretariat has been moved to Canada and is now again located in the USA. Major global events of the WLO include the World Leisure Congress, World Leisure EXPO and the World Leisure Games. Other programmes of note which have been developed and continue to this day include World Leisure Centers of Excellence, World Leisure Commissions, World Leisure Chapters, World Leisure Academy and the World Leisure Honors and Awards programme.

Keywords: association; history; international; leisure; recreation; world

Introduction

The social, cultural and economic fabric of the world has been dramatically impacted by the forces of industrialization and urbanization over the past several hundred years. Stivers (2000, p. 4), discussing the progressive era at the turn of the twentieth century in the USA, has written that "... more and more people lived in the cities swollen by massive influences of immigrants and afflicted by all the problems and pathologies that rapid growth and overcrowding produce." The times produced two strategies of reform "... one in the direction of social justice, and the other toward rationalizing and regulating organizational, institutional and societal processes" (Stivers, 2000, p. 4–5).

Evolving out of the conditions arising from life in drab, crowded and often unsafe city environments has been the emergence of a social movement to enhance the quality of life and well-being of individuals through the provision of open spaces,

*Email: christopher.edginton@uni.edu

parks and recreation and leisure amenities. “The rise of organized leisure services, especially in developed countries, can be traced to efforts aimed in addressing problems, concerns and issues that occurred during the industrial era” (Edginton & Chen, 2008, p. 124). Discussing the history of recreation and allied professional groups, Sessoms and Stevenson have noted:

Adult education, recreation and social group work all have a common heritage. Each is a product of the social welfare reforms that occurred in our cities and industries at the turn of the nineteenth century. Their founders shared a belief – they were concerned with the quality of life and believed that through the “proper” use of leisure it could be achieved. (Sessoms & Stevenson, 1981, p. 2)

Edginton et al. have discussed how movements transitioned into institutions noting that “. . . movement spawn more than political rhetoric.” They note that “. . . many, if not all, of the strategies used to provide . . . [leisure] . . . that emerged in the industrial era started out as the dream, idea or vision of one or more people” (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006, p. 84).

To promote, enhance and assist the work of individuals dedicated to advancing such concerns, professional organizations and societies have emerged. As Edginton et al. have written, “. . . membership in such organizations provides a means to network with others, gather new information and promote the interests of the organization” (Edginton et al., 2006, p. 428). One such organization was the Playground Association of America (PAA), founded in 1906, which later became known as the Playground and Recreation Association of America (PRAA) and subsequently, the National Recreation Association (NRA) (Rivers, 1983, p. 21). The foundation of this new movement was laid by Henry S. Curtis, Luther H. Gulick and Jane Addams who advanced their concerns to philanthropist Joseph Lee, who, at the time, was the vice-president for public recreation of the American Civic Association (Rivers, 1983, p. 22). The initiatives for NRA to expand its efforts to focus on international development occurred as a result of the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. According to Thomas Rivers, “. . . in 1952, NRA, in a fundamental administrative plan, divided its work load into three divisions: (1) the recreation programme service; (2) the international service; and (3) the research department” (Rivers, 1983, p. 49). Thus began in earnest within NRA a focus on international development.

By the early 1930s, NRA was ready for closer relationships with recreation movements in other nations (Rivers, 1983, p. 47). As Rivers notes, “. . . the time was coming for some kind of permanent international cooperation.” In Los Angeles in 1932 at the National Recreation Association Congress, leaders from across the USA agreed that “an international recreation congress should meet every four years just before the Olympic Games in the city chosen for the event” (Rivers, 1983, p. 48). However, the location of the Olympics in Berlin and the nationalization of recreation was viewed as a denial of human freedom (Rivers, 1983, p. 48) in Germany, and then the Second World War forestalled immediate development. Rivers, travelling to Japan and other countries in the early 1950s, found that there was great interest in the establishment of an International Recreation Association (IRA) (Rivers, 1983, p. 48) (later known as the World Leisure and Recreation Association [WLRA] and today as the World Leisure Organization [WLO]). In 1956 at the National Recreation

Congress came the announcement that an international association would be formed.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the history of the WLO from inception to the present. This represents over a 50-year period from 1956 to 2012. In order to investigate the history of the organization, the following research questions have been formulated to guide the inquiry:

- (1) What factors led to the establishment of WLO?
- (2) Why was the name of the organization changed over time? What factors lead to the adoption of different terms and titles being applied?
- (3) How has the World Leisure Secretariat been situated and managed and who have been the principle individuals in advancing the governance, programmes and services of the organization?
- (4) What have been the major policy statements promulgated by the organization during the last 50 years?
- (5) What have been the significant global events, programmes and services offered by the organization?
- (6) What have been the major sources of fiscal support over the life of the organization and how have they changed?
- (7) What have been the significant publications and research projects of the organization?

Forming the WLO

The formulation of the UN following World War II provided a strong impetus for the formal establishment and incorporation of IRA in 1956. In 1956, the NRA Congress was held in Philadelphia (USA), and included representatives from 33 countries. This broad international gathering supported the universality of the language of recreation (Rivers, 1983, p. 49). The opening of the congress programme featured a pageant offered by an international and interracial choir emphasizing the right of leisure for all races and creeds. The congress programme, organized by Robert Crawford, paid testament to the fact that, indeed, recreation and leisure is an international movement and a "...force for world understanding and brotherhood" (Rivers, 1983, p. 50). Chartered under the laws of the state of New York, IRA was officially established on 3 October 1956. Ms Susan Lee, Trustee, NRA; Mr Otto T. Mallery, Trustee, American Academy of Political and Social Science and American University, Washington; Mr Joseph Prendergast, Executive Director, NRA; Mr Frank Adams, Board Member, NRA; and Rivers, Assistant Executive Director, NRA, were the original incorporators (Rivers, 1983, p. 50).

IRA was initially supported financially by the NRA. Rivers recalls that "...Edna Braucher, wife of the long-time leader of NRA, volunteered her services on a fulltime basis. Robert Gamble, with whom I had worked so closely for many years in NRA, joined the staff of IRA" (Rivers, 1983, p. 50). These individuals joined Rivers along with two secretaries and opened offices in the Carnegie Endowment International

Center located on the plaza of the UN at 345 East 46th Street, New York (Rivers, 1983, p. 50).

IRA was initially established for the expressed purpose of promoting:

... the development in all nations, through public and private agencies and by every appropriate means, of play and recreation, higher and more adequate community expression, a better social life, and better moral and industrial condition, subject to such regulations as may be provided by the laws of the State of New York, United States of America, and the laws in the places where this corporation may function. (IRA, 1956)

Further, the incorporation documents state that IRA "...had been organized to provide, on a cooperative basis, urgently needed international recreation services under an international Board of Directors and with the participation and cooperation of recreation agencies in other countries" (IRA, 1956). IRA was viewed as "...to provide a medium through which the recreation authorities of the world may work in unity serving youth and creating better understanding among the peoples of the world" (IRA, 1957). The founding objectives of the organization were as follows:

- (1) Serve as a central clearing house for the exchange of information and experience among recreation agencies of the world;
- (2) Aid countries to establish central recreation service agencies;
- (3) Provide leadership for the development of a world recreation movement designed to enrich the human spirit through wholesome use of leisure;
- (4) Encourage the provision of land and facilities, training of leaders, development of varied programmes and public interpretation of the values of play for children, recreation for youth and creative use of leisure for all ages; and
- (5) Provide a medium through which the recreation authorities of the world may work in unity on one of the common problems of man.

The organization immediately drew into its service over 30 volunteers who "...on their own time and at their own expense, traveled to other countries and exchanged information and experiences on play, recreation and leisure-time program" (Rivers, 1983, p. 50). During its first year of operation, IRA representatives visited Afghanistan, Brazil, Burma, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kashmir, Malaya, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The Netherlands and Turkey. Information was provided related to the organization of recreation programmes including a focus on programme areas such as music, drama, sports, games, nature study and folk dancing. A recreation exchange programme supported by the US Department of State saw 16 leaders from 13 nations implemented. In addition, IRA assisted Brazil in establishing a national organization and participated in a UNESCO study focused on the use of leisure. At the request of the UN, IRA assisted the UN Emergency Force in Gaza with recreation materials and supplies. The organization provided complete libraries, recreation and athletic materials as well as live entertainment and received kudos from the UN Secretary General, the Commanding General of the US Emergency Force and others (IRA, 1963–64).

As a result of IRA's international mission and focus, the organization has always sought collaborative relationships with UN, UNICEF and UNESCO. Former IRA Board Member Alex Quaison-Sackey from Africa was elected President of the 19th

Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1965. Further, in the early years of the organization, US Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson as well as UN Secretary General U. Thant and Deputy Secretary General Dr. Ralph Bunche offered high commendations for its work (IRA, 1963). Consultative status was granted to the organization by the UN in 1962 and continues to this day. Cooperation with UNESCO began in the 1960s with a training course for youth camps in South America (Westland, 1987, p. 11). Subsequently, in 1962, UNESCO granted the organization its non-governmental organization affiliate status. As Edginton and Jalloh report (2011, p. 334), this status was withdrawn in 2007 as a result of changing policies and the need to align the priorities and goals of the organization with that of UNESCO's.

Commenting on the work of IRA during its first year, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip commented:

All who are interested in your and in better understanding among peoples can be happy about the way in which the International Recreation Association has served throughout the world in its first year. It has a special mission to help the peoples in under-developed countries to see the value of proper recreation. I wish for it continued success and enlarged support. (IRA, 1957)

Appendix 1 provides a comprehensive listing of major events and activities of WLO from 1956 to the present.

From IRA to WLO

Undoubtedly the selection of the name of the organization as "The International Recreation Association" paralleled its parenting organization in the USA the NRA. In fact, much of the leadership of IRA was drawn from individuals who had been involved deeply in NRA's activities and in particular its focus on international service. An early pamphlet of the work of the organization was focused on "... helping to build better understanding among peoples of the world by working together toward life enrichment for all through the fruitful use of leisure" (IRA, 1957). The tagline used to promote IRA was "World service through recreation."

In 1973, IRA rebranded itself to become the WLRA. Other names considered included The World Recreation Association and The World Organization for Recreation and Leisure Development. The main consideration for changing the name of the organization was the fact that IRA had begun to regionalize its works as noted in the establishment of a European Regional Leisure and Recreation Association in 1972 (Rivers, 1972, p.3). Thus, it was thought that "... regions would logically see themselves as international" (WLRA, 1980a, p. 12). As noted, "...it was thought more appropriate that the supra-regional association would use the term 'world' in its identification" (WLRA, 1980a, p. 12). Over time, the association became affectionately by its phonetic pronunciation of its name *WALL-RA*.

Again, in 2007, the association's Board of Directors decided to change the name from the World Leisure and Recreation Association, Inc. to the WLO, Inc. According to Edginton (2007, p. 106) "...consideration of this change in the name of the organization by the World Leisure Board of Directors followed a discussion at the 2006 World Leisure Congress in Hangzhou, PRC." He further notes that "... as a part of a pre-strategic planning initiative, members of WLO's Board of

Table 1. Name changes.

