

# UMRA UNewsletter

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

SEPTEMBER 2013

## Patricia Hampl to discuss “Getting the Me out of Memoir” at September 24 luncheon

Our speaker for the first UMRA luncheon of the fall is Patricia Hampl, Regents Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Minnesota. Hampl is an American memoirist, writer, lecturer, and educator, and one of the founders of the Loft Literary Center.



She was born in St. Paul and attended the University of Minnesota, where she received her B.A. in 1968; she earned her M.F.A. at the University of Iowa in 1970.

She worked as an editor of the *Minnesota Monthly* and later as a freelance writer and editor before joining the University faculty in 1979.

She has received a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (1976), a National Endowment for the Arts Grant (1976), a Bush Foundation Fellowship (1979), a Fulbright Fellowship (1995), a McKnight Distinguished University Professorship (1996), and other literary awards.

Hampl is best known for her sensitive, introspective, and award-winning works of memoir. Her memoir titled *A Romantic Education* (1999) dealt with her Czech heritage. Her time in Prague and writing about Czech life under socialism attained—as one reviewer put it —“the stature of living his-

tory, and added to our understanding not only of Central Europe but also of what it means to be engaged in the struggle of a people to define and affirm themselves.”

Another memoir titled *Virgin Time: In Search of the Contemplative Life* (1992) was based on her Roman Catholic upbringing. This book was said to celebrate “the variety of the experience of traditional faith while promoting a spiritual journey without false piety or pretense.”

Her recent memoir titled *The Florist's Daughter* (2007) dealt with her feelings at the time of her mother's death. One local reviewer described it as “a thoughtful and ardent tribute to a normal childhood in a middling city (St. Paul) in a middling state (Minnesota) with modest parents who gave their children the inestimable gifts of security and love. But her book is no treacly sermon on an Edenic past. Rather, it's an intense gaze at ‘the spiral of wonder and wounds that accounts for the bravery of supposedly ordinary people in allegedly ordinary lives.’” It won the 2008 Minnesota Book Award for Memoir and Creative Non-Fiction. Hampl is also the author of several poems and other works.

Patricia Hampl's talk and discussion at the UMRA September luncheon is titled “Getting the Me out of Memoir: Autobiography in our Time.”

This is certain to be a popular program, so please send your reservations as soon as possible. See information in right column.

— John S. Adams, UMRA President

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### SEPTEMBER LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, September 24, 2013  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

#### Featured Speaker

Patricia Hampl, Regents Professor of English and Creative Writing,  
“Getting the Me out of  
Memoir”

#### Location

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

#### Menu

Seared Salmon with Tomato Basil  
Relish, served with Sweet Corn  
Couscous; for vegetarian or glu-  
ten-free options, please request  
when making your reservations.

**Reservations ARE Required**  
**Deadline: Thursday, September 19**  
Prepayment of \$16 per person;  
Annual prepayers **must** also make  
reservations.

To reserve your place(s), send  
your check payable to UMRA to  
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 date; if cancellations are  
necessary, please call by Sept. 19.

#### Parking

Parking is available in the East  
River Road Garage; with UMRA's  
discount coupon — \$6 for the day.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Big trends confront us: How should UMRA respond?

The world surrounding non-profit volunteer organizations is changing. Some fail to attract new members. Others have members but lack willing leaders. Some face financial challenges; some overlook their missions and lose their way. Meanwhile, critics question whether tax-exempt, non-profit service organizations should exist all (*StarTribune*, 18 Aug 2013), even as the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits vigorously defends them (*StarTribune*, 26 Aug 2013).

UMRA leadership is assessing what these trends mean for our organization. I consider the tax-exempt issue as a sideshow, but other trends are serious. Michael J. Sandel (*What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2012) argues that at an earlier time we were a society containing a market economy, but now we are becoming a market society. He asks “how can we protect the moral and civic goods that markets don't honor and that money can't buy?” Sandel's analysis helps me understand the larger forces that will influence UMRA's future.

Most of us remember a time when service professions (i.e., health care, education, law, banking and finance, insurance, government, etc.) were mainly about providing service to the individual and the community—rather than about money. Service professionals enjoyed high levels of community esteem, while foregoing market-level compensation for significant job security.

