

UMRA U NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

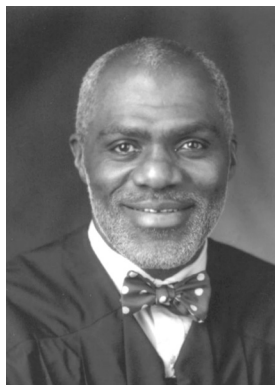
MAY 2005

Associate Justice Alan Page to speak on Judicial Independence, May 24

For many of us, there was a course in high school (sometimes called “Civics”) that covered the essential features of our form of democratic government. Three major branches of government—administrative, legislative, and judicial are assigned separate, equal, and independent functions in order to do the people’s business. For most of our more than 200-year history, the checks and balances between these three elements achieve a sort of rough equilibrium. But, at times, tensions develop between the three branches and, for a time, our civil life is disrupted; and we fret and worry until some measure of tolerance and respect, if not harmony, is again restored

between the feuding branches.

Currently, we appear to be in one of these tense times, with the judicial system—state and federal—subject to criticism, often-times inaccurate and sometimes



unjustifiably harsh, by elected officials, the media, and single-issue citizen groups. Most disturbing and dangerous are the rising threats and violent acts committed against members of the judiciary and their families.

Florida’s judiciary, faulted by the U.S. Supreme Court for not having resolved the 2000 presidential election balloting in that state, and criticized again by the president and members of the Congress for its rulings

in the Terri Schiavo controversy, is a telling example of a judiciary that might be tempted to believe that it is under siege.

Associate Justice Alan C. Page of the Minnesota Supreme Court is uniquely qualified to assess and provide a perspective about the present state of the judiciary. Elected to the state’s highest court in 1992, Justice Page previously served as Minnesota’s assistant attorney general from 1987 to 1993. Prior to his service in the attorney general’s office, he was an associate at the law firm of Lindquist and Vennum for five years.

No stranger to the University of Minnesota, Justice Page was awarded the degree Juris Doctor in 1978, on the recommendation of the Law School faculty, and he served as a member of the University’s Board of Regents from 1989 to 1992.

UMRA members in Minnesota during the 1970s may remember Alan Page as a member of the Minnesota Vikings professional football team defensive unit, known on the sports pages as the “Purple People Eaters.” He was elected to the Professional Football Hall of Fame in 1988.

Active in community and professional organizations, Justice Page takes a particular interest in encouraging urban high school youngsters to aspire to further education, and he leads efforts to support their aspirations.

Justice Page will join us on Tuesday evening, May 24, to speak about judicial independence. It is hard to conceive of an issue more important or more timely.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MAY BANQUET
AND ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday
May 24, 2005
5:30 – 9 p.m.

Featured Speaker

The Honorable Alan C. Page,
Associate Justice, Minnesota
Supreme Court

“Judicial Independence”

Location

West Wing of the Campus Club,
Coffman Memorial Union,
East Bank Campus, U of M

Cost

\$30 per person (tax included)

Reservation Deadline:
Thursday, May 19

To reserve your place(s) and select an entree, send a check, payable to the University of Minnesota Retirees Association, to David Wark at 1313 5th St., S.E., Mpls, MN, 55414; call him at 612-379-3854; or e-mail him at wark@umn.edu.

Reservations requested after May 19 will be on a waiting list. Cancellations must be received by noon Wednesday, May 18.

Parking

Parking is available in the East River Road and Weisman Museum garages, but please note that the Campus Club and UMRA are unable to offer discounted parking for this event.

See page 2 for more details.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

During the past year, our association has made good progress on a number of fronts. I've enjoyed being a part of that. I've also enjoyed working with a splendid group of Board colleagues.

To name some is to risk overlooking others, but several have to be mentioned. My earnest thanks go to Dave Wark and Robert Plunkett who, to my great relief, agreed to stay on yet one more year as secretary and treasurer, thus continuing their remarkably efficient handling of association affairs. In the process, they made my learning curve much less steep. I want to thank Judy Howe as well, not only for leading the way in developing UMRA's new Web site and listservs, and for figuring out how to mine "emeritus" and "retired" entries from the University's Student/Staff directory so we could use them in our membership campaign, but also for administering strong doses of reality to me at key moments.

