

JANUARY 2018

January speaker Jessica Finlay addresses improving environments for aging in place

Can we make the built environment healthier, happier, and safer for aging in place?



Winston Churchill once observed, “We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.” He was on to something. Urban surroundings built right can contribute to improved physical, mental, and social health, discourage us from dropping litter, encourage us to interact with neighbors, invite us to explore our neighborhood, minimize certain risks, and much more.

Our January luncheon speaker, Jessica Finlay, a Vancouver native and doctoral candidate at the University of Minnesota, will invite us to consider ways that aging in place can be healthier, happier, and safer. A geographer with a special

focus on gerontology, she believes that “if we pay more attention to how we build and maintain urban environments, ...supportive changes can benefit all citizens—regardless of age or ability.”

Finlay’s doctoral studies build on three intersecting research areas: urban geography (How does society build and interact with the urban environment?), public health (How are the health and wellbeing of the population monitored, regulated, and promoted by the state?), and feminist studies (A disproportionate share of our elderly population is female, and socioeconomically marginalized older adults are the fastest growing group). Data for her study were compiled from hundreds of personal interviews.

Minnesota’s urban elderly face a range of challenges. For example, “Construction zones are terrible for elders and the disabled,” Finlay said in an article about her doctoral research published in the *Star Tribune*. “This causes more than just physical challenges, such as the mental stress of figuring out rerouted buses. ...[And] in wintertime, with snow, ice, unshoveled sidewalks or impassable berms left behind by plows, many seniors venture out much less often. This makes Minnesota winters seem extra long and isolating to them.”

“On the plus side, seniors love the Minneapolis skyway system,” she said. “They’re weather-protected, mostly accessible for those using motorized chairs or walkers, and a safe and familiar environment for shopping and exercise.”

— John S. Adams, former UMRA president (and urban geographer)

Parking reservations available for UMRA luncheons

Combine your reservation for the UMRA luncheon with a reservation for parking and ensure your parking space. Tell the attendant when you arrive between 10 a.m. and noon. Pay when exiting, using your UMRA parking coupons as usual.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

JANUARY LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, January 23, 2018
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

Jessica Finlay,
U of M doctoral candidate
“*Creating Supportive Environments for
Aging in Place*”

Location

Conference Room ABC
Campus Club, Fourth Floor
Coffman Memorial Union

Menu

Roast cod with tomatoes, fennel,
olives, and potatoes; coffee or tea.
For special dietary needs, please
request when making
your reservations.

Reservations ARE Required.
Deadline: Thursday, January 18
Prepayment of \$16 per person.
Annual prepayers please make
reservations.

To reserve your place(s) and
parking, send your check payable
to UMRA: UMRA Reservations
c/o Judy Leahy Grimes,
1937 Palace Ave., St. Paul, MN
55105-1728

Or, contact her before the dead-
line at 651-698-4387; e-mail:
jleahy4654@aol.com.

Please honor the reservation
deadline; to cancel, please call by
January 18

Parking

University ramps and reserved
space in East River Road Ramp
with UMRA’s discount coupon —
\$6 for the day.

January 23 Workshop: Meaning and purpose in retirement

Due to longer life expectancy, many of us could live for 10 to 30 years after retiring, through several major changes in interests, activities, and identities in later life. For each of these transitions, we can opt to take on a new primary purpose and new sources of meaning.



This workshop will explore what we know about meaning and purpose in retirement. After a short opening by Ron Anderson, former UMRA president and current chair of the UMRA Cares Committee, four panelists will talk about their own life purposes and how these changed in later life. The panelists, Kathleen

O'Brien, Jan Hogan-Schiltgen, Dave Naumann, and David Wark, have all served on the UMRA Board. Their years since retirement range from 5 to 22, and their activities in retirement are quite diverse. Sharing their personal pathways into and through retirement, the panelists will identify major transitions that led them to re-assess meaning and purpose in their lives.

New research has revealed that well-being and contentment are more likely to result from purpose than from traditional routes to happiness. Therefore, to live enriched lives during our last years, we need to pay attention to our purposes and what they mean to us. This workshop has been designed to help guide this exploration.