Organizational name	Dates
International Recreation Association (IRA)	1956–1972
World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA)	1973–2006
World Leisure Organization (WLO)	2007–present

Directors identified this item as one of great interest” (Edginton, 2007, p. 106). Several factors were identified in moving forward with the name change including the fact that the short form of the organization “World Leisure” had become a popular way of referencing the association. The second factor is that many of the organizations affiliated with the UN such as the World Tourism Organization and the World Health Organization had parallel acronyms – WTO and WHO. In addition, referring to World Leisure as an organization as contrasted with an association added greater focus and clarity to its efforts. Last, focusing on and emphasizing the term “leisure” provided a way of aligning the work of the organization with other national organization which had sharpened and focused their titles. The phrase as a tagline that WLO adopted was “leisure as integral to social, cultural and economic development” (see Table 1).

Another way of re-branding the organization over time has been to change its logo. The first logo featured a globe and the words “International Recreation Association” on each of the three folds of the logo. In addition, the logo included an abstract world globe. Later, the logo was modified to picture a less abstract globe which was held in the hands of an individual and included the title of the organization “World Leisure and Recreation Association.” In 2000, a new design, significantly different from the previous logo, was introduced by Emmanuel Mongon. Mongon, a French management consultant and a member of the Board of Directors, facilitated the development of the new logo through a designer within his business. This logo emphasized the short form of the organization “World Leisure.” Again, as Edginton noted, adoption of the new World Leisure logo focused attention on use of the short form of the organization. He notes “World Leisure’s branding was not only carried out through the identifying marking of its logo, but the use of the short form of the name of the organization” (Edginton, 2007, p. 106). The new logo design was useful in that other descriptive terms could be added at the bottom of the design in order to highlight unique programmes.

Leading the WLO

Over the 50-year history of the organization, the role of chair or president of the World Leisure Board of Directors has been relatively stable. Over the life of the programme, there have been only seven individuals who have served in this role or will shortly. The chair or president, sometimes used interchangeably, is the presiding officer of the organization and is responsible for executing official meetings and ensuring that the activities of the organization are in accordance with its policies and procedures (WLO, 2011b, p. 2). As has been the case with the leadership of the WLO Board of Directors, the administrators of the organization have been relatively stable over time with selected individuals serving terms of office extending up to 20 years.

President/chairman of the board

The first individual to serve as chair or president was Ian Lawson Johnston, a businessman and philanthropist from the UK. A graduate of Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, he served from 1956 until 1972. Johnston also held the title of Lord Luke of Pavenham. He had served as the Chair of the National Playing Fields Association in the UK and was also a member of the International Olympic Committee. He played a pivotal role in the structuring of the organization in its formative years. He was strongly committed to pursuing the goals and objectives of the organization and was pivotal in the establishment of the European Leisure and Recreation Association (ELRA).

Johnston was followed by Robert O. Wilder who served from 1972 to 1995. He had previously served as the vice chair of the organization and, in his business life, was the chair of the National Forge Company located in Irvine, Pennsylvania, USA. As a graduate of Yale University, Wilder was known as an industrialist and philanthropist and his generosity enabled the organization to continue its work well into the 1990s. He also served as the vice-chairman for the American Council for the United Nations University. As one of the founding fathers of the organization, it was noted that "...he provided leadership and strong support to its development." He was in the forefront of those who realized that we have to develop a transcending loyalty to all members of the human family irrespective of their racial, cultural or economic background (Westland, 1995, p. 1).

Christina Quijana-Caballero served as the acting president of the association's Board of Directors from 1995–1996. Active in the association as its United Nations Representative, Quijana-Caballero was influential in advancing the organization's interest in Europe. During her work with the organization, she was instrumental in maintaining the organization's work with the UN and UNESCO.

In 1997, Herman P. Markell was named President of the Board of Directors, serving until 2000. As a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Markell was an industrialist, serving as General Manager of the parts distributor warehouse and later as CEO of General Parks, Inc. He was active in "...civic voluntary organizations, locally, nationally and internationally" (WLRA, 1997).

In 2000, George Torkildsen assumed the position of acting president of the organization after serving as vice-president. Torkildsen was widely known throughout the world and was the first Community Sport Center manager in the UK. A noted management consultant, writer, speaker, researcher and lecturer, Torkildsen graduated from Loughborough College and earned a doctorate at the University of West Minister.

A life member of the organization, Torkildsen was the author of such books as *Leisure and Recreation Management*, *Torkildsen's Guides to Leisure Management* and *Leisure Management A to Z: A Dictionary of Terms* (WLRA, 2000a, p. 17). Torkildsen and others worked to reshape and refocus the organization through some of its more difficult times (Casey, 2006, p. 3). As Casey noted, Torkildsen was respected, admired and loved (Casey, 2006, p. 4). In his honour, the WLO established the George Torkildsen Literary Award – presented to an individual who has made significant contributions to the recreation, parks and leisure service literature by advancing innovative ideas, thoughts and/or philosophical perspectives. The award

was first presented in 2010 at the 11th World Leisure Congress held in Chuncheon City, South Korea.

In 2003, Derek Casey was named Chair of the Board of Directors. Casey has previously served as the Chief Executive of the Sport Council and Sport England in the UK. During his tenure, he was responsible for the establishment of Sports Lottery Fund and the development of Institute for Sports in the UK. As a graduate of the University of Glasgow, he also received an honorary doctor of science degree from the University of Southampton and an honorary doctorate from the University of Strathclyde. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Senior Fellow of the World Leisure Academy and the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management. Very active as the chairman of the WLO's Board of Directors, Casey was responsible for financially stabilizing the organization and instrumental in developing new programmes such as the World Leisure EXPO, World Leisure Games and the World Leisure Festival. His nonrenewable term expires in 2013 (see [Table 2](#)).

Dr. Roger Coles was elected as its Chair of the Board of Directors and will assume his role beginning in mid October 2013. He has served as the World Leisure Organization's Program Manager for Educational Services; Chair, Program Committee, 2014 Mobile Bay World Leisure Congress; member, ad hoc committee to review election procedures for individuals seeking appointments to the World Leisure Organization's Board of Directors; and as a two-term member of the World Leisure Organization's Board of Directors. Dr. Coles previously served as chair of the Michigan (USA) Recreation and Parks Association Board of Directors, president of the American Association of Leisure and Recreation and president of the Society of Parks and Recreation Educators. Also, he has held academic appointments as professor and Chair of the Department of Recreation, Parks & Leisure Services and currently serves as the Interim Dean of the Graduate College at Central Michigan University, USA.

Distribution of the members of the World Leisure Board of Directors: 1957–2012

Initial members of the Board of Directors included individuals from Australia, Brazil, Ceylon, Colombia, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, The Netherlands, The Philippines, Republic of China, Sweden, the Union of South Africa, Uruguay, the USA and Yugoslavia. However, it is evident in reviewing [Figure 1](#) regarding the distribution of the Board of Directors from 1956 to 2012 that a large number of the membership comes from the USA leading the way with 234 appointments, followed by Columbia

Table 2. Presidents/chairman of the board of directors.

Name	Country	Designated title	Dates of service
Lord Luke of Pavenham	UK	Chair	1956–1972
Robert O. Wilder	USA	President	1972–1995
Christina Quijano-Caballero	Switzerland	Acting President	1995–1996
Herman P. Markell	USA	President	1997–2000
George Torkildsen	UK	President	2000–2003
Derek Casey	UK	Chair	2003–2013
Roger Coles	Canada	Chair	2013–present

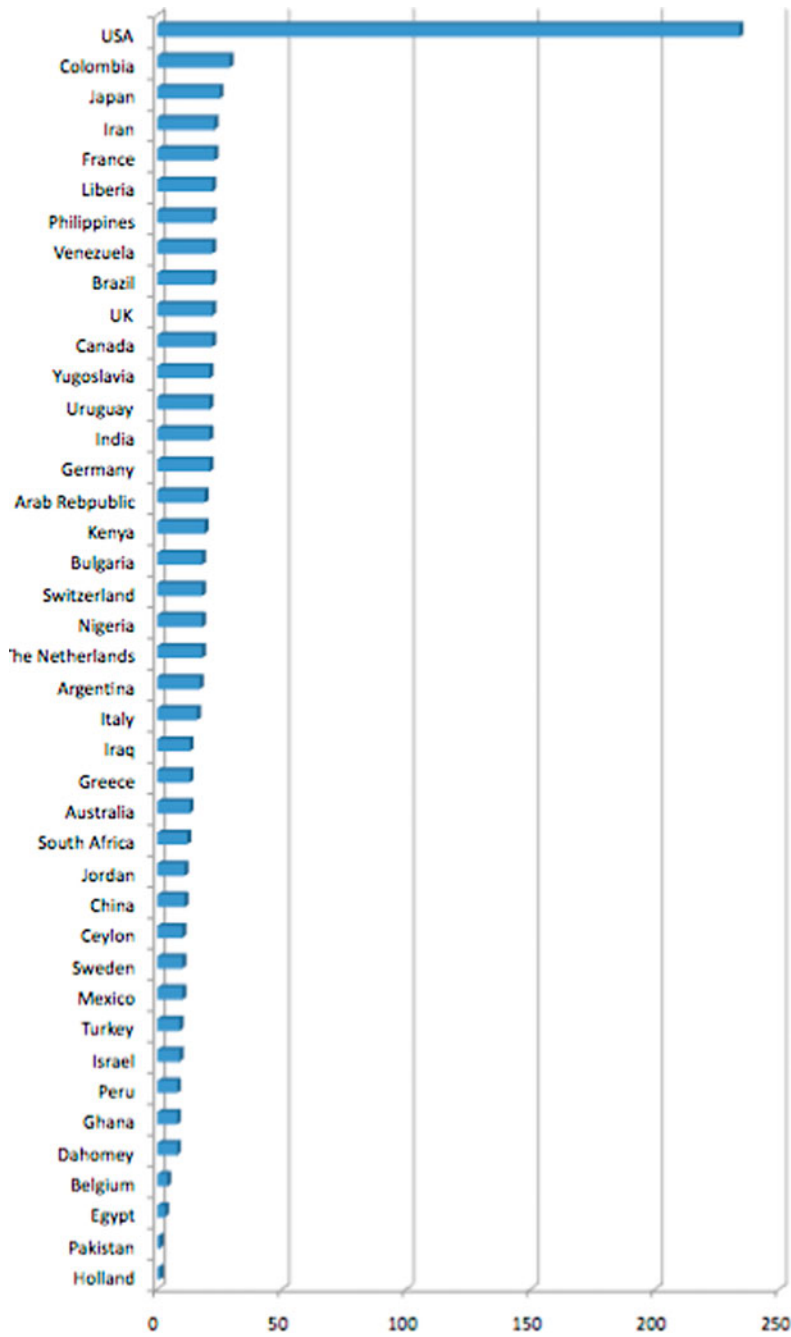


Figure 1. List of the countries represented by WLO Board of Directors members (1956–2012).

with 29, Japan with 25 and France and Iran with 23. Appointments may have occurred as a result of the development of an organized leisure movement in these countries or as a result of the historical focus of the World Leisure Secretariat in North America. In recent years, there has been an effort to gain greater representation with the Board of Directors adopting as a part of their by-laws the mandate to ensure that there were representatives from each of the continents around the world. In addition, the Board of Directors has sought to encourage greater gender balance in its appointments of individuals to the Board of Directors. Uvinha (2010, p.192–193) suggests that WLO “shows a strong attachment to the USA and Canada” in the composition of its board members. Although, he points out that recently there has been “...some recognition of linguistic and geographical diversity... ‘Anglophone’ speakers and countries still dominate.”