But today many demand both. After WWII the number of governments in the U.S.—federal, state, county, local, and special districts—proliferated (over 90,000 today), and government employees emerged as a political interest group. As money devoted to health care began expanding with Medicare (1965), it led inevitably to today's fights over who gets the money, diverting attention away from

improving national health. Meanwhile college graduates flood law schools as careerism steadily displaces serving the community. Even the U.S. military moved away from the draft as a national service model to a volunteer market-based recruiting model (1973).

We've lived this in higher education. As Baby Boom children came to school, they expanded demand for teachers, for trainers of teachers, and for trainers of the trainers—i.e., many UMRA members. We who became professors in the 1960s discovered (unexpectedly) that we could do well (financially) by doing good (teaching, scholarship, outreach). It was hard not to relish our good fortune.

But as compensation kept rising and job security persisted, we've become aware of a downside: higher education no longer enjoys the public esteem and support of earlier decades. Like government, health care, law, elements of banking and finance, and other service sectors, higher education too often appears aloof and self-serving, unconcerned with efficiency, effectiveness, high tuition, student debt, maturity and employability of graduates, and community service.

Diagnosing a problem is one thing; doing something about it is another.

At UMRA's recent leadership retreat, we reviewed our mission, assessed the past year, examined programs for alignment with mission, and identified ways to attract and retain the next generation of University retirees in light of trends outlined above. We also discussed our status as an independent non-profit organization, and we debated potential partnership arrangements with the University.

UMRA is a University resource, so how do we help? Send me your thoughts.

— John S. Adams, UMRA President  
adams004@umn.edu

### Spaces for the September program will be limited to 120 members. Reserve early.

Once again, our luncheon speaker this month is popular, and dining space is likely to fill up quickly, so please send your reservations in early.

Campus Club ABC is limited to 100. If necessary, as last spring, up to 20 more diners can be accommodated in Rooms 410 and 411; they then will join the crowd in ABC for the program.

### Discount parking for UMRA members

Campus parking discount coupons are greatly appreciated by many UMRA members. Thanks to Parking and Transportation, coupons reduce all-day fees to \$6, with the exception of special events parking. Members can obtain coupons: (1) at any UMRA luncheon; (2) when you renew your membership in midsummer; (3) by sending a request and self-addressed, stamped envelope to John Anderson, 1332 Como Blvd. E., St. Paul, MN 55117. Up to 21 coupons requires one Forever stamp; 22-42 coupons require 66 cents.

## UMRA invites retirees to apply for a grant

UMRA's Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) program will initiate its sixth cycle this fall in collaboration with the Office of the Vice President of Research. We encourage you to consider submitting an application to complete a project, present a paper, and propose new scholarship or other professional development action. Information about past awardees is available on the UMRA website: [www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra). The deadline for submissions is mid-December. Further information will be in the October issue of this newsletter.

— Jan Hogan-Schiltgen, chair, PDGR Committee  
[jhogan@umn.edu](mailto:jhogan@umn.edu)

## UMRA launches new recognition service awards program at May Annual Meeting



Incoming president John S. Adams and 2012-13 president Ron Anderson chat with the McVey family before the May luncheon. Gary McVey received UMRA's Community Service Award for his work with Habitat for Humanity. Others recognized were Judy Leahy Grimes for her service to UMRA and May speaker Paul Rosenblatt for his service to the University.

## Need transportation to luncheons?

The UMRA Cares Committee has received an inquiry on transportation from a member who no longer drives and cannot access public transit. In planning a response, we would like to know how many other members need assistance with transportation to luncheons. If this is true for you, please email [umracares@umn.edu](mailto:umracares@umn.edu) or leave a message for UMRA Cares at 612--626-4403, giving us your name and a phone number where we can reach you. Thanks.

## September 24 workshop: Learn about the Achievement Gap community project

This month's "Living Well in Later Life Workshop" (Sept. 24 at 1:30–2:30 p.m.) features Grant Abbott and Don Fraser, who will talk about their work on a community service project: "The Minnesota Achievement Gap."

This project, launched eight years ago, sponsors frequent "brown bag" discussions on Thursday or Friday noons at one of the churches near the University. Most of these sessions feature a well-known educator or politician discussing goals, strategies, policies, and projects designed to reduce Minnesota's achievement gaps across social groupings.

