

**Kelly McKibben promotes well-being by teaching yoga therapy classes
for vitally retired baby boomers at OLLI and beyond! (continued)**

Kelly grew up in Connecticut and studied psychology and art history at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, graduating in 1986. For six years she worked as a headhunter in Boston successfully matching her clients with optimal employment. But the stress of corporate life led her in another direction. In 1990 she began studying pastoral care at Andover Newton Theological Seminary outside of Boston. At this time she also began her own yoga practice.

Within a few years, Kelly was seeking to evolve her holistic lifestyle and accepted an opportunity to move to Hawaii where she practiced advocacy for persons with disabilities for several years. In 1994 she took a break from her job in Hawaii and went to the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, MA, and became formally certified as a yoga teacher. She then returned to Honolulu where she began teaching yoga part-time.

After enjoying a total of six years in Hawaii, she and her husband, Greg, sought a balance between the 'aloha spirit' of the islands and the seasonal beauty of New England. They moved to the Shangri-La of Asheville, NC. Kelly returned to Kripalu Center in 2000 and completed her professional level training as an instructor of yoga therapy in order to teach a variety of yoga classes, including yoga therapy classes, full time in Asheville.

In 2001, the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement (now called OLLI at UNC Asheville) was in its infancy. There was no Reuter Center back then and, because of limited classroom space, Kelly sometimes taught yoga classes in the UNCA gymnasium's dance studio, racket ball and basketball courts – quite a challenge for the mindful and quiet yoga concepts she was imparting to her students!

She explains, "At that time, the College for Seniors was becoming more formalized as an institution, supporting mostly intellectual pursuits. I've strived to offer a welcoming environment not only for the minds, but also for the bodies and hearts of each student. As this renowned center became a true 'lifelong learning institute,' it became important for me to create a protected space for holistic wellness, physical and emotional peace, and well being that balances out the academic emphasis at OLLI. That is what has kept me interested in participating here – OLLI students are very responsive to this respectful balance."

Kelly's course at OLLI, *Be Well Yoga*, will be offered next spring semester 2015. It is described as an opportunity to 'increase well-being in your body, mind and life.' We can see why Kelly has an enthusiastic and loyal following – it stems in part from her desire to make yoga accessible to everyone, not just skinny young women or people comfortable with woo-woo spirituality. Kelly concludes, "My attitude is that you are welcome here. Come sit on my 'porch' and let's get to know ourselves and each other. It's that Western North Carolina 'y'all-ness' that I embrace." For many years, Kelly has maintained a thriving yoga studio in her West Asheville home, serving over 100 devoted students a week. For more information about Kelly and the classes that she offers, you may go to her website: www.goodyoga.net.