

UMRA NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

SEPTEMBER 2010

Learn about active learning classrooms with Dr. Robin Wright; see new STSS building

Some of you may recall being in a class many years ago in a space that contained several rows of chairs with writing arms, a blackboard on the front wall, and an instructor whose instructional aids were limited to a piece of chalk, an eraser, and in exceptional situations some colored chalk!

Then, overhead projectors were introduced to help present information visually, followed by computers and projectors with PowerPoint to replace the overhead transparencies. Soon, lectures could produce such an avalanche of information that printouts of the slides were necessary to assist note takers in keeping pace. And finally, a question arose—was real learning taking place? Could students assimilate and understand this volume of material?



At our September luncheon Dr. Robin Wright will share her experiences and enthusiasm for a different approach in a different environment—the new active learning classrooms such as those in the new Science Teaching and Students Services building (STSS).

In the active learning classroom, students are not expected to be aural and visual sponges of information presented. Rather, they are challenged to conceptualize and organize the information of the course, and then to use that knowledge to tackle questions that take the course material to the next level of understanding. The requirement for each student to engage with the

material in a thoughtful way has powerful implications for learning. The instructor's role changes from dispenser of information to facilitator, guiding student groups to the appropriate fundamental information, posing penetrating questions to challenge, and finally, bringing closure to the process by sharing novel solutions offered by student groups and summarizing the entire effort.

Dr. Wright earned her Ph.D. in genetics and cell biology from Carnegie-Mellon. Following a postdoctoral appointment in biochemistry at the University of California, Berkeley, she joined the faculty at the University of Washington. In 2003 she moved to Minnesota to become the associate dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the College of Biological Sciences (CBS).

Dr. Wright has been very active in transforming the undergraduate experience in CBS. One of her major accomplishments is the transformation of the introductory course for biology majors to a highly interactive course. She championed the construction of the first active learning classroom at the U of M, in which the physical layout is a major departure from typical lecture rooms. Round tables with extensive connectivity to the Internet supports active learning by all present. Dr. Wright has taught Foundations of Biology with enrollments ranging from 60 to 120.

At our luncheon Dr. Wright will describe and illustrate these new approaches and share some remarkable outcomes.

An opportunity to see one of the new classrooms will follow for those interested in walking over to STSS.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

SEPTEMBER
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday
September 28, 2010
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Featured Speaker

Robin Wright, associate dean,
College of Biological Sciences
“Active Learning Classrooms:
Teaching More, Talking Less”

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 reservations that
are not prepaid.

Reservation Deadline Thursday, September 23

To reserve your place(s) send a check, payable to UMRA, to UMRA Reservations, c/o Judy Leahy Grimes, 1937 Palace Ave., St. Paul, MN, 55105-2032; contact her at 651-698-4387 or jleahy4654@aol.com

Please honor the September 23 reservation date; if cancellations are necessary, please let us know by noon September 23.

Parking

Parking is available in the East River Road Garage at UMRA's membership discount, \$5.00 for the entire day.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to a new academic year full of activities involving the University of Minnesota and UMRA! This year promises to be full of challenges and changes as monumental as in any other period in University history.

On the University front there are the challenges associated with an evermore constrained financial situation. We all hope that careful planning will direct the changes so that the result will be a stronger, more cohesive institution. On the horizon also are changes in leadership, particularly the positions of University president and the senior vice president of the Academic Health Center.

The campus is also changing. Already this fall we see the opening of the Science Teaching and Student Services building on the site of the former Science Classroom Building. This is a very significant step forward. The new facility features interactive classrooms of a sort seldom seen before on any university campus. A recent external review committee commented on these new active learning classrooms: "The Committee applauds the University for its foresight in preparing for what is emerging as the undergraduate pedagogy of the future." The launching of these classrooms signals movement toward greater in-class student involvement in the educational process.

Big renovation projects are under way. Folwell Hall is one of these. Built in 1906-07 at a cost of about \$415,000 and named for the first president of the University, it is on the National Register of Historic Places. In recent years it has been the instructional home for 27 different languages. All occupants changed their loca-

tions in June, scattering to five buildings, all within about a block of Folwell Hall. Construction is expected to be completed in time for re-occupancy by fall semester, 2011. The project is budgeted at \$23 million dollars.

