



PHELAN M. EBENHACK

Jim Clark

If you've lived in Orlando for any length of time, you've probably read Jim Clark's work. With an MA from Stetson University and a PhD in history from the University of Florida, he successfully married his love of history with his talent for the written word. The award-winning journalist and author started his career as a copyboy at ABC News before joining United Press International as a reporter. He moved here in the mid-'70s and has been involved with local publications, including the *Orlando Sentinel* and *Orlando Magazine*.

A history lecturer at the University of Central Florida, Clark appreciates the responsibility that comes with being an educator. "Teaching is one of the few remaining things where you're on your own. If I do my job, the students learn, if I don't, then they don't learn."

His laundry list of accomplishments includes authoring nine books. His most recent are the first of three volumes in the *Pineapple Anthology of Florida Literature*, as well as *Orlando Florida: A Brief History*. "When I first arrived here in the late 1970s, I doubt that any publisher would have wanted to publish a history of a small town like Orlando."

But last May, The History Press approached him about doing just that. And they wanted to move quickly. "They gave me what seemed like an impossible task—100 days. But I wrote 44,000 words and, with the help of Cynthia Cardona Melendez, curator of collections at the Orange County Regional History Center, gathered up nearly 100 pictures."

Clark does most of his writing in the office in his home near downtown Orlando, which has served as a good vantage point. "It has been great to watch the growth of the city. There is something to do nearly every night in a town that offered little 40 years ago. It is amazing to see the success of Mad Cow Theatre and the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and other arts groups."

One could say Clark's own success—and his contributions to this community—are equally amazing. To learn more, visit DrJimClark.com. **oam**