

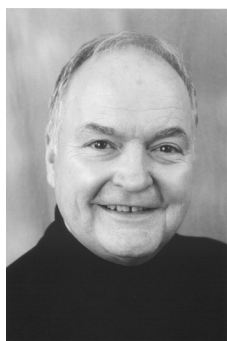
UMRA NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

MARCH 2009

Vern Sutton to review 50 years of the art scene in Twin Cities at March meeting

Audiences for music and theater activities know Vern Sutton. For 35 years he directed the opera program at the University of Minnesota. He also directed plays, operas, and musicals for a wide range of performing groups including the Great North America History Theatre, Chimera, Plymouth Music



Series/Vocal Essence, Ordway Music Theater, Minnesota Opera, Minnesota Orchestra, Children's Theatre Company, the Southern Theater, the College of St. Scholastica and Northfield Arts

Guild. His directing work has stretched well beyond local venues to Finland and to the Aldeburgh Festival in England where he directed Britten's *Paul Bunyan* and *The Tender Land* by Copeland. He is well known for his semi-staging and concert staging of operas, produced by the Minnesota Orchestra Sommerfest.

Besides directing, Sutton has appeared in acting and singing roles with 15 upper Midwest companies. In England, he has performed with the Aldeburgh Festival, Wigmore Hall, and the BBC; in the U.S.: the New Opera Theater in New York, the Houston Opera, San Francisco Spring Opera, Charlotte Opera, and Wolftrap. He has sung more than 60 different roles. He played Fezziwig and other roles for a number of years in Guthrie's *A Christmas Carol*; he has sung the premieres of 17 operas, 9 song cycles and 3 oratorios. With School of

Music colleague Dominick Argento, he has premiered six Argento operas.

Sutton keeps his name before an international audience with many appearances on Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion," performing in 130 broadcasts from 1974 to the present (most recently on February 14, 2009, as the bartender in a Guy Noir episode). In 2002 he directed Keillor's parody opera *Mr. and Mrs. Olson* for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Professor Sutton was a member of the University of Minnesota faculty from 1967-2003. He served as director of the School of Music for six years, and in 1981, he was named a recipient of the Horace T. Morse-Amoco Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching. In 1997 he was the first recipient of the President's Award for Outstanding Service to the University.

We welcome Professor Vern Sutton to our March UMRA luncheon and look forward to his presentation with great anticipation.

Reminder: invite prospective members to lunch with us

Stop and think— "who can I invite to the next UMRA luncheon?" Then pick up the phone or the mouse and do it *now*. Encourage your friends to sample UMRA's hospitality and programming. You will be adding to the collegiality of UMRA events and helping fellow retirees enjoy the benefits of UMRA membership. Call in a reservation for your guests. It's UMRA's treat!

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MARCH LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday
March 24, 2009
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

Vern Sutton, professor emeritus,
University of Minnesota
"50 Years of the Arts in the
Twin Cities"

Location

Conference Room ABC
Campus Club, Fourth Floor
Coffman Memorial Union,
East Bank Campus, U of M

Cost

Prepayment: \$12 per person.
\$14 at door for those not prepaid.

Reservation Deadline

Thursday, March 19

To reserve your place(s) and to take advantage of prepaid price, you must send a check, payable to UMRA, to UMRA Reservations, c/o Becky Hurst, 1794 Roxanna Lane, New Brighton, MN 55112 before the deadline date. You may contact Becky at 651-636-5568; e-mail: rebecca.hurst@comcast.net

Reservations requested after March 19 will be on a waiting list. Please let us know about cancellations by noon, March 19.

Parking

Parking is available in the East River Road Garage at UMRA's membership discount, \$5 for the entire day. Come early and visit the Bookstore.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hope And The Last Lecture

Our daughter gave us two books for Christmas. One was Barack Obama's *The Audacity of Hope*. The other was *The Last Lecture* by Professor Randy Pausch, lately of Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Virginia.