The ease or difficulty with which the president's job unfolds depends in large measure on working relationships with past and future presidents. I've been more than fortunate to have the support over the last 12 months of two long-time friends. Gerhard Weiss has provided sage and experienced counsel while Warren Ibele willingly took on a whole variety of tasks. My job was eased as well by the wonderfully efficient and good-spirited work of our newsletter editor/publisher Ginny Hanson. Many Board colleagues, both new and continuing, committed time and energy to advancing the association's agenda. A more able and congenial group would be hard to imagine.

Finally, I want to thank UMRA members who offered me the opportunity to make a contribution to the association's continuing evolution. Retirees, whether from the ranks of faculty, staff, or P&A, constitute a vital resource for the University. UMRA is committed to serving their interests and also to finding ways that retirees can continue as active, contributing members of the University community. To have had some role in moving those agendas ahead during this past year has been a pleasure.

Cordially,
John Howe, President

You are invited to attend UMRA's annual meeting and spring banquet

As the lead story on page one announces, the Honorable Alan Page, associate justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, will speak at our annual banquet at the Campus Club on the evening of May 24. Justice Page's topic, you'll note, could hardly be more timely, and we look forward to hearing his viewpoint.

The evening's festivities will begin at 5:30 with a cash bar in the West Wing dining room. As we gather, Dan Wascoe will tease familiar jazz, show tunes, and requested old favorites from the club's grand piano. Dinner will commence at 6:30, with a brief business meeting and the election of new officers following at about 7:30. Justice Page's talk and follow-up conversation with the audience will begin about 8 p.m. Adjournment will come shortly after 9 p.m. The spring banquet rounds out our UMRA year, so come early, stay late, and enjoy!

When you contact Dave Wark to make your reservations (see page one for instructions), be sure to specify your menu selection. The main course options are beef medallion, grilled kebob with chicken, or a vegetarian kebob.

As in past years, UMRA and the Campus Club are not able to provide a parking discount for this annual evening meeting as has been customary for our noontime luncheons. However, lots of parking spaces will be available in the East River Road and Weisman Art Museum garages, and we encourage you to come with friends and share rides.

Remember—if you're reluctant to drive in the evening and can't find a friend to bring you, call the Retirees Volunteer Center at 612-625-8016 to arrange a ride.

Last reminder: E-mail security requires change in software protocols by July

On several occasions, we've included reminders about impending changes in the University's e-mail system. Here's a final one. All of us who continue to use the University's system must change our e-mail software protocols before July 5, or we will have our accounts cancelled. The change is necessary to provide greater security for user names and passwords in an increasingly open and vulnerable computer environment.

For information on what is required, how to bring it about if you've not already done so, and how to find help if you need it, go to www.umn.edu/securecom or call the Technology Help Line at 612-301-4537. We've been assured that Help Line consultants will be available to walk the novices among us through the necessary steps.

Association officers “retire”

A voluntary organization such as UMRA depends heavily on the self-motivating energy and commitment of its officers. This spring, two association stalwarts step down after multiple years of dedicated service.

One of these, our secretary Dave Wark, has kept Board minutes, managed luncheon reservations, and offered wise counsel on the full range of UMRA affairs. Fortunately, Dave’s “retirement” is only partial, since he’s agreed to stand for election as a Board director.

Equally to be celebrated is Robert Plunkett, treasurer extraordinaire, who has not only kept the association’s books and paid its bills on time, but he also has seen to membership renewals. Unfortunately, Robert now bids UMRA a full farewell as he and his wife resettle in Austin, Texas. We offer both of our colleagues a hearty vote of thanks, and we wish them well.

In addition, we confront the usual rotation of directors off the Board. Ending their terms as directors are Russ Hobbie, Jack Imholte, Judy Howe, and Elizabeth White. While the infusion of new perspectives is always good, the departure of experienced colleagues is inevitably something of a jolt. The loss is eased, however, by the assurance that UMRA can continue to count on their firm support.