For advance preparation, you may wish to read at least the first page of a background paper, "Meaning and Purpose in Retirement," which has been posted on the UMRA website at <https://umra.umn.edu/news/2018-001-january-workshop>. It includes definitions of common terminology and suggestions for thinking about the topic.

Join us after the UMRA luncheon on Tuesday, January 23, for this highly interactive workshop from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the ABC room of the Campus Club. The final half hour will be devoted to dialogue among the workshop attendees. Multiple points of view will be encouraged!

—Ron Anderson, chair, UMRA Cares Committee

When you need to cancel ...

Wait-list members want your cancelled reservations, so if circumstances will prevent you from using your UMRA luncheon reservations, please call, nay *shout*, to say your spot will be available. When reservations close, as they regrettably do, our reservation maven keeps a waiting list of members who would really like to attend. She is a genius at filling available seats *if* she knows they will be vacant.

Make someone happy; if you find you can't be there, contact Judy at jleahy4654@aol.com or 651-698-4387.

Parking discount coupons

Discount coupons for campus parking venues are very popular with UMRA members. Since the use of coupons was initiated in 2012, more than 17,000 have been distributed. Use of a coupon reduces the parking fee to six dollars all day, which is a considerable savings.

Parking discount coupons are available at UMRA luncheons or may be requested by mailing a self-addressed, stamped envelope to John Anderson, 1332 Como Blvd. E., St. Paul, MN 55117. A #10 envelope with one Forever stamp can deliver 21 coupons. Additional postage is necessary if more coupons are requested.

A cautionary note: Avoid keeping your coupons where they might come into contact with magnets or cell phones. These can erase the magnetic strip, making the coupon non-functional.

Come at 10:30 for coffee and social time before luncheons

Thanks to the Campus Club for making its Bar and Lounge available to UMRA members for coffee and visiting before our luncheons. There is no charge and no need to RSVP.

UMRA Book Club to discuss "*Dark Money*" at January 19 meeting

Book Club member Mariah Snyder will lead the discussion of *Dark Money* by Jane Mayer at the January 19 meeting. The Book Club meets at 2 p.m. the third Friday of every month, except December. Meetings are held at the 1666 Coffman Building, which is located on Larpenteur Avenue near the St. Paul Campus. Newcomers are welcome. Contact Pat Tollefson for more information (p-toll@umn.edu)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

UMRA BOARD NEWS

At its November meeting the Board began sifting and prioritizing the multitude of suggestions that emerged from the table conversations at October's "Town Hall" luncheon meeting. This process will continue through the winter and into spring.

In response to a show-of-hands poll at the luncheon, a substantial majority of participants indicated support for more aggressive UMRA growth. Several steps are already in progress to increase both the size of the membership and the range of activities offered to members.

- **Luncheon venue:** Most recent luncheons have sold out, sometimes only a few days after newsletter publication, and the town hall conversation reinforced the Board's sense that space limitations of Campus Club ABC have become a serious drag on UMRA's development. A new Luncheon Venue Task Force, chaired by President-elect Jerry Rinehart, is now looking systematically at other possibilities.
- **Luncheon rental costs:** We are grateful to the Provost's office for clearing away one obstacle to any move from the Campus Club. Because UMRA is separately incorporated and not part of the University's accounting infrastructure, it appeared we were subject to higher rental rates. The Provost's office has agreed, however, that because UMRA's mission is so closely aligned with the success of the University, it is appropriate for the retirees association to have its own account within the U's billing and payments system. This makes us eligible for internal rates.
- **Expanded activities:** The Social Activities Committee continues to experiment with offerings beyond the traditional luncheon/speaker/workshop days. In addition to piggybacking on several Campus Club events, the committee has programmed a St. Paul skyway tour later this month (see p.6 of this newsletter). If this is successful, other local tours or visits will likely follow.
- **Communications:** The Communications Task Force, chaired by former president Jean Kinsey, submitted its report to the Board in early January. Their list of recommendations includes many measures for UMRA to better communicate with its members, with potential U of M retirees, with the U of M administration/staff/faculty, and with the larger community. Watch for more in future newsletters.