Director General, Executive Director, Secretary General

Dr Thomas E. Rivers (1892–1977) gave life to the founding of IRA and served as its Secretary and Director General from 1956 to 1974. He had served on the staff of the NRA and its predecessor, PRAA, from 1923 to 1956. In his role with this organization, he served as secretary of the National Recreation Congress from 1923 to 1953 and in the same position for the National Recreation School from 1926 to 1936. Following graduation from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1917, he was appointed to the War Camp Community Service programme in Georgia as a part of his US Army assignment. This would undoubtedly have bearing on his later activities with IRA and its work in supporting UN emergency forces in the Congo and Gaza with morale and recreation services in later years. During Rivers’ tenure as Director General, he was assisted by Robert R. Gamble (Rivers, 1983, p. 92), John A. Nesbitt (IRA, 1963, p. 3), Judson Chrisney (IRA, 1968, p. 3) and William “Bill” Cunningham (IRA, 1971, p. 3). He was also assisted by Robert M. Zawoluk and David Barnebl who also served as Directors of Development (IRA, 1969, p. 3; WLRA, 1974a, p. 2) as well as Jane Wallace who was responsible for general information services (WLRA, 1974b, p. 3).

The recipient of many acknowledgements including an honorary degree of Doctorate of Humanics from Springfield College, Rivers was also honoured for his outstanding service to humanity and received awards from Iran, Peru and Japan. Rivers widely travelled. For example, in 1955, he visited some 22 countries in Europe and the near and Middle East in order to establish the groundwork for the organization (“Dr T. E.,” 1974c, p. 4). Secretary General of the UN, U. Thant, wrote to Rivers... “you are helping to create a climate where peace can flourish” (“Dr T. E.,” 1974, p. 4). Lord Luke of Pavenham commented that Rivers “...has taken a technical subject and lifted it to the level of statesmanship” (Rivers, 1983, p. 51). Massachusetts Congressman Silvo O. Conte called Rivers “...our global ambassador of recreation” (Rivers, 1983, p. 53). Rivers dedicated his legendary life to a single goal “...building a better world through recreation.” He was, in fact, “... a creative leader; that is, the kind of human being who dreams, pioneers, invents, acts and leads” (Rivers, 1983, p. 53). His life was dedicated to a single goal: “building a better world through recreation” (WLRA, 1977, p. 1).

William D. Cunningham (1913–1980) was named the Director General of WLRA in 1974 and served until 1980. Bill Cunningham, as he was known, served as

Deputy Director of the organization from 1970 to 1974 and “. . . upon the resignation of Tom Rivers as director general . . . [he] . . . was appointed by the WLRA Board of Directors to the position of executive director . . . [and] . . . and undertook his new responsibility with fervor and enthusiasm” (Melendez, 1980, p. i). Cunningham’s parents were missionaries and he lived in the Far East for 17 years. “His professional career in the United States was developed in the commercial sector involving marketing, public relations and advertising positions with major corporation and advertising agencies” (Melendez, 1980, p. 4).

Cunningham saw the association expand “its international activities with significant participation in the 1976 United Games Conference on Human Settlements which saw the adoption of Resolution C.18, whereby leisure and recreation became a subject of international concern” (Melendez, 1980, p. 4). In addition, the INTERCALL and INTERCALIX Commissions were established in order to promote leadership and information exchange. In addition, the Thomas & Ruth Rivers Scholarship programme was established. Melendez, reflecting on Cunningham’s contribution to the organization noted that “he helped to strengthen the foundation upon which our future will be built, and we will remember him with respect and affection” (Melendez, 1980, p. 4).

Nelson B. Melendez (1947–) served as Executive Director of the organization from 1980 to 1984, replacing Bill Cunningham. Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, he received a BA degree from the University of Puerto Rico and pursued doctoral studies in leisure services and resources at New York University. Melendez previously served as the assistant general manager of the New York State Park and Recreation Commission for the city of New York. Prior to that, he had served as the director of the Department of Recreation, Sports and Culture, Municipality of Caquas, Puerto Rico. During Melendez tenure as Executive Director, planning for the creation of a Latin American Regional Association occurred, the World Leisure Commission on Research was established, and the organization published several documents including one focused on *Leisure and Aging: An International Perspective*. In addition, the organization conducted an international symposium on leisure and ageing at the UN Headquarters in New York City. The *WLRA Journal* was established, succeeding the *WLRA Bulletin*. During his stewardship, the association celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Cornelis (Cor) Westland (1918–2008) served as Secretary General of WLRA from 1984 to 1996. Westland’s professional and personal journey was remarkable. Born in The Netherlands in 1918, Westland graduated from the Royal Military Academy and later earned a bachelor of physical education from the Academy of Physical Education in Amsterdam. He served as an officer in the Royal Dutch East Indies Army from 1940 to 1951. During this period of time, he was a prisoner of war. From 1951 to 1953 he was a member of the faculty of the Royal Military College. In 1953, he immigrated to Canada and began his professional work with leisure and recreation with the YMCA. From 1966 to 1970, he served as a recreation consultant with Fitness Canada and from 1970 to 1976 as Director of Recreation Canada. Following, from 1976 to 1984, he was an associate professor in the Department of Leisure Studies, University of Ottawa.

As Secretary General, his work was central in the establishment of the World Leisure International Center of Excellence graduate programme (WICE) initially offered by the Christelijke Hogeschool Noord Nederland, Leeuwarden, The

Netherlands. He provided leadership to a variety of national and international conferences including the WLRA Symposium on Leisure staged at the UN in 1982 and the World Congress on Play in Human Settlements. Westland offered many keynote presentations in countries such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, Columbia, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands and Norway. First elected to the Association's Board of Directors in 1977, Westland also served as its Vice Chair prior to assuming his position as Secretary General in 1984. As an author of numerous books and articles, his publications include *Recreation Development in Canada*; *Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada*; and *Playing, Living and Learning in Canada*.

In departing as Secretary General, Westland reminded his colleagues of the potential for growth and development of the organization. As he noted, we all can collectively make a difference. Westland was accorded the title of Secretary General Emeritus at the World Leisure Congress in Cardiff in 1996. Bob Stebbins, professor, University of Calgary, summed up Westland's contribution as an international leader stating, "...he was the man of the hour at a time when leisure studies, as a young discipline, needed leadership on the international scene. For this, he will always be remembered" (Casey, 2008, p. 2). As a student graduating from the WICE programme in The Netherlands, Adriana Estrada from Mexico remarked that Westland was "...a sincere and authentic man ~ with a huge heart. Certainly he was a leader for many generations involved in the leisure movement" (Casey, 2008, p. 2). In honour of Westland's contributions and as a reflection of his sincerity and authenticity, the WLO established The Cornelis Westland Humanitarian Award. The award seeks to perpetuate his memory and to recognize an individual or an organization that has made a significant and sustained contribution to the worldwide leisure movement advancing human concern. The award was first presented in 2010.

Gerald S. Kenyon (1932–) followed Cor Westland as Secretary General, serving from 1996 until 2004. Kenyon had a significant impact on reframing the organization so that it was perceived as a viable entity for promoting leisure as a vehicle for social, cultural and economic development. Noted for his influence in promoting the development of the discipline of sports sociology (Sage, 1987), he had previously served as a faculty member and Dean of the Faculty of Human Kinetics and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo and as the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the University of Lethbridge. In 1996, Kenyon presented a paper at the World Leisure Congress held in Cardiff, Wales, entitled *World Leisure and Recreation Towards 2001* (Edginton, 2005, p. 1). Kenyon proposed a framework that was focused on sharpening the mission and mandate of the organization, reformulating the governance structure, enhancing programming, broadening the reach of the organization, building a stronger operational base and strengthening financial resources. He was responsible for effectively defining the priorities and strategies in a planning document entitled: *A World Fit for Living – World Leisure Priorities for People 2004–2008* (WLO, 2003). This plan included four priorities: (1) heightening the awareness of leisure benefits; (2) improving policy and legislation; (3) strengthening leadership; and (4) expanding international cooperation.

One of the more significant developments during his tenure as Secretary General was the implementation of the 1st World Leisure EXPO in Hangzhou, China. In addition, he provided leadership to the development of the Asian Pacific Center for the Study of Leisure at Zhejiang University, PRC, and oversight to the continued operations of the World Leisure International Center of Excellence at Wageningen

University. In 1998, the *São Paulo Declaration on Leisure and Globalization* was drafted at the 5th World Leisure Congress. This statement included several fundamental principles to assist individuals, governments and non-governmental organizations in the context of globalization. Also, Kenyon worked to transform the *World Leisure Journal* to focus its attention to greater scholarly activity in addition to redesigning the format to upgrade its presentation as a scientific journal.

In 2004, Christopher R. Edginton (1946–) was named Secretary General. With his appointment, the World Leisure Secretariat was moved to the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, USA. At the time of his appointment, Edginton served as Professor and Director of the School of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services. He had previously served as professor and head of the Department of Leisure Studies and Services at the University of Oregon. Edginton has been identified as one of the leading contributors to the application of contemporary management concepts in the park and recreation field (Howard & Crompton, 1980). He is credited with having an inclusive management style that drew more individuals into the work of the organization in a meaningful fashion.

Working side by side with Derek Casey, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Edginton worked to reshape the administrative structure of WLO by creating portfolios for Programme Managers and detailing its programmes and services. Further, he worked to strengthen the financial resources of the organization by instituting strategies to improve hosting fee structures for World Leisure programmes. During his tenure, new programmes including World Leisure Games and the World Leisure Festival were developed. A long-term contract was negotiated in 2009 by Derek Casey and Jack Agrios with the Hangzhou People's Municipal Government (China) to perpetuate the World Leisure EXPO. The 2nd World Leisure EXPO was successfully implemented in 2011, drawing over 37 million people to various events and activities. With Roger Coles, a member of the WLO's Board of Directors, he led the initiative to craft a new and updated strategic plan entitled *World Leisure Organization – Leisure: Enhancing the Human Condition Priorities & Strategies 2009–2014* (Edginton & Coles, 2009). New World Leisure Centers of Excellence were established at Arizona State University and at Vancouver Island University. The WICE programme at Wageningen University was brought to a successful conclusion under his leadership. In addition, he brought a greater focus on the World Leisure Commissions by reviving them as a programme of the organization. The World Leisure Chapters programme was implemented and expanded with chapters in Taipei, China, Hong Kong and Quebec. Recently, he oversaw the transition of the *World Leisure Journal* from an internally published journal to one that is supported in a cost-effective fashion by Routledge Publishing, a member of the Taylor & Francis Group. He also worked with Kim Moss, programme associate, and later with Johanna Smith, to enhance the promotional features of the organization by upgrading the website, promoting greater use of social media, and in creating a consistent brand image in various publications. He also oversaw change in the name of the organization from WLRA to its present name of WLO (see Table 3).