Don Fraser is former mayor of Minneapolis and Minnesota congressman, and current UMRA member. Grant Abbott is an Episcopal priest and the retired executive director of the St. Paul Area Council of Churches. They will also discuss what they believe needs to be done to end the achievement gap, based on what they have learned over the eight years.

If you go to their website: [www.mnachievementgap.org](http://www.mnachievementgap.org), you will see that the discussions span a wide variety of education policies. If you subscribe to their email list, you will receive advance notices of their meetings, where you will have the opportunity to influence key educational decision makers and indirectly help in improving education in Minnesota.

In June the *StarTribune* ([www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/210647341.html](http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/210647341.html)) described this project and its impact for St. Paul. Just before the school board elections, the Achievement Gap Committee got the candidates together at a brown bag luncheon. The outcome? Candidates who participated left that day with greater awareness of the achievement gap challenges in our local schools.

The Minnesota Achievement Gap forum is an exemplary community engagement project and a model for other projects related to public policy.

Like other UMRA workshops this past year, this workshop will be in the Campus Club's east-wing dining area after the UMRA luncheon. The workshop begins about 1:30, with about a 20-minute presentation by Grant Abbott and Don Fraser. This will be followed by a group discussion led by the speakers. All UMRA members and friends are welcome, even if you don't attend the luncheon. There is no charge.

— Ron Anderson, Workshop Committee

## Mark your calendars!!

UMRA meetings are generally held on the fourth Tuesday of the month; however, this year our fall meetings will be on October 29 and November 19.

## What did you do this summer?

Chances are most of us enjoyed activities like entertaining grandchildren, traveling, or maybe simply sipping lemonade in a hammock on a front porch or patio. But for many UMRA members activities also included planning and meetings in preparation for the year ahead.

Here is a review of “What I did this Summer,” as seen through the eyes of UMRA’s new president, John S. Adams.

## UMRA leaders participate in summer retreat

On August 22, 27 UMRA board members, representatives, affiliates, committee chairs, and others met at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs to discuss the current state of the organization and future planning.

Topics for the day were: (1) review and clarification of UMRA’s mission and assessing progress; (2) committee updates and plans for 2013-14; (3) progress on the University’s retiree center plan and UMRA links with the U; and (4) updates and planning for the August 2014 Big Ten and AROHE (Association of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education) meetings to be held in Minnesota. Treasurer Dick Skaggs provided a preview of the 2012-13 annual budget report and 2013-14 budget, to be presented at the September Board meeting.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this lively and productive meeting. Soon we will be inviting the broader membership to join us this coming year as we begin working on the plans and ideas discussed.

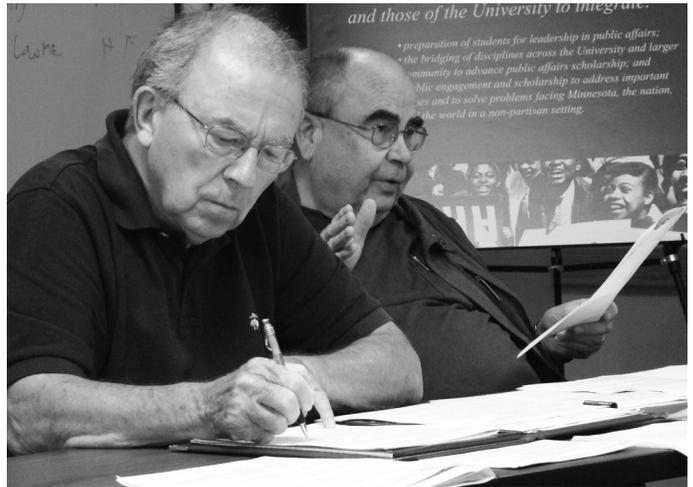
— John S. Adams, UMRA President

## Adams represents UMRA at Big Ten Retirees Associations meeting in Ann Arbor

Representatives of the Big Ten’s retiree organizations met in August, and I attended, representing UMRA. Since Nebraska and Penn State joined, there are now 12 members—soon to be 14 with the addition of Maryland and Rutgers.