- **Fundraising:** Two recent meetings with staff of the U of M Foundation have yielded encouraging results. The Foundation is willing to serve as a 501(c)3 conduit for appropriate UMRA fundraising efforts and has already begun helping us identify potential funding sources whose criteria appear to align nicely with UMRA. In the next few months we will establish priorities for funding—which could well include one-time infusions of money to kick-start some of our expansion measures.
- **Professional Development Grants for Retirees:** Given that the U's three-year funding commitment for this popular UMRA program expires this year, we were relieved to learn recently that the Provost's office is committed to continuing the program.

— Chip Peterson, UMRA President 2017–18
c-pete@umn.edu

Photo Club to meet on January 9

The UMRA Photo Club will meet on Tuesday, January 9, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the St. Anthony Branch of the Hennepin County Library in the small shopping center at New Brighton and St. Anthony Boulevards in Saint Anthony Village. Come at 11:30 a.m. for lunch and camaraderie at the Great Dragon Buffet, which is across the parking lot from the library. (Ask for the senior discount.)

The January theme is "Repetition." Attendees should email three to four "Repetition" pictures to Dick Kain, kain@umn.edu, by Monday, January 8, and to bring 10 pictures of your choice on a flash drive to share and discuss.

We welcome photographers of all abilities. Most of us are amateurs who like to take pictures and want to get better. We all benefit from the help we get from each other. For more information contact Sheri Goldsmith May, golds009@gmail.com, or Craig Swan, swan@umn.edu.



Club member Craig Swan took this photo of the Supermoon with his Canon SX40 HS. Settings were 1/60 sec; f/5.8; ISO 200; 150.5 mm. The camera was hand held; Craig relied on the image stabilization feature of the camera.

Cartoonist Steve Sack delights November audience

At the November luncheon, UMRA members enjoyed a rare treat—Steve Sack, award-winning cartoonist with the Star Tribune. From childhood on, Sack enjoyed drawing pictures, but he didn't begin his career as a cartoonist until college, when he joined the *Minnesota Daily* staff. That was the beginning of 36 artful years, much of them at the *Star Tribune*, in which he



Steve Sack signed several copies of his book for UMRA members at the November luncheon. Earl Nolting was happy to see the autograph included a cartoon.

has earned a reputation for spot-on visual commentary on political and world events. After years of newspaper downsizing, Sack remains one of only 50 full-time professional cartoonists in the U.S., down from 350 a few years ago. He advises young people seeking his advice about becoming cartoonists to “get a Plan B.”

Focusing on hot-button issues including gun control, climate change, local and world political figures, presidential doings and foibles, and current events, Sack has attained national and international acclaim, including the coveted Pulitzer Prize.

Sack spends most of his job time researching daily blogs and news sources. Although he receives many ideas for cartoons from readers, he relies on his own background work, saying, “I'd rather do a lousy Sack than a clever who-knows-who.”

Scott Gillespie, editorial pages editor and *Star Tribune* vice president, spoke briefly saying, “Steve is brilliant, the best at what he does in the country; one of the best in the world. He's the best-informed journalist on my staff. His work is honest, and it's a pleasure to be his boss.”

Sack's book, *The First and Only Book of Sack*, published in October 2017, has already gone into several reprints. It costs \$15 and is available online at shop.Startribune.com.

— Julie Medbery, editor

Professional Development Grants for Retirees —2018 update

Ten applications were submitted by the December deadline for the 2018 Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) program. This is below the average of 16 applications per year, perhaps because of the new on-line-only application process introduced this year. Despite that complexity the process went smoothly, due in no small measure to Marci Freundschu in the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and system analyst Francine Anderson, who were most helpful to applicants.

If any of you did not feel comfortable applying because of this new process, we would like to hear about your concerns. Please email me at dick@umn.edu.

The approved proposals will be announced in March. The new grants will start on April 1 and extend to June 30, 2019.

Looking ahead, the committee is concentrating on the funding of this program for 2019 and beyond. Although UMRA is not officially part of the University, most of the funding for this program since its inception in 2009 has come from the University through the Provost and OVPR. As we work with the University to continue this arrangement, it is important to demonstrate UMRA's commitment to the program.