Major public policy statements

A significant and important function of WLO has been the crafting of public policy statements to advance leisure on a worldwide basis. In general, these statements have

Table 3. Director General/Secretary General.

Name	Country	Designated title	Dates of service
Thomas Rivers	USA	Director General	1956–1974
William Cunningham	USA	Executive Director	1974–1980
Nelson Melendez	Puerto Rico	Executive Director	1980–1984
Cor Westland	Canada	Secretary General	1984–1996
Gerald Kenyon	Canada	Secretary General	1996–2004
Christopher Edginton	USA	Secretary General	2004–present

come in the form of either a charter or a declaration. WLO's policy and guidelines for public statements have provided the following definitions for a charter and declarations as follows:

A charter identifies, recognizes and proclaims certain conditions to be the right or privilege of an individual or a collective. It is the most solemn written statement in which the organization can affirm its most fundamental beliefs. A declaration is a statement in response to a significant public issue, usually of ethical or moral importance, flowing from deliberations within larger forums, such as a regional or world conference or summit. It is a collective statement of beliefs or principles which is agreed by a specific audience following formal motions. (WLR, 1998a, p. 1)

Perhaps the most significant has been the organization's "Charter for Leisure" first adopted in 1970 and later revised in 1979 and 2000 (WLO, 2003, p. 20). Based on advancing Article 24 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) that "everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay," the Charter emphasizes personal freedom and choice as central elements of leisure and accentuates its benefits to both the individual and the community. The Charter includes eight (8) articles that spell out leisure as a basic human right, its importance in contributing to quality of life, the benefits of leisure, the role of government and the importance of educational institutions in teaching the nature and importance of leisure (see Table 4).

A second major public policy statement known as the *São Paulo Declaration ~ Leisure in a Globalized Society* was adopted in 1998 in São Paulo, Brazil, at the 5th World Leisure Congress (WLO, 1998). The statement addresses issues related to globalization and its opportunities as well as challenges to individual and community well-being. The Declaration includes ten (10) articles which emphasize the importance of equitable and sustainable policies, diversity, the removal of barriers, freedom and integrity of individual leisure and the role of all sectors in supporting quality leisure experiences. The statement also calls for enhanced research aimed at understanding the consequences of globalization and encourages the dissemination of information regarding the forces of this phenomenon.

In 2008, a third major public policy statement was adopted by the organization. Known as the *Quebec Declaration ~ Leisure, Essential to Community Development*; this statement was a product of the 10th World Leisure Congress organized into five (5) major articles. The Declaration calls for enhancing the quality of life and well-being for individuals, advancing a community social capital and promoting democratic life. The general Declaration offers that "...leisure plays an essential role in community development: it affects the quality of life and the well-being of

Table 4. World Leisure major public policy statements.

Title	Location & organizing body	Year	Drafting committee and major contributors
Charter for Leisure	Symposium on Global Recreation Needs, Geneva, Switzerland	1970, revised in 1979 and 2000	Norman P. Miller (Chair), Drummond W. Abernathy, Julien Falize, Eugene-Marcel Guiton and Friedrich Roskam
São Paulo Declaration: “Leisure in a Globalized Society”	5th World Leisure Congress, Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC), São Paulo, and the Latin America Leisure and Recreation Association (ALATIR) São Paulo, Brazil	1998	Paul Jonson (Chair), Theo Beckers, Mike Collins, Claude Cousineau, Deb Jordan, Gerry Kenyon, Rob Lynch, Hillel Ruskin, Danilo Santos de Miranda, Robert Stebbins and Joan Westland
Québec Declaration: “Leisure, Essential to Community Development”	10th World Leisure Congress, Le Conseil québécois du loisir, Québec City, Canada	2008	André Thibault (Chair), Yves Beauregard, Mario Chamberland, Mélanie Drapeau, Véronica Gomez, Anne-Louise Hallé, Louis Jolin, André-François Lafond, Pierre Morin, Tanara Pickard, Gilles Pronovost, Gabrielle Rail, Isabelle Roy and Sonia Vaillancourt

Source: Rivers (1983). *Thomas E. Rivers: An autobiography*. Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association; A. Thibault (personal communication, February 7 2013); G. S. Kenyon (personal communication, February 10 2013); P. Jonson (personal communication, February 14, 2013); World Leisure Organization (WLO). (1998). São Paulo declaration: Leisure in a globalized society. Retrieved from <http://www.worldleisure.org/pdfs/saupaulo.pdf>.

individuals, contributes to the development of social ties and social capital and represents a place for expression and engagement in democratic life” (WLO, 2008). This Declaration calls for a commitment of individuals, communities and organizations to advance leisure and the aforementioned concerns.

Global events

In recent years, WLO has repositioned its activities to focus on the provision of events of global significance. Four major types of events have emerged including World Leisure Congresses, World Leisure EXPO, World Leisure Games and World Leisure Festivals. World Leisure Congresses are international events that bring delegates for educational programmes including world-renowned speakers, exhibitions, trade shows, educational sessions, tours and workshops. The World Leisure EXPO is a series of exhibits, special events, festivals and training programmes designed to showcase and demonstrate leisure’s potential to improve our quality of life offered every five years in Hangzhou, China. The World Leisure Games are designed to encourage participation especially by young people, both as individuals and within

teams, from around the world. Although, yet to be implemented, the World Leisure Festival event has been designed to provide an opportunity for a wide range of leisure pursuits to be on display and tried by local community and international visitors.

World Leisure Congresses

The World Leisure Congress event has been one of the most significant and important events offered by the organization. The first International Recreation Congress was held in Philadelphia, (USA) in 1956. Other World Recreation Congresses followed in Osaka and Kyoto (Japan) in 1964, The Geneva Symposium (Switzerland) in 1967, Asian Recreation in Bangalore (India) in 1969 and the European Recreation Congress in Geneva (Switzerland) in 1972 (WLRA, 1977, p. 1). The current congress format was initially adopted and implemented in 1988. The first congress was held at Lake Louise, Alberta (Canada), in 1988 and focused on the theme “Free Time, Culture and Society.” Starting in 1996, congresses were held biennially. Also, the organization sponsored a number of conferences, symposiums and workshops. For example, in 1977, an international congress on Leadership for Leisure was first held in the USA and repeated again in 1979 in Puerto Rico. Further, a Latin American regional symposium on Non-formal Education through Recreation occurred in 1979 in Venezuela (WLRA, 1980a, p. 14). In 1980, a conference on Leisure Information Networking was held in Belgium. More recently, regional conferences were held in Shanghai (China) in 2001 focused on “Social Development, Leisure and the Older Person,” and in 2005 in Malmö, Sweden, addressing the topic of “Leisure and the Youth Migrant: Identity, Integration and Community.” Of great significance was the conduct of a high-level World Leisure Forum in Hangzhou (China) in 2006. Madam Wu Yi, Vice Premier of the State Council of China, was one of two keynote speakers along with Derek Casey. She noted in her speech that leisure is the “. . . common pursuit of civilized and healthy lifestyles” (2006, p. 3).

In its current format, congresses are organized on a 2-year biennial basis. Following the initial congress held in 1988, a second congress was held in Sydney, Australia. A congress was planned for Barcelona, Spain, in 1990 but cancelled as a result of the inability to garner resources to implement the programme. Congresses followed in India (1993), Wales (1996), Brazil (1998), Spain (2000), Malaysia (2002), Australia (2004), China (2006), Canada (2008), South Korea (2010) and Italy (2012). WLO congresses are planned to be held in Mobile, Alabama, USA, in 2014 and in Durban, South Africa, in 2016. Interest in participation in the congresses has increased over the years with the high point being the 10th World Leisure Congress held in Quebec City, Canada, in 2008. That event drew over 4500 delegates. The congress was unique in that it involved the development of partnerships with allied international professional organizations in the areas of camping and tourism as well as with the Conseil Québécois du Loisir and Canadian Parks/Recreation Association. [Table 5](#) presents a listing of World Leisure Congresses’ dates, locations and themes.

World Leisure EXPO

In 2002, WLO signed a contract with the City of Hangzhou to implement a worldwide exposition (“7th World,” 2002, p. 5). This event was established to draw attention to Hangzhou as the “Oriental Capital of Leisure.” This designation had

Table 5. World Leisure Congresses.

	Date	Location	Theme
1st Congress	16–22 May 1988	Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada	Free Time, Culture and Society
2nd Congress	16–19 July 1991	Sydney, Australia	Leisure and Tourism: Social and Environmental Change
3rd Congress	5–10 December 1993	Jaipur, India	Leisure, Tourism and Environment: Issue of Human Development
4th Congress	15–19 July 1996	Cardiff, Wales, UK	Free Time and Quality of Life for the 21st Century
5th Congress	16–30 October 1998	São Paulo, Brazil	Leisure in a Globalized Society: Inclusion or Exclusion?
6th Congress	3–7 July 2000	Bilboa, Spain	Leisure and Human Development
7th Congress	21–25 October 2002	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Global Forces and Local Responses: Leisure–Culture–Sport–Tourism
8th Congress	12–17 September 2004	Brisbane, Australia	Leisure Matters
9th Congress	5–9 October 2006	Hangzhou, the People’s Republic of China	Leisure . . . Integral to Social, Capital, and Economic Development
10th Congress	6–10 October 2008	Quebec City, Canada	Leisure and Community Development
11th Congress	28 August to 2 September 2010	Chuncheon City, South Korea	Leisure and Identity
12th Congress	30 September to 3 October 2012	Rimini, Italy	Leisure and Transformation
13th Congress	6–12 September 2014	Mobile, Alabama, USA	Leisure: Enhancing the Human Condition
14th Congress	June/July 2016	Durban, South Africa	Leisure: Challenges, Choices and Consequences

been made by WLO to the City of Hangzhou to enhance its reputation worldwide. The 1st World Leisure EXPO was held in 2006 and was focused on the theme "Leisure Changes Peoples' Lives." The EXPO was staged from April to October 2006 with the main venue for the event including the World Leisure EXPO Garden and the World Leisure Fold Garden. The event was combined with the 9th World Leisure Congress, a 100-City Exhibition, the initial International World Leisure Innovation Prize, the World Leisure Consensus Project and a high level World Leisure Summit that included a presentation by the Vice Premier of China Madam Wu Yi. It was estimated that 15 million individuals attended this event.

Subsequently, WLO and the City of Hangzhou signed a second agreement to stage a 2nd World Leisure EXPO. This event occurred from September through November 2011 and was focused on the theme "Enjoy Leisure, Enjoy Life." The three main venues for the event were Xianghu Lake in the Xiaoshan District, White Horse Lake in Binjiang District and Thousand Isle Lake of Chun'an County. The EXPO featured displays from 160 cities and included 245 programmes. It was estimated that 37 million individuals attended the event.

