

ARKANSAS INSURANCE
HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2026 INDUCTEE

Victor A. Puleo Jr.

PH.D., CIC, CCI



LIFE

April 22, 1964 – January 3, 2025

HOMETOWN

Jacksonville, Florida

UCA FACULTY

Fourteen and a half years, from
2003

BUTLER UNIVERSITY

Davey Endowed Chair, from
2018

A CAREER IN TEACHING

Victor Puleo Jr. was born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Risk Management & Insurance from Florida State University, then worked as Marketing Director for American Guardian Life Insurance Company, before returning to Florida State University to enroll in their doctoral program in Risk Management and Insurance.

Dr. Puleo began teaching at Appalachian State University while completing his Ph.D. dissertation and taught there for four years before joining the faculty of the College of Charleston, where he taught for five years. In 2003, he joined the faculty of the College of Business at UCA, where he taught for fourteen and a half years. In January 2018, Dr. Puleo was enticed away from UCA by the offer of an endowed chair in risk management at Butler University.

The following are a few examples of contributions Dr. Puleo made to advance the role of insurance and improve the lives of many Arkansans.

LEADERSHIP AT UCA

The Insurance & Risk Management major was the first major in the College of Business to include for-credit internships in its curriculum. When Dr. Puleo joined the

faculty, he volunteered to manage the insurance internship program.

Dr. Puleo's success finding students' internships caught the attention of the Dean of the College of Business, who offered him an appointment to create and direct an internship program for the entire college. Within two years, participation in for-credit internships in the College of Business went from 10–12 in the insurance major to over 100 college wide. At the next AACSB reaccreditation, the internship program was cited as being one of UCA's outstanding accomplishments.

Dr. Puleo was instrumental in getting a Gamma Iota Sigma chapter at UCA. Gamma Iota Sigma is the international collegiate fraternal organization organized to promote student interest in insurance as a career. Gamma Iota Sigma officially chartered the Alpha Psi Chapter at the University of Central Arkansas with 43 charter members on October 8, 2005.

Dr. Puleo was also responsible for getting Personal Financial Planning added to UCA's insurance major. He co-authored a grant request, and UCA was awarded \$75,000 from the State Farm Foundation to fund the creation of the Personal Financial Planning track in the Insurance & Risk Management major. This track was well received, and many

graduates are working in the life, health, and financial services industry. Several graduates of that program now operate successful financial planning practices.

Another of Dr. Puleo's major contributions resulted from his appointment to UCA's Employee Benefits Advisory Committee. Because of his extensive knowledge of group health insurance, he was able to provide guidance as UCA moved from a fully insured group health insurance program to a self-insured program that allowed expansion of health insurance benefits while controlling costs.

— LEADERSHIP AT BUTLER UNIVERSITY

In January 2018, Dr. Puleo became the chairholder of the Davey Endowed Chair of Risk Management and Insurance at Butler University. He was also the Academic Director for Butler's Master of Science in Risk & Insurance, chairman of the Risk Management & Insurance Department, and faculty advisor for Butler's Gamma Iota Sigma chapter.

Dr. Puleo was cited as a pillar of the Risk Management & Insurance department, where he helped guide students through their academic careers and into the professional world. His achievements and expertise in the Risk Management & Insurance field were unmatched, and his dedication to teaching made him a perfect find for the Butler community.

— INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Dr. Puleo lent his expertise on individual and group health insurance to assist the Arkansas Department of Insurance with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act in Arkansas. He was the lead investigator on a study funded by the Arkansas Department of Insurance that provided the Arkansas Health Benefits Exchange Partnership's Plan Management Committee with information about competition in the health insurance market, and the health insurers likely to participate in the Arkansas Insurance Exchange. Dr. Puleo was frequently called on by the Arkansas Plan Management Advisory Committee to provide advice on health benefits, and competition in the Arkansas health insurance arena.

Many knew Dr. Puleo through his work with the Risk & Insurance Education Alliance's Certified Insurance Counselor program, where he served as an Educational Consultant, National Faculty Member, member of the Board of Directors of their Research Academy, and

Academic Director for Life, Health, and Employee Benefits. He was proud of UCA's participation in the Alliance's University Associate Certified Insurance Counselor (UACIC) program, that allows students to earn two parts of the prestigious Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC) designation.

In March 2011 Dr. Bill Hold, President & CEO of the Risk & Insurance Education Alliance, was the featured speaker at the very first UACIC conferment in the nation. More than 200 people witnessed the conferment of the UACIC designation on seven UCA students at a banquet in McCastlain Hall.

— ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN HOBBIES

Dr. Puleo's hobby was fishing. While at the College of Charleston he took his hobby to a whole new level. With the help of a mentor he learned to fish for redfish, and got good at it. So good that he was invited to participate in a Pro-Am tournament. That led to him being invited to join a professional fishing team. After he moved to Arkansas, redfish tournaments eventually lost their luster, and as his responsibilities at UCA grew, he gave up professional fishing. He did volunteer to serve as the first faculty advisor for the UCA Bass Fishing Club, where he helped the club become a Registered Student Organization and qualify for funds to pay tournament registration fees.

— COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

Dr. Puleo lost his battle with cancer on January 3, 2025. At his memorial service at Butler University, Craig Caldwell, Dean of the Lacy School of Business, spoke of Dr. Puleo's ambition and dedication to his work, and how his work was driven by a call to support others.

Dr. Puleo will always be remembered for his profound impact on the industry, his unwavering commitment to excellence, and his lifelong dedication to helping others make a better life for themselves and their community.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Puleo's lasting legacy includes his humility and deep passion for diversity, inclusivity, and kindness to everyone who crossed his path. He genuinely cared about others, as evidenced by his years-long commitment to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, CARE Animal Rescue, and diversity programs at the National Cathedral.