A report on unfinished business

As UMRA’s 2004–2005 year comes to an end, and we begin pointing toward 2005–2006, we offer a brief report on the status of several important Board initiatives still in process.

President Bruinicks has applauded our efforts to bring the Regents Policy on Faculty Emeriti and Senate Resolution on a Faculty Retirees’ Bill of Rights to the attention of administrators and others in the University community. In coming weeks, we’ll be working with Vice President Carol Carrier to determine exactly how and when that should be done. The Board will continue conversations with civil service and P&A leaders about the creation of similar documents for those colleagues.

At its May meeting, the Board expects to finalize a communication to central administration concerning the shrinking group of faculty retirees who are significantly invested in the pre-1963 retirement annuity program.

Conversations continue this spring with Parking Services to arrange the details and start date of the new parking discount program, which was announced in the April Newsletter, as well as arrangements with Intercollegiate Athletics for discounts on next year’s athletic events.

Continues on page 4

Presenting the slate of UMRA officers and board nominees for 2005-2006

As specified in the association’s By-Laws, nominations for the election of UMRA officers are to be published in the May Newsletter, prior to election at the annual meeting. Members of the nominating committee were appointed and approved by the Board at its March meeting; they are: Gerhard Weiss (chair), Walter Johnson, Judy Howe, Earl Nolting, and Dan Panshin. The committee is to be especially commended for its work this year because it had to think about a new treasurer and secretary, in addition to a president-elect and four directors—all the while keeping in mind gender balance, representation of our three constituencies, and distribution across Twin Cities colleges. Talk about balancing a ticket!

Having persevered, the Nominating Committee presents the following slate of nominees, each of whom has agreed to serve:

- **President-elect**—Frank Miller
- **Secretary**—Ben Zimmerman
- **Treasurer**—Judy Howe

Board Directors:

- Judith Coccia
- Gene Mason
- Betty Raygor
- David Wark

Continuing as association officers and directors are:

- President—Warren Ibele
- Past President—John Howe

Board Directors:

- Jean Forsberg
- Robert Holt
- Burt Sundquist
- Marty Dworkin
- Jan Hively
- Rodney Loper
- Evelyn Franklin

The By-Laws note that additional nominations may be made from the floor, providing the nominees have given their consent. Election is to be by acclamation, except in cases where there is more than one nominee for a position, which would require a ballot vote. The By-Laws do not specify the vote required for election if a ballot is taken, but a simple majority will carry unless that arrangement is challenged.

Unfinished business — Continued from page 3

Communication concerning UMRA business inevitably lags during the summer months when Board meetings and publication of the Newsletter lapse. Efforts will be made to keep members informed, however, via the UMRA Web site and listserv until action picks up once again in September. In the meantime, if you have questions, get in touch with one of the association officers.

Medicare Part D: a work in progress

Medicare Part D is the new prescription drug insurance from Medicare that becomes available on January 1, 2006. The University of Minnesota plans to provide prescription drug coverage that will be better than Medicare Part D coverage through all four of the current medical plans offered to retirees.

While that commitment is certain, there remains a number of issues that have not been resolved with Medicare and the University's four plans because regulations and rates are still in the process of being defined. Employee Benefits staff, along with Ted Litman, UMRA Board member and Retiree Subcommittee representative to the Benefits Advisory Committee, continue to monitor information that comes from Medicare;

they will consult with the plans and scrutinize possible resolutions for the open issues.

You can expect to receive a number of communications over the next few months about Medicare Part D. These will begin with a newsletter from Employee Benefits in May. Medicare will send a letter to you in mid-summer that will tell you how Part D works. As we work out the details of the enrollment process, you will hear from Employee Benefits as major decisions are made and the dates for Open Enrollment are scheduled. Meanwhile, you can find more information by going to Web sites such as www.medicare.gov and www.cms.hhs.gov and reviewing the frequently asked questions section for consumers.

For additional information about
UMRA and its activities, visit the association's
Web site at www.umn.edu/umra.

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UMRA
Retirees Association
University of Minnesota

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