As a result of the success of the 1st World Leisure EXPO, the City of Hangzhou and WLO decided to perpetuate the event in Hangzhou. A long-term agreement was signed that provides for the staging of the event every five (5) years. In addition, an International Leisure Development Forum is held annually, drawing together scholars and professionals from around the world to discuss research findings and best practices impacting on leisure. The success of this relationship has provided a platform to propel forward both the City of Hangzhou and WLO.

World Leisure Games

Chuncheon City, South Korea, hosted the 1st World Leisure Games in 2010. Focused on the theme of "Improving Quality of Life through Leisure Experience," the 1st World Leisure Games involved air sports, land sports and water sports. Leisure games including B3, aggressive inline skating, skateboarding, BMX, sports climbing, dance sport, inline slalom, inline marathon, water skiing, wakeboard, hanggliding, paragliding, sportfishing, JokguSport, model aircraft, B-boy dancing and billiards were featured. The event was complimented by the staging of the 11th World Leisure Congress and a Trade Show which provided a venue for displaying and promoting leisure products and services. Many indoor/outdoor leisure products, health/fitness products, sports equipment, resort promotions, corporate exhibits and local government promotions were included. The World Leisure Trade Show also included a fashion show, mime and puppet show and opportunities for participants to receive a fitness check-up including a body fat ratio analysis and physical ability evaluation.

A 2nd World Leisure Games will be hosted by Qingdao City, The People's Republic of China in 2015. The theme of the event has been designated as "Dynamic City, Colorful Life!" Planned events include extreme sports, sport climbing, obstacles roller skating, water skiing, sports dancing, street dancing, sailing, E-sports, golf, roller skating (racing track, road), horse riding, off-road vehicle track racing, powered paragliding, dragon boat racing, angling, around-the-late triathlon, body-building, aerobics and beach soccer. Games will be staged at the Qingdao Laixi Lake Aquatics Sports Center, the Qingdao Laixi Jiangshan Leisure Games Park and the Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center.

Programmes and services

True to its initial goals and objectives, WLO focused its attention and energies to providing technical assistance to organizations and agencies throughout the world. Representatives from IRA visited countries on four continents as mentioned above. “Direct personal service was given on problems of organization and specialized programmes of music, drama, sports, games, nature study and folk dancing” (IRA, 1957). In addition to its initial work in the Congo and Gaza, IRA was instrumental in providing recreation morale programme for refugees in South Vietnam. Further, the organization provided training and leadership techniques to Vietnamese who would become recreation leaders (WLRA, 1980a, p. 5).

In addition, IRA worked to assist in the establishment of national recreation associations and provide support to existing ones. For example, the organization worked in 1970 to assist in establishing the ELRA. Original countries involved in this group included Belgium, England, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland (WLRA, 1980b, p.11). The ELRA was formally established in 1972. In 1980, the organization worked to establish the Latin American Leisure and Recreation Association (ALATIR). Countries included Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Columbia, Chili, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay (WLRA, 1980a, p. 15).

World Leisure Commissions

The World Leisure’s Commission Program was initiated in the 1970s. The Commission Program is an ongoing effort to support the organization’s three current main objectives of research, information dissemination and advocacy. The Commission Program provides opportunities for individuals to join with others of similar interest to advance collective concerns on a world basis (WLO, 2013a). Two commissions – the International Commission for the Advancement of Leisure Leadership (INTERCALL) and the Commission for the Advancement of Leisure Information Exchange (INTERCALIX) – were established in 1974. These Commissions, in turn, sponsored a number of major activities including conferences (1st INTERCALL, 1977; 2nd INTERCALL Conference, 1979) and 1st International Leisure Information Conference (1980).

In 1981, the International Commission on Leisure Research was formed and subsequently sponsored the 1st Conference on Research (1984) and 2nd Conference on Research (1986). Today, there are an increasing number of commissions. The Commission on Access and Inclusion was approved the Board of Directors in 1997 and held its first meeting in Brazil in 1998. The Commission on Children and Youth is oriented to enhance leisure experiences for children and youth worldwide by creating more equitable access. The Commission on Leisure Education which emerged from INTERCALL has among its primary objectives promoting greater awareness of the significance of leisure and recreation.

The Commission on Law and Policy was established in 1998 to assist “all the citizens of the world the right to leisure” (Jonson, n.d.). The Commission on Leisure and Later Life is directed towards enhancing the role of leisure for individuals in later life including advocating for improved leisure programmes and better access to leisure experiences. The Commission on Leisure Management was established in

1987. This Commission seeks to collect, exchange and disseminate information on management policies, techniques and approaches. The Commission on Tourism and Environment has as its primary focus “to raise the awareness and understanding of tourism as a dynamic force of social and cultural change with overall sustainable impact on the environment” (Leslie, n.d.). The United Nations Commission was created in 2005 and seeks a representative from each member country of the UN. The Volunteerism Commission found in 1997 seeks to understand the relationship between volunteering and leisure (Stebbins, 2000). Finally, the Commission on Women and Gender established in 1989 exists to provide support to women practitioners, researcher and educators.

In 2002, the Commission Program was abolished at the 7th World Leisure Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. However, the programme was reestablished in 2004 at the 8th World Leisure Congress held in Brisbane, Australia. In 2008, Commissions were charged with holding working sessions to establish new goals and programmes. Today, expectations for each of the Commissions involve the following: (1) have leadership in place; (2) have a programme at the congresses; (3) commit to a 1000-word article for the *World Leisure Journal*; (4) actively engage their membership; and (5) work towards a policy statement (Bean, 2012, p. 4).

World Leisure Centers of Excellence

One of the most significant programmes of the WLO has been the establishment of postgraduate educational programmes. Initially known as World Leisure International Centers of Excellence (WICE) and today know as World Leisure Centers of Excellence, the concept emerged in 1988 at the 1st World Leisure Congress held at Lake Louise in Canada (McPherson, 1996; WLRA, 1998b). The initial programme was established at the Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN) Leeuwarden in The Netherlands. In 1990, a Memorandum of Agreement was crafted between WLRA and the institution with the first class of students enrolled in 1992 (McPherson, 1996). This programme operated from 1990 to 1997 but was dissolved in order to more effectively reflect the goals of each institution (Kamphorst, 1997).

Following the dissolving of the programme at CHN Leeuwarden, a new programme emerged in connection with Wageningen University, also located in The Netherlands. The primary individual in advancing this and the previous programme was Teus Kamphorst. According to Kamphorst, Wageningen University was chosen because it had a history of engaging international students and also a programme of recreation and programme study (Kamphorst, 1997). The programme at Wageningen was focused on leisure, tourism and the environment and grew internationally renowned experts and scholars as instructors into the programme. In fact, this was a key element of the programme as students were afforded with the opportunity to gain perspectives from faculty throughout the world and members of the WLO were afforded the opportunity to teach in the programme. The arrangement between WLO and the University of Wageningen was concluded in 2010 when the agreement between the parties was dissolved.

In 2010, two new initiatives were undertaken to establish WLCE at Vancouver Island University (VIU; Canada) and Arizona State University (ASU; USA). The programme at Vancouver Island University was established to allow students to gain a masters degree in sustainable leisure management. The programme emphasized

global perspectives and innovation and assists students in gaining knowledge of sustainable theories and practices. The same year, another programme was established at Arizona State University focusing attention towards how leisure impacts the social, cultural, economic and environmental health of communities (WLO, 2011a, p. 7). Coursework offered at ASU leads to a master's degree and a doctor of philosophy.

Other efforts to establish WLCE have occurred including negotiations with the Seoul School of Integrated Science and Technology (aSSIST), NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences and Indiana University. In fact, the WLO Board of Directors authorized the establishment of programmes as both aSSIST and NHTV Breda in 2010 and 2012, respectively. However, these programmes have not come to full fruition as of this date.

World Leisure Academy

In 2009, the WLO Board of Directors established a framework for the World Leisure Academy. "As a program of the WLO, the Academy seeks to promote leisure concerns through its advocacy, research and educational endeavors and acknowledges the contributions of researchers, educators, practitioners, and other credited with advancing leisure" (Edginton, 2010b, p. 68). The objectives of the Academy are as follows: (1) to encourage the study of the phenomena of leisure; (2) to advance knowledge related to the best professional practices found within leisure service delivery systems; (3) to serve as a interdisciplinary forum for the scholarly exchange of ideas; (4) to serve as a forum to discuss issues, provide support and share information on matters impacting on leisure; and (5) to acknowledge to the contributions of researchers, educators, practitioners and other whose contributions are recognized globally (Edginton, 2010b, p. 68).

In 2010, the World Leisure Academy held its inaugural meeting and induction ceremony at the 11th World Leisure Congress in Chuncheon, South Korea. Atara Sivan was elected as the first Chair of the World Leisure Academy, and Ricardo Uvinha was elected as the Vice Chair (Edginton, 2010a, p. 301). Individuals inducted into the academy as charter members included Jack Agrios, Cara Aichinson, Chris Auld, Derek G. Casey, Ian Cooper, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Grant Cushman, Christopher R. Edginton, Jeong Myung Gim, Geof Godbey, Elery Hamilton-Smith, Karla Henderson, Ma Huidi, Bohdan Jung, Francis Lobo, Robert Lynch, Ishwar Modi, Larry Neal, Ken Roberts, Chris Rojek, Atara Sivan, Robert Stebbins, Ricardo Uvinha and Tony Veal.

World Leisure Honors and Awards

The World Leisure Honors and Awards programme has evolved over time. In 1970, the Thomas and Ruth International Scholarship was established in honour of the founding director general and his wife. The award honours a graduate or undergraduate student and enables them to present a scholarly paper at the biennial World Leisure Congress focused on recreation, leisure, natural resource management, tourism or a related area. In the past, the awards programme included International Merit Award, Community Excellence Award and Award for Excellence

in Leadership. These awards, with the exception of the Thomas and Ruth International Scholarship, were discontinued in 1996.

Starting in 2006, a new WLO honours and awards structure was initiated. Prominent among this award structure was the development of the World Leisure International Innovation Prize Award proposed in 2000 by Emmanuel Mongon. The purpose of this award is “to recognize the most outstanding achievements in the world where a group of people have been working together to improve the quality of life through leisure” (Mongon, 2000). The award was first made at the World Leisure EXPO in 2006 held in Hangzhou, The People’s Republic of China (WLO, 2011). The prize is unique in that it recognizes organizations and their programmes which utilize “leisure as a creative solution to enhancing collectively the social, cultural, environmental and economic quality of life in an area” (WLO, 2011b). In 2005 at the World Leisure Regional Conference held in Malmö, Sweden, The Hillel Ruskin Memorial Scholar Lecture Award was conceived. This award seeks to perpetuate and recognize the contributions of the namesake of this award by sponsoring a scholar lecture focused on advancing concepts related to leisure, leisure education and leisure policy development. The award was first made at the 2008 World Leisure Congress held in Quebec City, Canada.