One way to show that commitment is through financial contributions from UMRA members. In 2011 UMRA established a fund at the University of Minnesota Foundation specifically to receive donations for the PDGR program. Since then, the fund has received many contributions from retirees, including six recent gifts made since the November UMRA luncheon. The value of the fund now exceeds \$26,000, and we hope to continue building this endowment to help supplement our University funding and to demonstrate UMRA's commitment. More about this in coming months.

— Dick Poppele, PDGR Committee chair

New Financial and Legal Issues Group gets underway

The first meeting of the special interest group for Financial and Legal Issues Group (FLG) got off to an enthusiastic start on December 6 with the topic, “Tax Planning in Uncertain Times.” Members learned about probable changes and possible actions to take before the December 31 deadline.

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They also discussed the new tax code beginning in 2018, with the understanding that all information was : (1) educational only, and not advice for any individual; and (2) tax rules are always subject to change. Meetings will be on Wednesdays at 2 p.m. at John A. Knutson & Co., PLLP, classroom, 1755 Prior Avenue North, Falcon Heights, MN 55113. Sessions will also be available as a webinar by computer and phone.

Members suggested the following topics and speakers:

- February 21: Identity security. Lead presenter: Dave Bell, president, Cyber Solutions.
- April 25: Health care administration, medical issues, care taking, funding long-term care (LTC), and issues with LTC facilities. Lead presenter: Jayne Clairmont, owner/consultant, English Rose Suites.
- August 15: Estate planning.
- November 14, 2018. Year-end income tax actions based on the new federal income tax code and Minnesota legislative action.

UMRA members interested in joining the group or information about it, may contact Andy Whitman, awhitman@umn.edu; phone 612-747-6015.

November workshop highlighted services for caregivers

The November workshop, “Challenges of Caregiving among Older Adults,” featured Greg Owen, a sociologist and consulting scientist at Wilder Research, part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, and several specialists in caregiving services at Wilder. They began by reporting on a survey of several hundred caregivers in St. Paul and ended with an overview of Wilder’s services for caregivers.

These services include support groups, coaching and consultation, courses and webinars, a caregiver hotline, adult day care center, and respite services to allow caregivers to be away for short periods of time.



Many of the participants expressed interest in Wilder’s Tai Ji Quan group class, a balance training regimen designed for older adults at risk of falling and people with balance disorders. Slides from the workshop can be found on the UMRA website at <https://umra.umn.edu/news/2018001-november-workshop>.

— Ron Anderson, UMRA Program Committee

Volunteer Opportunity: Participate in research to improve balance

A common health issue for our age group is falling and breaking a hip because of poor balance. If you are at least 70 years old and not involved in a physical activity/exercise program, you are invited to participate in Ready-Steady, a new research program through the School of Nursing, to find the best ways to avoid accidental falls through strength-building and balance exercises.

The purpose of the research, funded by the National Institutes of Health, is to determine which motivational and wellness strategies are most effective. Siobhan McMahon, RN, is the principal investigator.

Small groups (of four to six) will meet for 90 minutes a week for eight weeks at a convenient community center to learn leg strengthening and balance movements for home practice. Working with a coach and nurse, they will use a physical activity monitor (Fitbit) to assess their response to the activities. Volunteers will also meet with a research assistant both before and after the eight-week session, as well as 6 and 12 months after, to observe progress in balance, strength, and physical activity.

Compensation is provided for each meeting, and participants keep the Fitbit.

This is a multi-year study. If you are a snowbird or edging into age 70, you can join the program when you’re ready. Contact URVC to register: URVC@UMN.EDU or 612-625-8016.

The University Retirees Volunteer Center wishes each UMRA and family member the very best in health and spirit for the year now upon us. We believe volunteerism promotes wellness, and we have volunteer opportunities to match your interests in bettering our society. Submit a Volunteer Profile and tell us what you want to offer.

“I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.” ~ George Bernard Shaw

— Alan Kagan, URVC Coordinator

Social Committee plans St. Paul skyway tour and reception

Join a free, two-hour tour and reception for UMRA members in the St. Paul Skyway on Sunday, January 21, 2-4 p.m. See the sky bridge Photo Art Show “Speaking of Home,” which features 58 recent immigrants to Minnesota. View the nearly completed MN Wild hockey training center in the old Macy’s building. Learn about skyway history, governance, skyway social and security controversies, and the

future of skyways.