The Obama book takes us through his childhood and youth and the formation of his thinking, leading to how he conducted his campaign and how he has begun his presidency. The title came from one of the first sermons he heard from Rev. Jeremiah Wright (*Dreams from my Father*, pp. 291-295). The impact of that sermon on Obama was immediate:

"As the choir lifted back up in song...I felt a light touch on the top of my hand. I looked down to see the older of the two boys sitting beside me, his face slightly apprehensive as he handed me a pocket tissue. Beside him, his mother glanced at me with a faint smile before turning back toward the altar. It was only as I thanked the boy that I felt the tears running down my cheeks."

The fact that Obama named his second book, *The Audacity of Hope*, shows the long-term impact of that sermon and also of his career as a \$10,000-a-year community organizer. The subtitle of this book is a clue to the goal of this ambition of hope: "Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream." Whatever we may think of the idealism of Obama's hope in the face of the political realities of Washington, we have to admire his belief that the American people want to see things change, and that, as in the South Side of Chicago, the people can be a force in directing their own futures.

Professor Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture* is, on the other hand, about a dying man's last thoughts as he prepares for and gives his last lecture. It starts with his being told that he has pancreatic cancer, and that it will soon take his life. Soon that news gets around, and he is invited by Carnegie Mellon to give one of a series of last lectures sponsored by that institution. The rest of the book deals with balancing time with family against time spent in preparation of that lecture, and with the preparation, the delivery of the lecture.

Pausch's attitude towards death resembles that of Julius Caesar: "Cowards die many times before their deaths, the valiant never taste of death but once."

And Pausch approaches his death in that way, positive with memories of his life as a father and teacher, while time runs down on the future. His hope is that his life has been a blessing to his family and students, not hope that he will land in a better place as his life ends. The book is full of chapters with advice: "Dream Big," "Let's Make a Deal," "Don't Obsess over what people think, look for the best in everybody," "Show Gratitude," etc. It's full of humor and optimism.

Both books are hopeful—forward and backward looking—Obama's on his career in politics and how he would conduct a presidential campaign and presidency. Pausch's book also is full of memories and hope as he looks backward and ahead. But his hope is toward a very different purpose: what he could leave his students and children after his death. "...Seeing that death, a necessary end, will come when it will come."

— Hal Miller, President

UMRA Board in action on new initiatives

At its February meeting, the UMRA Board discussed several matters and took action on a few. Professor emeritus John Howe brought a brief report on the excellent progress that has been made on the Small Grants project. We can look forward to a full report on that initiative in April, once the grants are awarded and the recipients are notified.

The Board unanimously approved going forward on the establishment of a UMRA archives in the University Library. John and Judy Howe proposed the idea and will be reporting on details soon. The Board also voted to begin efforts to

offer a special membership meeting on the topic, "Managing Personal Funds in the Midst of Global Financial Crisis." Board members Ron Anderson, Burt Sundquist, and Rodney Loper will meet with Hal Miller to begin discussion of the possible program. We would encourage those of the membership who wish to join us in planning this effort to let Hal Miller know at miller@umn.edu.

Finally, due to resignations, the Board is working to fill two openings. The bylaws of the Association allow the Board to do that when the openings occur. At our February meeting,

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Positively warm greetings abound at UMRA winter luncheon programs

Let the winter winds chill the landscape, U retirees were snug and warm in the Campus Club in February, enjoying a spectacular lunch and fascinating program. It was a scene even a snowbird could learn to love. Parking their cars at discount prices in the River Road Garage, UMRA members avoided slippery streets by navigating the welcome shelter of the A-level tunnel to Coffman Memorial Union.

Our speaker, University Librarian Wendy Lougee, brought us all up to date on what libraries offer in today's world, and it turns out it's a lot more than books.