The Cornelius Westland Humanitarian Award honours previous World Leisure Secretary General Cor Westland who served as Secretary General from 1984 to 1996. The award “seeks to recognize an individual or organization that has made significant and sustained contributions to the world-wide leisure movement, advancing human concerns” (WLO, 2010, p. 3). Applications are evaluated on the impact of the nominee’s contributions to the leisure movement, the relevance of the contribution to solving contemporary issues and the impact of the nominee’s leadership especially as related to Cor Westland’s legacy (WLO, 2010). The award was first made in 2010 to Dicken Yung and in 2012 to Francis Lobo.

George Torkildsen served as the Chair of the WLO Board of Directors and was “the first community sports center manager in Britain and has been called the father of sport and leisure in that country,” and was a prolific writer within the field of leisure (WLO, 2010, p. 6). The George Torkildsen Literary Award honours him and his contributions to the field. Nominees are selected based on their literary contributions which advance leisure worldwide, the impact of their contributions and their insights brought to emerging trends, issues and concepts (WLO, 2010). The award was initially made in 2010 to Karla Henderson and in 2012 to Tony Veal.

World Leisure Chapters

The World Leisure Chapters programme was conceptualized in 2001 to enable individuals and groups to affiliate with the organization. The idea was to enable groups to pursue the broader goals of the organization on a local basis to meet their own particular needs and interests in advancing leisure. No mandate is made to World Leisure Chapters in terms of their programmes as they are free to engage in activities of their own choice. They are not restricted to meetings, discussion groups, public forums and/or research or advocacy projects in advancing leisure in a particular locale.

The first World Leisure Chapter was established in Taiwan in 2003 and is known as the Chinese Taipei World Leisure Chapter. Primary individual in advancing this

chapter was Prof. Horace Ho-Mu Chen. This was followed by the establishment of the China World Leisure Chapter in 2007. Dr Fu Lei provided great leadership in this initiative. In 2008, the Hong Kong World Leisure Chapter was established. Great leadership was provided by Prof Dr Atara Sivan, Ms Elizabeth Dendle and Prof Dr Lawal Marafa. The newest group to establish a World Leisure Chapter occurred in the Canadian Province of Quebec in 2008. Leadership was provided by Dr André Thibault and Daniel Caron. The Conseil Québécois du Loisir was responsible for establishing this affiliate relationship.

Becoming a World Leisure Chapter enables a group with certain rights and privileges including: (1) authorization to use a special World Leisure logo, designating the local of the chapter; (2) special recognition through the World Leisure's media including its website; (3) receiving World Leisure materials and publications in proportion to its membership; and (4) the opportunity to work directly with the World Leisure Secretariat and Programme Managers on projects of mutual interest (Edginton, 2006, p. 8).

World Leisure publications and research projects

Over time, WLO has consistently offered its membership a publication highlighting the activities of the organization as well as, in recent years, advancing research and scholarly findings. In 1958, nearly immediately after the founding of the organization, the initial publication was created known as the *IRA Bulletin*. This document provided a summary of topics of interest to the readership and encouraged individuals to offer articles and photographs. During the first several years, it was published five times a year.

As the organization changed its title from IRA to WLRA so did the name of the bulletin change from the *IRA Bulletin* to the *WLRA Bulletin*. The purpose of the publication was to keep members of the organization and affiliates "... abreast of trends, developments and new ideas in leisure and recreation around the world" (WLRA, 1980b). In 1976, the *WLRA Bulletin* changed to a magazine format (WLRA, 1976a, p. i). The document continued to be published five times a year. In 1981, the magazine was renamed the *WLRA Journal* and designated at the official publication of the WLRA. Originally the *IRA Bulletin* and subsequently named professional magazines were compiled and edited by the World Leisure Secretariat. However, in 1992, Bohdan Jung of the Institute for International Studies in Warsaw, Poland, became the editor of the journal until 1996. Afterwards, he became the managing editor of the journal until the end of 2010.

In 1999, Francis Lobo was named Editor-in-Chief. Again, the journal underwent a significant revision wherein the format was changed from a professional magazine to that of a research journal. The size of the journal was reconfigured. The intent of the journal was to publish reviewed articles that focus on leisure, recreation and related issues that impact on individuals, groups and society in general. A strict blind review process was established by using members of an editorial board (WLRA, 2000b). In 2002, Ken Roberts was appointed as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal and remained in the position until 2009. Roberts was followed by the appointment of Grant Cushman and Bob Gidlow as Co-Editors-in-Chief from 2009 until 2012. Currently, Atara Sivan serves as Editor-in-Chief. In 2010, a contract was negotiated with Routledge, a member of the Taylor and Francis Group, to assume the managing

editor's role for the journal. This arrangement provides greater visibility for the journal and enhanced revenues for the organization.

Over time, WLO has published a number of proceedings and papers. For example, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, *The First World Conference of Experts on Leadership for Leisure (USA)*; *The Second World Conference on Developing Leadership for Leisure and Recreation (Puerto Rico)*; *Symposium on Non-Formal Education Through Recreation (Venezuela)*; and *Proceedings of First International Link Conference (Belgium)* were published. More recently and continuing in this tradition of publication of conference proceedings (Thibault, 2012), the *Rimini World Leisure Congress Book of Abstracts* was published online. Other publications of note have included *Games Children Sing Around the World* (Rasmier, 1976); *Beyond Survival: A Global Survey of the Status and Role of Leisure and Recreation in Human Settlements* (WLRA, 1976b); *Playing, Living, Learning: A Worldwide Perspective on Children's Opportunities to Play* (Westland & Knight, 1982); *International Directory of Academic Institutions in Leisure, Recreation and Related Fields* (D'Amours, 1991); *Leisure in a Globalized Society* (Garcia & Lobo, 2000); *Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development ~ Hangzhou Consensus* (Jackson, 2006).

Financial strategies

Over time, WLO has had a different mix of financial support for its activities. In its early years, NRA loaned professional staff, office space and other resources to operate the organization. Its financial assistance, as well as the wealth of many dedicated persons, served to advance the organization in its early years (Rivers, 1983, p. 15).

However, from early on, the contributions of philanthropists to advancing the work of the organization were instrumental in moving its programmes and services forward. A review of the organization's budget during its first year indicates that it was established with an initial budget of \$209,266 in 1956 (WLRA, 1980a, p. 4). When contrasted with the same buying power in 2011, the budget would have been approximately \$1.7 million. Budget during the next several years increased, providing resources for travel, technical programmes and the crafting of materials and the implementation of other activities.

Following the death of Robert O. Wilder and his departure as President of WLO Board of Directors, philanthropic support for the organization diminished. Further, the transition from a philanthropic supported organization to one dependent on membership dues and fees significantly limited its fiscal resources. In fact, by the late 1990s, financial resources of the organization have been tested severely. Nearly all professional functions were carried out on a voluntary basis by members of the organization. Endowments for lifetime memberships were depleted. It was necessary to craft a new strategy to financially support the organization. That strategy has become one of cities, associations and other entities purchasing the use of the World Leisure brand as a way of aligning itself with several of the programmes and services currently offered by the organization.

The notion of WLO global events has emerged with the signing of a contract for the City of Hangzhou, The People's Republic of China, to host the 1st World Leisure EXPO. The hosting fee for this event provided a substantial gain for the organization

that has enabled it to increase its administrative footprint and public relations activities. A second strategy has been the approach taken to securing cities and their partners to host the World Leisure Congress event. In past years, revenues were divided between the host organization and World Leisure after the event had been conducted. The strategy employed at this time involves payment of a sum in advance, and it is not dependent on the number of delegates attending the event. The third strategy has been the creation of another global event known as the World Leisure Games. The 1st World Leisure Games was held in Chuncheon, South Korea, in 2010 and the 2nd will be held in Qingdao, The People's Republic of China, in 2015. Again, advanced hosting fees are required for this event. A fourth strategy has been developed, that is, the hosting of World Leisure Festivals. To this date, no contract has been secured to support this type of initiative. These strategies have placed WLO on a firmer fiscal footing, providing for the opportunity to hire fulltime staff and support other operational aspects of the organization. However, it should be pointed out that 50 years or so after the founding of the organization, the budget today is approximately the same that it was in 1956.

A review of the current, proposed budget of WLO reveals that 3% of the revenues are drawn from membership fees, 92% come from hosting fees, 3% are derived from publication royalties and 2% come from other sources (WLO, 2013b). As can be discerned from reviewing this information, it would be difficult, if not impossible to run the organization depending on membership fees alone. Over time, the WLO Board of Directors has kept the fee for membership to the organization very low in order to provide access to the organization by all those interested regardless of their economic status.

Conclusion

For over 50 years, WLO has served as an advocate promoting recreation and leisure concerns on a worldwide basis. Initially founded in 1956 as an extension of the work of the NRA, the organization has historically focused its efforts and attention on providing information, leadership and technical assistance to countries throughout the world. In its founding, the organization drew together a number of professionals, industrial leaders, government officials and philanthropists with key interest in advancing recreation and leisure concerns on a worldwide basis. Initially located in New York City, the organization tied a number of its efforts and activities directly to the UN.

Worldwide activities included travel by members of the organization to visit key leaders in countries throughout the world. Other early programmes included providing technical assistance in selected programme areas such as folk dance. Still further, other programmes of significance included assisting Brazil, Pakistan and Taiwan in organizing national recreation associations. A number of study tours and exchange programmes also were hallmarks of early efforts of the organization. The organization's volunteer field service programme saw a large number of representatives providing services throughout the world. Assistance in support of UN troops in Gaza and the Belgian Congo drew praise from US Presidents and international officials.

For nearly 20 years, Thomas Rivers served as Director General of the organization (1956–1974). He was followed by William Cunningham (1974–1980); Nelson

Melendez (1980–1984); Cor Westland (1984–1996); Gerald Kenyon (1996–2004); and Christopher Edginton (2004–present). The World Leisure Secretariat was moved to Ottawa, Canada, upon the appointment of Cor Westland as Secretary General. In turn, the Secretariat again was moved to Alberta and then British Columbia (Canada) during the tenure of Gerald Kenyon as Secretary General. Currently, the Secretary General is located in Cedar Falls, Iowa (USA), at the University of Northern Iowa. Furthermore, individuals such as Lord Luke of Pavenham, Robert O. Wilder and Derek Casey have provided excellent leadership to the organization over time, serving in the role of President or Chair of the Board of Directors.

In recent years, emphasis has been placed on financially stabilizing the organization via the development of global events such as the World Leisure EXPO, World Leisure Games and World Leisure Festival programme. It was estimated that 37 million individuals attended the event held in Hangzhou, The People's Republic of China in 2011. These events have provided significant resources to the organization that have enabled it to add additional professional staff and establish a reserve fund to ensure its future viability. Attendance at World Leisure congresses has experienced some variability over the years with the peak occurring in Quebec City (Canada) where nearly 4500 delegates from 70 countries registered for the event.

WLO has a rich history tied to advancing recreation and leisure concerns on a worldwide basis. Although there have been periods of challenge faced by the organization, its future seems secure. There continues to be strong interest in promoting leisure as integral to social, cultural and economic development. Quality of life and the livability of communities continue to resonate throughout the world. Human happiness is increasingly a topic that is linked in meaning and relevant fashion to freedom and, in turn, leisure.

