We congratulate Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce president Mike Quaintance on accepting his new role as a full professor at Keiser University and thank him for his years of service to the Cape Chamber, which saw unprecedented growth, the start-up of important leadership programs and expansion of other events in his 18 years as leader.

Quaintance, 57, will leave his position effective April 15. Quaintance gave the Chamber an identity and face not only in Cape Coral but throughout Southwest Florida. His greatest achievements came in the area "near and dear to his heart" — leadership.

In building on the already successful Cape Leadership program, Quaintance created Advanced Leadership and also was instrumental in the development of the Junior Leadership program. Advanced Leadership took what was learned in leadership and provided enhanced leadership skills, especially in problem solving. Junior Leadership was created to engage high school students in what was happening within their community and provide potential workforce opportunities once their academic careers were completed.

The new leadership programs also inspired him to go back to school. He received his associate's degree in 2005, his bachelor's in 2008 and master's in 2011. He is working toward a doctoral degree, which he will finish in 2016. At Keiser, he also will take on community outreach responsibilities.
Recognizing the importance of becoming involved with decisions made in Tallahassee and their impact here, Quaintance also started Cape Coral Days, an annual three-day trip to the state capital, where participants meet with local legislators and other prominent Florida leaders to learn more about the issues. That event has since become known as Southwest Florida Days and involves many groups throughout the region.

During Quaintance’s presidency, membership climbed from about 500 when he took over from Doug Lockhard in May 1997, to a high of 1,068 during tremendous economic growth in the mid-2000s to a membership of about 730 today.

Quaintance and his staff, plus countless volunteers, also expanded and improved the Holiday Festival of Lights in December as well as the July Fourth celebration, Red, White & Boom, moving the event from Tarpon Point to the foot of the Cape Coral bridge on Cape Coral Parkway in 2000. The event has become the biggest Independence Day event in the area.

The chamber also purchased the building where it does business near the Cape bridge in 1999 from the Southwest Florida Chamber, and paid off the note on the building last year.

Our best to Quaintance and to the Chamber board of directors as they begin the search for his successor.