

The Cain's gift is transformational for Cornelius

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Bill and Ericka Cain

Sept. 10. A 30-year partnership in work and marriage is the hallmark of Ericka and Bill Cain. These Cornelius residents are now partnering on the Cain Center for the Arts, the \$25 million arts center that will be built in downtown Cornelius.

The Cains are donating \$5 million toward the construction of the center. With \$4 million from a bond issue and other contributions, about \$8 million remains to be raised.

Modest to a fault, the Cains thanked the community for allowing them to donate \$5 million to the cause.

They are responsible for growing Financial Independence Group into a \$50+ million (revenue) company—one of the largest private companies in Mecklenburg County—but they will be the first to say that their team of 150 energetic and dedicated staff are the ones that make it all happen.

For three decades Ericka Cain has acted as her husband's right-hand person, implementing his highly nuanced ideas, growing the organization from a good idea into a financial powerhouse with serious clout in the insurance industry.

FIG markets major insurance carriers to independent brokers, providing not only product, but advisor training and programs to better prepare the advisor to serve the consumer.

A long road to Cornelius

Bill Cain recalls, “I came from a lower-middle class family and life was not easy. I decided at a young age that I wanted to live differently.” Bill Cain’s father was a “straw boss” on a telephone company line gang, frequently moving the family from county to county where telephone poles and wires criss-crossed the rural, post-Depression South. He attended more than 100 schools before getting his high school diploma.

“This is the beginning, not the end... It’s not that we’ve accomplished something and it’s over. We want to reach out to the schools, the community, the region and beyond.”

—Bill Cain

After graduating, Cain decided to become a Baptist minister and attended William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss. He pastored a small church in Greensboro while attending seminary at Wake Forest for a three-year divinity degree. Deciding he wanted to counsel and teach, Cain went to UNC Greensboro for a doctorate. He taught education psychology at Greensboro.

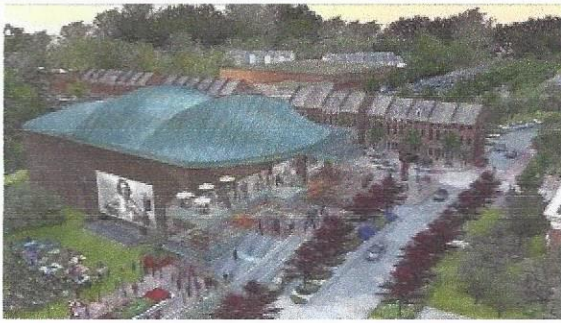
Insurance career happened by accident

Bill Cain got into the insurance business by accident. Knowing he wanted to help people, Cain started consulting for a small insurance agency. It was not long before he was able to purchase the company from the owner. He found his passion and thus began his career. This passion has grown into FIG today.

What started as a seed in 1976 now flourishes as a full-service marketing organization providing an industry blueprint of partnerships between advisors and carriers. The goal is to educate and assist advisors while providing customized retirement plans that meet individual client’s needs.

Ericka was a teacher

The business grew with the countless hours Bill put in—days, nights and weekends. Ericka came on board in 1987. The daughter of a Merchant Marine, Ericka had been a teacher with a knack for “problem children.” Did that prepare her for life in the world of business?



Artist rendering of The Cain Center for the Arts.

“She married one,” Bill said. They both smiled. “I’m not good at the details... I’m ready to charge forward. Ericka figures out how to do it,” Bill says.

“I always enjoy problem solving,” Ericka remarks, “I believe it can be done...with trouble shooting, that it can be accomplished. Each of us has a piece of the puzzle...when we come together we complete the puzzle.”

The Cain’s partnership in business and everywhere else will have a historic, transformational effect on Cornelius.

The Cain Center for the Arts will be the cultural cornerstone of Lake Norman—as well as an economic development catalyst for downtown Cornelius.

They thanked the town

Bill, who thanked the town and the art center board for allowing them the honor of donating, said, “we wanted to see Cornelius become not just a good town but a great town.”

The Cains asked themselves what kind of contribution they could make to help beautify Cornelius.

“When we heard about the arts center we immediately became interested,” Cain said, explaining it will have “a lasting effect and a lot of influence on children and adults.”

The art center will also be a place to meet new people, to talk and to put down their cell phones.