As Thomas Rivers reminds us all,

... leisure offers the opportunity for life enrichment... without peace, there can be no leisure... recreation leaders have an unparalleled opportunity and a professional obligation to explore every possible means of building better understanding between peoples... no other field of human interest offers a more promising opportunity than helping to meet the aspirations of people... global cooperation and team work in this field would help to keep the peace... [WLO]... provides a medium through which the leisure time leadership of the world can work. (Rivers, 1983, p. 74–75)

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his appreciation to Ginnell Harlin, Xiafei Nie, Johanna Smith and Carol Bean for their assistance in researching and in the preparation of this article.

References

- Bean, C. (2012). *Minutes of meeting #025 of the Executive Committee of World Leisure, Rimini, Italy*. Meeting Minutes. Retrieved from the World Leisure Organization archives.
- Casey, D. (2006). Memorial service for Dr. George Torkildsen. *World Leisure Journal*, 48(1), 3–4. doi:10.1080/04419057.2006.9674424
- Casey, D. (2008). Cornelis Westland: A tribute. *Commemoration Ceremony: Lieutenant Colonel Westland* [CD]. Quebec City: Complexe Militaire Saint-Malo.
- D'Amours, M. (1991). *International directory of academic institutions in leisure, recreation and related fields*. Quebec City: World Leisure and Recreation Association.

- Edginton, C. R. (2005). Gerald S. Kenyon, secretary general, World Leisure 1996–2004: A remarkable record of leadership. *World Leisure Journal*, 47(1), 1–2. doi:10.1080/04419057.2005.9674379
- Edginton, C. R. (2006). Establishing a World Leisure Chapter in Korea. *Journal of Leisure and Recreation Studies*, 7(1), 1–11.
- Edginton, C. R. (2007). From the World Leisure and Recreation Association, Inc. to the World Leisure Organization, Inc.: A name change for the organization. *World Leisure Journal*, 49(2), 106–107. doi:10.1080/04419057.2007.9674492
- Edginton, C. R. (2010a). ChunCheon 2010 11th World Leisure Congress and 1st World Leisure Games: Spectacular, successful, and historical events. *World Leisure Journal*, 52(4), 300–301. doi:10.1080/04419057.2010.9674656
- Edginton, C. R. (2010b). World Leisure Academy established. *World Leisure Journal*, 52(1), 68–69. doi:10.1080/04419057.2010.9674624
- Edginton, C. R., & Chen, P. (2008). *Leisure as transformation*. Champaign, IL: Sagamore.
- Edginton, C. R., & Coles, R. (2009). *World Leisure Organization – Leisure: Enhancing the human condition: Priorities & strategies 2009–2014*. Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Organization.
- Edginton, C. R., DeGraaf, D. G., Dieser, R. B., & Edginton, S. R. (2006). *Leisure and life satisfaction: Foundational perspectives* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Edginton, C. R., & Jalloh, A. (2011). The United Nations system and World Leisure: An overview. *World Leisure Journal*, 53(4), 332–335. doi:10.1080/04419057.2011.630791
- Garcia, E. B., & Lobo, F. (2000). *Leisure in a globalized society*. São Paulo: World Leisure and Recreation Association.
- Howard, D. R., & Crompton, J. L. (1980). *Financing, managing, and marketing recreation and park resource*. Dubuque, IA: W.C. Brown.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1956). *Articles of incorporation*. New York, NY: Author.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1957). *A message from his royal highness: The Prince Philip [Pamphlet]*. New York, NY: Author.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1963). John A. Nesbitt deputy director general appointed. *IRA Bulletin*, 6(4), 3.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1963–64). *Organizational overview*. New York, NY: Author.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1968). IRA appoints deputy director general. *IRA Bulletin*, 11(3), 6.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1969). IRA appoints director of development. *IRA Bulletin*, 12(2), 3.
- International Recreation Association (IRA). (1971). IRA appoints new deputy director. *IRA Bulletin*, 14(1), 3.
- Jackson, E. L. (2006). *Leisure and the quality of life: Impacts on social, economic and cultural development – Hangzhou consensus*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press.
- Jonson, P. (n.d.). *Submission to establish a new WLRA commission: Law commission*. World Leisure Organization Archives (File 181-1/L2). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- Kamphorst, T. J. (1997). [Letter to WLRA board member]. World Leisure Organization Archives (File 320-1/W1). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- Kenyon, G. S. (1996). *World leisure and recreation towards 2001*. A paper presented at the 4th World Leisure Congress, Cardiff, Wales.
- Leslie, D. (n.d.). *Proposal: WLRA commission on tourism and the environment*. World Leisure Organization Archives (File181-1/T1). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- McPherson, B. (1996). *External review*. World Leisure Organization Archives (File 320-1/W1-10). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- Melendez, N. (1980). In memoriam. *WLRA Bulletin*, 22(6), i.
- Mongon, E. (2000). *World Leisure Prize*. World Leisure Organization archives (File 160-2). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- Rasmier, P. (1976). *Games children sing around the world*. Meville, NY: Belwin Mills.
- Rivers, T. E. (1972). *International recreation association annual meeting of corporate members*. Meeting Minutes. Retrieved from the World Leisure Organization Archives.

- Rivers, T. E. (1983). *Thomas E. Rivers: An autobiography*. Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Sage, G. H. (1987). Pursuit of knowledge in sociology of sport: Issues and prospects. *Quest*, 39(3), 255–281.
- Sessoms, D., & Stevenson, J. (1981). *Leadership and group dynamics in recreation services*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2000). *Application for full commission status: Volunteerism commission (pro tem)*. World Leisure Organization Archives (File181-1/V1). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- Stivers, C. (2000). *Bureau men, settlement women: Constructing public administration in the progressive era*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Thibault, A. (2012). Rimini World Leisure Congress book of abstracts. [worldleisureorganization.org](http://www.worldleisure.org). Retrieved from <http://www.worldleisure.org/uploads/news/fdcd25da20e696781019e12ab7584565.pdf>
- United Nations. (1948). *The universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>
- Uvinha, R. R. (2010). Is leisure studies “ethnocentric”? A view from São Paulo, Brazil. *World Leisure Journal*, 52(3), 191–195. doi:10.1080/04419057.2010.9728281
- Westland, C. (1987). IRA-WLRA 1956–1986. Thirty years of service: An historical perspective. *World Leisure and Recreation*, 29, 10–13.
- Westland, C. (1995). Robert Wilder. *World Leisure and Recreation Association Newsletter*, 9(2), 1.
- Westland, C., & Knight, J. (1982). *Playing, living, learning: A worldwide perspective on children's opportunities to play*. New York, NY: World Leisure Recreation Association.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1974a). WLRA appoints new director of development. *WLRA Bulletin*, 17(3), 2.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1974b). Jane Wallace joins WLRA staff. *WLRA Bulletin*, 17(4), 3.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1974c). Dr. T. E. Rivers retired as WLRA director general. *WLRA Bulletin*, 17(5), 4.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1976a). Editors note. *WLRA Bulletin*, 19(2), i.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1976b). *Beyond survival: A global survey of the status and role of leisure and recreation in human settlements*. New York, NY: Author.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1977). Dr. Thomas E. Rivers, founder and 18 years director general of WLRA, has died. *WLRA Bulletin*, 22(4), 1–2.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1980a). *In brief: A statement of the association's purpose including an abbreviated account of its history of science*. New York, NY: Author.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1980b). *WLRA in action: Publication [Pamphlet]*. New York, NY: Author.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1997). Herman P. Markell appointed as WLRA president. *World Leisure and Recreation*, 11(2).
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (1998a). *Policy and guidelines for WLRA public statements*. Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association. (1998b). *WLRA international centers of excellence (WLCE): Terms of reference*. World Leisure Organization Archives (File 320-1/W1). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (2000a). Appointment to the board of directors. *World Leisure Newsletter*, 14(2), 17.
- World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA). (2000b). *Call for proposals: World Leisure and Recreation – Re-launching in 2000*. World Leisure Organization Archives (File 350-1/J4). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2011). World leisure international innovation prize. Retrieved from [http://www.worldleisure.org/template.php?id=151&World + Leisure + International + Innovation + Prize](http://www.worldleisure.org/template.php?id=151&World+Leisure+International+Innovation+Prize)

- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (1998). *São Paulo declaration: Leisure in a globalized society*. Retrieved from <http://www.worldleisure.org/pdfs/saupaulo.pdf>
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2003). *A world fit for living: World leisure priorities for people 2004–2008*. Okanagan Falls: Author.
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2008). *Quebec declaration: Leisure, essential to community development*. Retrieved from <http://www.worldleisure.org/pdfs/quebec.pdf>
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2010). *Honors and awards*. Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2011a). *Annual report 2010*. Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2011b). *World Leisure Organization position descriptions*. Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2013a). *Commissions*. Retrieved from <http://www.worldleisure.org/template.php?id=133&About+Commissions>
- World Leisure Organization (WLO). (2013b). *World Leisure Organization 2013 proposed budget*. Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.
- Wu, Y. (2006). Better Leisure, Better Live. *World Leisure Journal*, 48(3), 3–5.
- 7th World Leisure Congress: Programme book. (2002). World Leisure Organization Archives (Box 9). Cedar Falls, IA: World Leisure Secretariat.

Appendix 1. Chronology of World Leisure historical events

Year	Event(s)
1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IRA incorporated under the laws of the state of New York on 3 October ● Headquarters established, UN Plaza, New York City ● Lord Luke of Pavenham (UK) Chair, Board of Directors ● Thomas E. Rivers (USA) named Director General, Robert R. Gamble named Director General
1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UN request services in support of Emergency Forces in Gaza ● US Department of State supports multinational leader exchange programme in 44 countries ● IRA assists in organizing professional recreation associations, Brazil and Pakistan
1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cooperative Community Recreation Exchange Program initiated, leaders from 12 countries visit USA cities ● <i>IRA Bulletin</i> established, first international publication focused on recreation
1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer Field Service program expanded, 20 representatives providing service worldwide ● UN's ECOSOC request support in developing an international directory of national parks ● Olympic Games Preparation Project supported by the US Department of State involves leaders from 14 countries
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Symposium on leisure "An Opportunity for World Service" organized at Springfield College, features delegates worldwide ● Cooperates with UNESCO to offer training course for youth in South America
1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IRA assists in the organization of professional association in India ● Published <i>On the Mend – A Guide To Recreation in Hospitals</i>
1962	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ECOSOC grants nongovernmental affiliate status to IRA ● Support provided to Thailand to assisting the development of a national Recreation Service System ● Cooperative Recreation Cultural Exchange Program finds Latin Americans visiting USA cities