The entire campus area is caught up in major change as streets and utilities are modified in anticipation of traffic rerouting during construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit system that will pass through campus on Washington Avenue. Beginning in September the Washington Avenue Bridge will be retrofitted to carry the trains. Construction of the rail line and the transit platforms on the East Bank campus will begin in May and will continue through the following year. When the trains begin running in 2014, commuting to campus should be much more convenient as well as more environmentally friendly.

Change is inevitable. Although we often resist change, since we are creatures of habit, we should realize that change from year to year is essential for growth and keeping up with the times. When established in 1851, the University of Minnesota was just a concept in minds of a few forward-looking leaders of the time. Now, 159 years later, the University of Minnesota is a large, highly respected university with thousands of students, faculty, and staff and hundreds of amazing buildings. To get to the current status, change was necessary every year, some more than others. This year will not be an exception!

—John Anderson, UMRA President
ander049@umn.edu or 651-489-4330

In Memoriam

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

Dorothy A. Wickesberg, d. May 4, 2010; spouse of Albert K. Wickesberg, Strategic Management, who continues as an UMRA member.

William E. Ranz, Chemical Engineering, d. October 20, 2009; his wife, Virginia L. Ranz continues as an UMRA member.

Mary Jane Larson Mohring d. May 8, 2010; spouse of Herbert Mohring, Economics, UMRA member.

Stay up to date this fall on ever-changing traffic patterns on campus

Getting to campus this fall may require some special navigation because of construction associated with the light rail transit project. Some streets may be temporarily closed.

To make your journey to campus and UMRA luncheons more trouble-free, check this handy University web site—www.lightrail.umn.edu — for the latest information about where construction zones may be impacting traffic.

This web site provides details and maps to alert you on what to expect on a week-by-week basis. Information includes the impact on access to streets, parking ramps, buildings, side-walks that are closed, and changes to bus routes and stops. You may also sign up to receive e-mail updates.

FREE! Concerts, theater, and even parking

That headline is the University Retirees Volunteer Center's way of getting your attention — but it **is** authentic. The URVC provides ushers for concerts and lectures at Ted Mann Concert Hall and plays at the Rarig theatres. And, in return, volunteers are treated to the performances.

Soon URVC will be preparing the fall semester schedule to send out to all who are interested in ushering, and you can get on that list right now.

The range of concerts is varied and expansive—orchestral, choral, jazz, chamber music, opera, concert band, or recitals. And, the University School of Music ensembles, faculty, and guest artists provide it all at an extraordinary level of artistic experience. For theater and dance fans, the U's Theatre and Dance Department presents both contemporary and classic performances. This is indeed a “theater town,” and the University's student actors are mentored by Guthrie staff. If you haven't attended these productions, you have been missing a great experience.

The job is easy—ushers simply hand out programs and collect tickets, and then you will have a reserved seat for the performance. You will soon see that this volunteer assignment is not just an aesthetic experience—volunteers report that it's healthful—energizing for both minds and bodies.”

Join today. For that list of ushering opportunities, just call the office (651-457-6586) or e-mail your name, phone, and address information to urvc@umn.edu. You will receive a schedule by snail mail, or e-mail if you prefer. Make your selections and contact us to confirm your requests.

—Alan L. Kagan, Project Director

University Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC)

A gentle reminder: Have you answered your renewal letter? Reap the benefits of membership

Have you noticed? Your UMRA card is dated, and it expired on August 31. With all the benefits of membership, as well as discounts for parking and so many interesting University venues, we hope you will surely want to renew.

Letters with renewal information were sent out in June. If you did not receive yours, or if a move has displaced your renewal form, please contact Virgil Larson, membership records manager, larso071@umn.edu or 651-644-4562.

And if, in the course of the year ahead, you move to another address or location, please be sure to let us know so that we can keep in contact and get the Newsletter to you. A form for that purpose is always printed on page 4 of every issue.