The tour will begin at Town Square in the center of the Skyway system and includes the



Securian and Golden Rule buildings; Central Station for the Green Line Rail; St. Paul Athletic Club; the Old Pioneer Press, Lowry, and Landmark Towers buildings; and the St. Paul Hotel. Walking distance will be about two miles, depending upon where you park.

At the end of the tour UMRA member Ron Anderson and his wife, Nancy, will host a reception in their skyway-connected condo on the 23rd floor of the Landmark Tower building, where views of Rice Park, the Capitol, the Ordway, and the Cathedral of St. Paul are spectacular.

The tour is limited to 35 persons. To make reservations for the tour, send an email by January 15 to Ron Anderson (rea@umn.edu) and give your name and the name of your guest, if any.

Directions and parking information will be sent to those signed up for the tour.

— Cherie Hamilton, Social Activities Committee;

— Ron Anderson, Skyway Tour and Reception Host

From the Cares Bookshelf

If you want to become informed about the latest research on the power of meaning, the place to start is a new book by Emily Esfahani Smith, *The Power of Meaning: Crafting a Life That Matters*.

Smith writes that within psychology is “a growing new movement, one that is fundamentally reshaping our

understanding of the good life. [The] research shows that the search for meaning in life is far more fulfilling than the pursuit of personal happiness.”

Like so many who write on the topic of meaning in life, Smith strongly advocates doing things for others as the best route toward meaning and contentment with life.

In her last chapter, Smith tackles the challenge of finding meaning in retirement. She notes that research finds that a sense of purpose declines with age and into the transition to retirement. This emerging emptiness leads some in later life to seek changes such as connecting with volunteer projects and seeking out new activities as advocated by the Encore organization that was founded by Marc Freedman.

Both academics and non-academics will find this book easy to read. Smith discusses the implications of dozens of new research studies on the role and impact of meaning and makes the material very understandable.

— Ron Anderson, Cares Committee Chair

Book Notes

This is a compilation of the UMRA Book Club members’ reactions to their November read: *Hillbilly Elegy*.

Most of the group found this book thought-provoking. It is an insider’s view of the people of Appalachian country and helps to understand recent political events and the great divide that has become evident in our nation.

Vance says the culture he grew up in “had no heroes.” He states the culture has a deep distrust of the media, politicians, and all institutions; it is very vulnerable to conspiracy theories. He says they are caught in a “group belief” that if you try to get ahead you never do, so why try at all? He emphasizes that his success resulted from having had some stable people in his life to counter the often chaotic, crazy behaviors around him. He had to detach himself in order to survive, yet he continued loving his mother in spite of all her failed relationships, her drug use, and her ultimate use of heroin, which Vance calls “the Kentucky Derby of drugs.” Vance acknowledges that he was saved by his grandparents.

The author credits the Marines for giving him an expanding sense of self-worth so that he was able to graduate from Ohio State University and from Yale Law School. A student of Vance’s background attending such schools is almost unheard of, said one of our members.

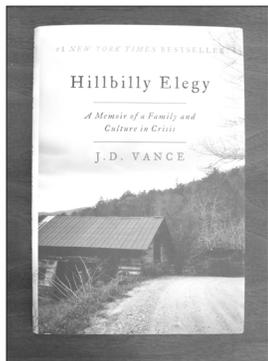
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Book Notes Continued from page 6

Over all, book club members were impressed by the author's grit and foresight, which helped him outgrow the culture he grew up in. Members admired the culture's devotion to family and the fact that a seed of optimism seemed to always be there, even in the worst of times.

Near the end of the book Vance describes how he thought he was able to shake off his background and become a productive member of society, while still carrying the weight of "his people."

Hillbilly Elegy is a must-read for anyone wanting a better understanding of the dissatisfaction of the poorer, white working class and their struggles to move ahead.



In Remembrance

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of these losses to our UMRA community. Our condolences to the families and friends of:

Richard Burkey, professor, U of M Morris Science and Math, died December 3, 2017, in Englewood, Florida. He was one of the 13 founding faculty members of the University of Minnesota Morris campus.