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Year	Event(s)
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consultants visit India and Thailand to support the development of National Recreation Association ● Rivers visits multiple Asian countries including Japan, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand ● Cultural exchange project crafted for individuals from Latin America and Iran ● John A. Nesbitt is appointed Deputy Director General
1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Olympics Games Preparation Project supported by the US Department of State involves leaders from 12 countries ● Leadership training consultant assists the University of Brussels ● IRA assists in the organization of National Recreation Association in Taiwan ● IRA Bulletin offered in Spanish ● The “global view of recreation” published in three languages reporting on services in 29 countries ● IRA and the National Recreation Association of Japan cooperatively organized the 1964 World Recreation Congress held in Tokyo
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IRA Board Member Alex Qualson-Sackey (Africa) is elected President of the 19th Session of the UN General Assembly ● 1st International radio broadcast on recreation service to 150 countries ● Assist in the establishment of the National Recreation Association of Columbia
1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>IRA Bulletin</i> published in Spanish and French ● Recreation programme consultants work in Greece, Iran, Iraq, Italy and Turkey ● Recreation Leadership Training Program conducted for refugees in South Vietnam ● Cooperative efforts with the International Alliance of Tourism
1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitated an exchange of USA youth from USA to European countries in a youth recreation worker exchange programme ● Assist in the organization of a national recreation association in South Korea ● Expanded recreation morale programme for refugees in South Vietnam ● Established a Geneva Center as a meeting place for leaders, events and library resources ● <i>1st International Basic Bibliography</i> on play, recreation and leisure created ● Symposium on Global Recreation Needs organized, Geneva, Switzerland
1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebrated UN’s International Year for Human Rights with a resolution of support ● Expanded recreation service programme for Vietnam refugees ● Judson Chrisney appointed Deputy Director General
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist in planning for Asian Recreation Congress, Bangalore, India ● Assisted in promoting the newly formed Special Olympics programme ● Robert M. Zawoluk is appointed Director of Development
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established affiliate relationship with the Recreation Association of Australia ● <i>Charter for Leisure</i> crafted ● Organized European Festival of Recreation ● Prepared report on recreation in the Pan-African region
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assisted in the formulation of Israeli National Recreation Association ● Assisted in the organization of the New Zealand Recreation Society ● Joined Columbia University USA in the creation of a programme “Leisure Education, Recreation and Related Special Education” ● William “Bill” Cunningham is appointed Deputy Director General

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Year	Event(s)
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Robert O. Wilder (USA) President, Board of Directors ● Formed the European Regional Leisure and Recreation Association ● Organized Canadian/USA Recreation Exchange project enabling Canadian professionals to visit US recreation programmes in 25 cities
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participated in the UN Conference on the Environment, Stockholm, Sweden ● IRA rebranded World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA) ● Thomas & Ruth Rivers Scholarship established ● Sponsored International Recreation Conference, Brussels, Belgium ● Participated in the governing council of the UN Environmental programme ● Creates guidelines for municipal recreation programmes in Brazilian cities
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thomas Rivers retires after 60 years of service ● William Cunningham (USA) named Executive Director ● <i>Basic Biography on Play</i> published ● Study tour of Soviet Union organized ● INTERCALL and INTERCALIX Commissions established ● David Barnebl is appointed Director of Development ● Jane Wallace is appointed General Information Services Director
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IRA participates in the 1st World Congress on Recreation for Youth, Mexico ● The global status of leisure studied for UN's HABITAT Conference ● Published <i>Games Children Sing Around the World</i>
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Published <i>Beyond Survival ~ A World Wide Study of Recreation in Human Settlements</i> ● Published <i>Leisure and Recreation in Human Settlements ~ A Global Survey</i> ● Sponsored a symposium on "Recreation and Human Settlements," HABITAT Forum, Vancouver, Canada
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● INTERCALL organizes 1st World Conference on Experts on Leadership for Leisure ● Thomas Rivers passes away at the age of 85
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study tour of Denmark, Sweden and Norway organized ● INTERCALL and ELRA representatives meet to discuss leisure training in Europe ● WLRA works with Japanese associations to sponsor an International Conference for the Advancement of Leisure and Recreation Studies ● Published <i>Proceedings and Papers of the 1st World Congress on Leadership for Leisure</i>
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizes 1st Latin American Regional Symposium on "Non-Formal Education Through Recreation" ● INTERCALL sponsors 2nd World Leisure Congress on Experts on Leadership for Leisure ● Revised <i>Charter for Leisure</i>
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nelson Melendez (Puerto Rico) is named Executive Director ● Organized 1st International Leisure Information Network Conference ● Published <i>International Directory of Leisure Information Resource Centers</i> ● Assisted in the establishment of a Latin American Leisure and Recreation Association (ALATIR) ● <i>WLRA Journal</i> replaces the <i>IRA Bulletin</i>
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLRA 25th Anniversary Celebration, Switzerland ● World Leisure Commission on Research established ● Launched <i>Leisure, Recreation and Tourism Abstracts</i> ● Published <i>Non-formal Education Through Recreation</i>

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Year	Event(s)
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducted International Symposium on Leisure and Aging at UN HQ ● Published <i>Playing, Living and Learning</i>
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World Leisure Commission on Leisure Education established ● Developed a governing agreement between ELRA and WLRA ● Published <i>Leisure and Aging: An International Perspective</i>
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cor Westland (Canada) is named Secretary General ● World Leisure Secretariat moved to Ottawa, Canada ● ALATIR establishes Secretariat in Puerto Rico ● WLRA sponsors International Symposium on Sports for All ● WLRA adopts a new constitution establishing a Council of Governors, Information Policy
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1st World Conference of the Commission on Research, France ● New magazine <i>World Leisure and Recreation</i> established ● Sponsors an International Symposium on Leisure ● Commission on Information publishes first newsletter ● Thomas & Ruth Rivers International Scholarship initiated with support from the National Recreation Foundation
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Published <i>International Director of Academic Institutions in Leisure, Recreation and Related Fields</i> ● Participates in international conferences in Brazil, Israel, Argentina, Japan and Canada ● 2nd World Conference of the Commission on Research, Brazil
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World Leisure Commission on Leisure Management established
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1st World Leisure Congress, "Free Time, Culture and Society," Lake Louise, Canada ● Task force on AIDS/SIDA established ● Task force on Women established
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World Leisure International Center of Excellence (WICE) established at the Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN) Leeuwarden; 1st class starts in 1992 (1990–1997)
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd World Leisure Congress, "Leisure and Tourism: Social & Environmental Change"
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Task force on People with Disabilities established
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3rd World Leisure Congress, "Leisure, Tourism & Environment: Issue for Human Development," Jaipur, India
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Christina Quijano-Caballero (Switzerland) Acting President, Board of Directors
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gerald Kenyon (Canada) is named Secretary General ● 4th World Leisure Congress, "Free Time and Quality of Life for the 21st Century," Cardiff, UK ● World Leisure Awards programme ~ International Merit Award, Community Excellence Award and Award for Excellence in Leadership discontinued
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Herman P. Markell (USA) President, Board of Directors ● WICE relocated to the University of Wageningen (1997–2010) ● World Leisure Commission on Access and Inclusion established ● World Leisure Commission on Volunteerism established ● World Leisure Commission on Women and Gender established ● World Leisure Commission on Tourism and the Environment established ● World Leisure Commission on Leisure in Later Life established ● World Leisure Commission on Law established

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Year	Event(s)
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5th World Leisure Congress, “Leisure in a Globalized Society: Inclusion or Exclusion?” São Paulo, Brazil ● <i>Leisure in a Globalized Society ~ The São Paulo Declaration</i> adopted
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Francis Lobo is named Editor of the <i>World Leisure Journal</i>
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● George Torkildsen (UK) President, Board of Directors ● New “block” logo and color scheme adopted ● 6th World Leisure Congress, “Leisure & Human Development,” Balboa, Spain ● Published <i>Leisure in a Globalized Society</i> ● World Leisure Prize proposed ● World Leisure Commission on Children and Youth established
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 7th World Leisure Congress, “Global Forces & Local Responses: Leisure–Culture–Sport–Tourism,” Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ● World Leisure Commissions programme abandoned ● Ken Roberts is named Editor of the <i>World Leisure Journal</i>
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLRA strategic plan <i>A world fit for living: World leisure priorities for people 2004–2008</i> adopted ● Chinese Taipei World Leisure Chapter established
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 8th World Leisure Congress, “Leisure Matters,” Brisbane, Australia ● Derek Casey (UK) Chair, Board of Directors ● Christopher Edginton (USA) is named Secretary General ● World Leisure Commissions programme reinstated
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World Leisure Regional Conference, “Leisure and the Young Migrant: Identity, Integration and Community,” Malmö, Sweden
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Published <i>Leisure and the Quality of Life: Impacts on Social, Economic and Cultural Development ~ Hangzhou Consensus</i> ● 9th World Leisure Congress, “Integral to Social, Capital, and Economic Development,” Hangzhou, PRC ● 1st World Leisure EXPO, Hangzhou, PRC ● 1st World Leisure International Innovation Prizes awarded ● World Leisure Commission on United Nations established
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLRA rebranded World Leisure Organization (WLO) ● China World Leisure Chapter established
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10th World Leisure Congress, “Leisure and Community Development,” Quebec City, Canada ● Leisure, Essential to Community Development ~ The Quebec Declaration adopted ● Hillel Ruskin Memorial Scholar Lecture Award established and awarded ● Hong Kong World Leisure Chapter established ● World Leisure Commission on Health Promotion and Disease proposed
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLO strategic plan <i>Leisure: Enhancing the Human Condition ~ Priorities & Strategies 2009–2014</i> adopted ● Quebec City World Leisure Chapter established ● Grant Cushman and Robert Gidlow are named Co-Editors of the <i>World Leisure Journal</i> ● WLO signs long-term agreement with Hangzhou, PRC, to continue World Leisure EXPOS

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Year	Event(s)
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 11th World Leisure Congress, “Leisure & Identity,” Chuncheon City, South Korea ● 1st World Leisure Games implemented ● World Leisure Future Leaders programme established ● Cornelius Westland Humanitarian Award established and awarded ● George Torkildsen Literary Award established and awarded ● WICE agreement with University of Wageningen concluded ● Vancouver Island University (Canada) established as a World Leisure Center of Excellence offering a masters degree in Sustainable Leisure Management ● Arizona State University (USA) established as a World Leisure Center of Excellence offering a master’s and doctorate degree in Leisure and Community Development
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2nd World Leisure EXPO, Hangzhou, PRC ● Bohdan Jung concludes multiple decade service to WLO as Managing Editor of the <i>World Leisure Journal</i> ● WLO signs contract with the Taylor & Francis Group to serve as the Managing Editor of the <i>World Leisure Journal</i>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12th World Leisure Congress, “Transforming Cities, Transforming Leisure,” Rimini, Italy ● 2nd World Leisure Games Contract signed with Qingdao, The People’s Republic of China ~ programme to be implemented in 2015

Source: Adapted from Author (ca 1980). WLRA in brief: A statement of the association’s purpose including an abbreviated account of its history of service. World Leisure Organization Archives (Box 2). World Leisure Organization, Cedar Falls, Iowa, USA; Westland (1987). I.R.A. – W.L.R.A. 1956–1986 Thirty Years of Service: An Historical Perspective. *World Leisure and Recreation Association* 9–13.