New! UMRA discount for School of Music events

Joining the ever-growing list of partners who offer discounts to our members is the University's School of Music.

Announcing a special sampler event taking place on Saturday, October 16 at 7:30 p.m. It's the 10th Anniversary Collage Concert, a non-stop concert showcase of all that the School of Music has to offer including performances by choral, orchestral, jazz, chamber, world music, and band ensembles as well as operatic interludes and solo performances by faculty and students.

Come hear more than 300 students and faculty performing in this theatrical, musical extravaganza on the beautiful Ted Mann Concert Hall stage—and in the aisles! Tickets for this event are \$16, but **with the UMRA discount, retirees can obtain tickets for \$11**. This is a general admission event (no reserved seats) so plan to arrive early for the best seats!

To order tickets, call 612-624-2345 or place your order online at www.tickets.umn.edu. (Please note, online tickets are available on this Northrop Ticket Office web site, but make sure that you scroll down to the School of Music events at the bottom of the page. Be aware there is also an event at Northrop on the same evening.)

Park in the 21st Avenue parking ramp and take advantage of your UMRA membership for discount parking as well!

Many thanks go to Earl Nolting, whose steadfast devotion to the discount benefits program has succeeded in creating many fine new partnership venues for us to enjoy.

—John Anderson, UMRA President

Center for Spirituality and Healing plans fall and winter workshops— ask about UMRA discounts

Whether you are long retired, recently retired, or soon-to-be retired, you may find CSH's Purpose programs both helpful and enlightening. The *Purpose Project*, led by Richard Leider, is designed to help people in the second half of life find the spark that we call “purpose.” The programs this fall will include a “Working on Purpose” workshop on September 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and “Living on Purpose” on September 23. On November 4, CSH will introduce a new workshop called “Healing on Purpose.”

The Center for Spirituality and Healing resides in the School of Nursing, and, as an UMRA benefits partner, CSH offers a 10 percent discount to UMRA members. For more information, contact Beth Somerville, somer012@umn.edu or 612-626-2395; or Cass McLaughlin, mclau033@umn.edu, or 612-626-5319.

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3. Mail both to the address above.

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Other Info _____

Welcome New Members

Please give a hearty welcome to new members who recently have joined UMRA. Greet them at the next lunch program and add this information to your 2009–2010 directories.

Nancy N. Eustis, Humphrey Institute
825 Summit Ave, #601, Minneapolis, MN 55403-3185
612-381-0366

Edward M. and Jean M. Griffin, English
3125 Ridgewood Road, Arden Hills, MN 55112-3649
651-636-1483

Patrick E. and Betty Hanna, Medicinal Chemistry
2250 173rd Circle NW, Andover, MN 55304
763-753-4648

Barbara J. Leonard, School of Nursing
12860 177th St. N. Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047
651-433-8118

Walter and Florence Littman, Mathematics
76 Clarence Ave. S.E., Minneapolis MN, 55414
612-331-2740

Margaret and Robert P. Patterson,
Physical Med and Rehab / Medical School
3761 Foss Road, Minneapolis, MN 55421
612-788-4860

Subbiah and Vivian S. Ramalingam, Mechanical Engineer-
ing 2182 Acorn Road, Roseville, MN 55113
651-636-1042

Ronald John and Rosslyn Sawchuk, College of Pharmacy
14934 Pixie Point Circle SE, Prior Lake, MN 55372
952-226-6507

Craig and Janet Swan, Economics / Provost's Office
2631 Irving Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-374-2496

Jerald J. TerEick, Mathematics - IT
4354 Vivian Ave., Shoreview, MN 55126
651-484-9030

Do you know a U retiree who's not yet a member?

Or, do you know someone who will be retiring soon? Now is the time to invite them to lunch with us and to introduce them to the collegiality and benefits of joining UMRA.

When you make your reservations, just call in to tell us that you want to bring a prospective member, and UMRA will treat them to their first luncheon program. Be sure to give us your guests' names for the name tags and help give them a hearty welcome by introducing them to others.

Keep current on UMRA news, programs, and discounts
with a visit to the association's new and ever-improving
web site: www.umn.edu/umra
