

SPOTLIGHT—Ed Clark, Director of Transportation, St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.

Each SPOTLIGHT edition highlights one of our many energetic Florida RTAP transit professionals and allows these individuals to introduce themselves in their own words. In this issue, the SPOTLIGHT is on Ed Clark, Director of Transportation, St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.



Name: Ed Clark

Title: Director of Transportation, St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.

Birthplace: Irvington, New Jersey

Education: BS Zoology, Florida Atlantic University, 1974; Santa Rosa Ranger Academy, Santa Rosa Community College, 1990; and Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, 1994.

Professional History: Ed Clark is currently the Director of Transportation at St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc. (SJCCOA) This agency is the Community Transportation Coordinator for St. Johns County and is contracted by the county to provide public transportation including paratransit and deviated fixed route service. St. Johns County is comprised of both small urban and a large percentage of rural area, the county seat is St. Augustine, Americas oldest continuously settled European established city.

Before coming to SJCCOA in 2013, Ed retired as an award winning Chief Ranger in the National Park Service. This career took him to permanent assignments in 6 national parks and many temporary assignments throughout the country. Prior to joining the National Park Service he worked for almost 10 years at Florida Power and Light Company as a planner and construction services engineer. His professional career began in the sciences teaching college and doing research in animal behavior and aquaculture.

Years Working with Current Agency: 3 years

Years Working in Transit Industry: 3 years

Biggest Challenge Working in Paratransit: Continuing to provide high quality community service in the face of the impacts of Medicaid Reform. The loss of funding seriously affected our programs and worse yet adversely affected the people who knew and trusted us to transport them to their

medical appointments who now have to ride with other providers.

Personal Benefit Working in Paratransit: Working in paratransit has been one of the more routinely heartwarming ways of dedicating my life to public service. On a daily basis I go home knowing that hundreds of life enhancing trips took place due to the efforts of the great people I work with.

Professional Philosophy: I believe it's my job to lead, not just manage. As such I have to communicate a vision of what our mission is and ensure that our people have all the resources they need to succeed in that mission.

Professional Goal: St. Johns County is at a turning point with respect to transit. We have to move beyond providing reasonable geographic coverage of the county. While we have been successful in doing so and providing reasonably good transit options for the transportation disadvantaged, we must do more. We have to diversify our funding streams so that we can provide 7-day service with longer hours, as well as bus routes that have shorter headways and more frequency. By doing this we will diversify our customer base by attracting choice riders and at the same time greatly enhance the quality/quantity of the service we offer our core TD customer base.

Personal Background: I have a grown son, a former Marine, who works for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's law enforcement branch doing IT and program management work. I live in a small, rural airport community and am lucky enough to keep my vintage airplane in a hangar behind my house so I can go flying regularly. Along with that I raise chickens and have two cats...the cats grudgingly allow me to sleep in "their" bed, after all they figure they rescued me. Along with flying I enjoy shooting, biking, hiking, kayaking, and rock climbing.

Childhood Amition: I'm lucky to have pursued my childhood ambition of spending my adult life working in public service which started right out of high school when I entered the service.

Inspiration: I have always been inspired by those who display honor, integrity and courage in their lives despite the difficulties they face.