The digital age has not only changed the way people use libraries, it has changed what libraries do. Besides an overview of the U's collections, archives, and research methods, Lougee demonstrated some surprising ways the U Libraries are a resource for supporting students in their studies. Today's students will find tutors as well as materials in their library. Most fascinating, perhaps, are the structures available to assist them in completing an assignment on time, complete with scheduled e-mails to "nag" them periodically about the steps they should be at for each phase of a research paper.



University Librarian Wendy Pradt Lougee and Hal Miller, UMRA president, enjoyed conversation over a delightful Campus Club lunch before Lougee's presentation at the February meeting.



Greeting February luncheon attendees at her table is Meredith Poppele, UMRA board member. Enjoying the camaraderie are Harlan Smith, Betty and Hy Berman.

Volunteer to assist March activities for International Women's Day Celebration

Help celebrate International Women's Day. University Retirees Volunteer Center is helping to recruit helpers for this annual free event, cosponsored by Advocates for Human Rights and the U's Human Rights Program. This year, the 14th, the celebration takes place on Saturday, March 14, in Coffman Memorial Union, 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Many volunteers are needed to keep things running smoothly.

Volunteer tasks include morning set-up; organizing food tables; assisting with registration and volunteer check-in; helping with the unloading of materials in the morning; serving as greeters, runners, and guides; and cleaning up. Most volunteer time slots will be only two hours long, so you will have plenty of time to learn and enjoy before/after your shift.

The theme this year is "Transforming the World through Women's Voices." Keynote presenters will be Fahima Vorgetts (long-time activist on behalf of women in her home

country, Afghanistan) and Professor Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin (U of M Law School professor), speaking on women and war. The day will also include 14 workshops on women's human rights issues, music, film, visual arts, arts and crafts vendors, and a wealth of resources at tables staffed by co-sponsoring organizations. See the IWD Web site (www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org; click on the IWD logo) for more details about the various components of the day.

If you are interested in helping, contact University Retirees Volunteer Center by e-mailing urvc@umn.edu or calling 612-625-8016 on a weekday morning to indicate your preference for assignment and time of shift (morning or afternoon). Someone will get back to you with the specifics of your assignment.

—Judy Rosenblatt, volunteer and URVC board member.

Here's your chance to help an important University committee

UMRA has been asked to identify retired University people who would be willing to assist the Honors Committee in identifying candidates and developing their resumes for the Outstanding Achievement Award and the Award of Distinction. The Outstanding Achievement Award is intended for University of Minnesota alumni/ae. The Award of Distinction is intended for those persons who have achieved distinction in their fields of endeavor but who are not University of Minnesota alumni.

As reported last month, UMRA members who volunteer for this effort will be paired with colleges or service units and will be assigned various duties as defined by those units. The tasks might range from assisting the units in identifying candidates, helping in gathering supporting materials for the awards, or doing much of the major work in the nomination process.

Anyone who is interested in pursuing this project should contact Hal Miller at miller@umn.edu.

Welcome a new member this month

Please give a hearty welcome to Edward Radcliffe who is joining UMRA, following the superb example of his wife, Betty Radcliffe, already a member for several years.

Please welcome him at the next lunch program and add his contact information to your 2008-09 directories.

Radcliffe, Edward B. (Entomology)
806 Carla Lane, Little Canada, MN 55109-1943.

Board actions — Continued from page 2

the board voted to ask Ron Anderson to join the Board and he consented. Ron has been quietly serving behind the scenes as UMRA's webmaster, and we thank him for his excellent work on the website, a great asset to UMRA. We still have one opening and would be pleased to receive nominations for that place. Please send your nominations to Hal Miller, miller@umn.edu.

For additional information about UMRA and its activities, and to see photos of past events, go to www.umn.edu/umra.

Have you changed your address, e-mail, or phone?

1. Print new information below.
2. Cut out this form and address label.
3. Mail both to the address above.

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City, State _____
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E-mail _____
Other Info _____

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