MASTERS OF HIS DOMAIN

As a teenager, Paul Leon Masters had a knack for knowing what to say and when to say it. And we aren't talking about offering dating advice to friends but rather relationship counseling to his friends' parents. He was also fascinated by the unknown, gravitating toward sci-fi flicks and magic shows. As he got older, he set out to find a way to marry his love of the mysterious with his intuitive counseling, and he discovered metaphysical education programs. "I couldn't get enough of it – it resonated with me," Paul says. He earned doctorates in psychology and theology and went on to found the Institute of Parapsychology in Beverly Hills, California, in 1959, a time when there weren't many institutes of higher learning exploring expanded states of consciousness, meditation and self-hypnotism.

In the 1960s, students flocked to Paul by the thousands. Paul has never referred to himself as a guru despite being so well-versed in Eastern traditions he once found himself schooling Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who was made famous by his affiliation with The Beatles. Paul attracted the attention of Timothy Leary, the psychologist who urged the nation to "turn on, tune in, drop out" through the use of psychedelic drugs. Leary invited Paul to a meeting in the Hollywood Hills. "After two hours with Timothy Leary, I knew I didn't want to touch what he was doing," says Paul, who maintains he's never experimented with drugs because he can achieve the same state naturally. "If you met him in an Irish pub, it would be a fun-filled evening, but he was messing around with opening the door to the unconscious without getting into the spiritual aspect of it. I counseled a lot of people who experienced 'bad trips' because of Timothy Leary."

Paul founded the National Metaphysics Institute in 1965 and the University of Metaphysics in 1976. He was an early pioneer of at-your-own-pace distance learning. Paul moved to Nevada and stayed there for 15 years, and in 2002, he found himself in Sedona at the urging of a friend. Paul will be the first to tell you he doesn't consider himself part of the New Age community, yet he was so moved by Sedona (he refers to it in conversation as Shangri-La) that he relocated the University of Metaphysics here and founded the **University of Sedona** in 2003. The university awards degrees in metaphysical science, divinity, theology, philosophy and holistic ministry, to name just a few. Paul estimates 10,000 students have come through his program since he began teaching. University of Sedona is set to launch its own radio station, KUOS 92.1 FM, this month featuring local news, talk shows, and music. So how does he define metaphysics in a town that has made a name for itself by bandying about the term?

"It's speculative philosophy – the nature of reality," says Paul, sitting in a room at the university's headquarters in West Sedona. "It answers the questions, Who am I? What am I? Where am I? Where am I going? So many people come to Sedona for vortexes. I recommend taking a spin in the vortex within yourself."

For more information, visit **www.UniversityOfSedona.com** or call 928-203-0730.

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Dr. Paul Leon Masters, founder of the University of Sedona.

Photo by Deb Weinkauff