Richard Grimes died October 28, 2017. He is survived by spouse, Judy Leahy Grimes, UMRA Board member.

Wallace Nelson, professor emeritus of Agronomy, founder and director of the Minnesota Extension SW Experiment Station in Lamberton, died December 14, 2017, in Willmar, Minnesota. An UMRA member from 1993, he is survived by his spouse, Arlene Nelson.

Hans Weinberger, professor emeritus of Mathematics, founder and director of the Institute for Mathematical Applications, died September 27, 2017, in Durham, North Carolina. He and his spouse, Laura Weinberger, were both UMRA members.

UMRA Cares supports members

For assistance and support in the event of the death or serious illness of an UMRA member or family member, please e-mail us at umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403, and leave a message for UMRA Cares.

Also, if you learn of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge, please contact the UMRA Cares Committee.

Exploring alternative transportation? Share your experience

Results of the 2016 UMRA Survey and the October 2017 Town Hall Meeting indicate that some UMRA members are seeking alternative transport to get to places, including luncheons.

As the Cares Committee has been exploring options, they have encountered some successes and some frustrations. They invite readers to share their own experiences.

Uber is an alternative taxi service with quick response times and inexpensive rates. After struggling to get the Uber app on his iPhone, Ron Anderson tried ordering an Uber pickup after an evening Campus Club event. Because only buses and trains are allowed on Washington Avenue in front of Coffman, he asked for Uber to pick him up at Coffman's south entrance, 300 Delaware SE. That address covers a block-long distance and Ron says that makes it difficult to spot an Uber car because they often have little visible identification. Has anyone learned of a solution to this difficulty?

Transit Link, run by the Metropolitan Council, offers pickup and delivery in one of 75 mini-buses within the



seven-county area for a fee ranging from \$2.25 to \$7 each way. Reservations for rides must be scheduled at least two hours in advance and not more than 5 days ahead. When Maggie Catambay tried the service in Dakota County by calling 651-602-LINK (5465), she found it confusing. Even though the Transit Link website is filled with details about how to use this service, she needed a lot of help from the reservation specialist and the driver, and still she was confused about how to pay for the ride. "The website said we could use a Go-To Card (light rail/bus card) or the exact cash; however, one driver did not accept my U Pass (transit card available to persons registered for classes at the U) and another asked if I were a personal assistant, because PAs ride free," she said.

If you have had experiences using Uber, Transit Link, or another innovative form of getting around, please email Maggie Catambay at cata0006@umn.edu. The Cares Committee would like to share what you have learned.

— Maggie Catambay, Cares Committee

UMRA University of Minnesota Retirees Association

University of Minnesota
McNamara Alumni Center
Room 264, Suite 250
200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2002

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Other Info _____

UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403
Website: umra.umn.edu

*Thank you to the University of Minnesota Earl E. Bakken Center
for Spirituality & Healing for sponsoring the January Newsletter*

YMCA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PARTNERING TO EXPLORE NEW WELLBEING AND MINDFULNESS PROGRAMS

What does it mean to be well? What does it mean to be mindful? How can mindfulness and other self-care strategies keep us active and thriving through all of life's ups and downs? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in two new educational programs at the YMCA, made possible by a new National Institutes of Health funded research project. The program is free for YMCA members and non-members, 50 years of age and older.

*Want to learn more about
these programs?
Contact Linda Hanson at
hans4236@umn.edu
or 612-626-2224*



Earl E. Bakken Center for
SPIRITUALITY & HEALING
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to six new members who have joined UMRA since the last newsletter. Greet them at luncheon meetings and help introduce them to others:

- Cathy Bagne,
Pediatric Nephrology research study coordinator
- Charles E. Campbell,
School of Physics and Astronomy, faculty
- Kathy Fischer,
University of Minnesota Foundation, civil service
- Amy Kaminsky; Gender, Women, and Sexuality
Studies/Institute for Global Studies, faculty
- Dr. and Mrs. Robert Margolis
Otolaryngology, faculty
- Nora Paul,
School of Journalism and Mass Communication, P&A

*For contact information, see Member Directory at
<https://umra.umn.edu/membership>*