The main purpose of the annual Big Ten meeting is for retiree organizations to learn from one another and to seek advice on challenges and issues they face. The annual meeting moves from campus to campus, and **Minnesota will host the next meeting in August 2014.**

On Saturday morning, August 10, University of Michigan Public Health professor Victor Strecher spoke on new findings on brain science and vital living in the older years. Based on his recent book, *On Purpose*, he covered: new science explaining how exchanging professional com-



UMRA president John Adams takes notes as Treasurer Dick Skaggs reports to participants at the August leadership retreat.

mitments for new purposes during retirement positively affects health and brain function; a review of the literature on the topic; discoveries made from dung beetle research; and how philosophers talk about “purpose of life” vs. how NIH programs focus on causes of death. The conclusion: having a purpose extends one’s life.

Part of Saturday afternoon included a seminar with University of Michigan Kinesiology Professor Victor Katch discussing new findings on the Science of Exercise. “Exercise is medicine,” he reported, illustrating the several ways that individual health and well being are enhanced by exercise: “Moving is living; productivity enhances happiness.” For more about the science of “positive psychology,” he recommended going to: [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org).

Sunday morning was devoted to: (1) best practices in the different organizations and how issues that arise are handled; (2) problems with recruiting membership and leadership, noting that the coming generation of retirees seems less inclined to join, to volunteer, and to lead.

**Evaluations** of the 2013 meeting and suggestions for the 2014 Big Ten meeting indicate that participants would rather spend more time exchanging experiences and best practices and less time listening to speakers, regardless of how interesting and informative they might be. Representatives also want web pages set up for the meetings and asked that they be invited to submit questions to be discussed.

These ideas are going to be invaluable for UMRA as we go into the planning for the 2014 Big Ten meetings in Minnesota. **You are invited to get in on the action—volunteers are needed** to assist the committees as we work to present a great meeting for the Big Ten Retirees’ Association next summer.

— John S. Adams, UMRA President

## Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to new members who have recently joined UMRA. Greet them at the next luncheon meeting, and add them to your 2011-13 UMRA Directory.

Carl and Marlene Adams, Information and Decision Sciences, Faculty

9475 Olympia Dr., Eden Prairie, MN 55347-2845  
952-942-5005; 612-625-3542; adams003@umn.edu

Coral A. Berge, University Press, P&A  
1230 Lafond Ave. St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-645-4075; caberge@ties2.net

Katherine Fennelly, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Faculty

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914-479-5074; 651-246-8240; fenne007@umn.edu

Mindy Geisser and Gregory Pedersen, Div. of Environmental Sciences, School of Public Health, P & A  
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651-481-7055; msg@umn.edu, msgeisser@gmail.com

Cathy Lee Gierke, Carlson School, Information Technology, Civil Service

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823 Thornton St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414  
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James Stout, Earth Sciences, Faculty

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Robert and Patrica Sykes, Landscape Architecture, Faculty

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952-925-0167; sykes002@umn.edu

Louis Janus and Suzanne Thorpe, Global Prog. & Strategies/Ctr. for Adv. Research in Language Acquisition, P&A

5136 Sheridan Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55410  
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Virginia A. Wyum, Masonic Cancer Center, Civil Service

77 Peony Lane N., Maple Grove, MN 55311-1904  
763-420-2214; wyumx001@umn.edu

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See the newsletter online, delve into the archives,  
and stay current on news for retirees —  
There's always something new on UMRA's  
ever-expanding website: [www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra)

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## VOLUNTEER TUTORS and MENTORS NEEDED

The new school year has begun and schools at all levels seek tutors and mentors to help students reach their educational goals. Basic skills in English usage, writing, and math are especially needed for elementary children and adult immigrants. Your career skills in humanities and sciences will find opportunities as well. The locations are wide-ranging.

Perhaps you would wish to mentor an international teaching assistant at the University or facilitate our Wednesday international Partners in English conversation group?

### How tutoring makes a difference

You might be interested in what one volunteer, Corin Kagan, has accomplished this past year with her tutoring assignments under the URVC umbrella:

*“Tutoring at the Southside Minneapolis Adult Education Center, I have worked one-on-one with an Ethiopian student for five and a half hours weekly. I have gotten him through his GED – and during the summer session prepared him for his citizenship interview. Last Thursday I was delighted to see him at his naturalization service. He is a winner, and by the way – he is blind. I guess if I would have had students like him at the community college, I never would have retired early!”*

*In addition, I also meet weekly with a Chinese T.A. grad student in the Partners In English Program, improving her English language skills so her students will understand her.”*

The Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC) can also match you with tutoring programs such as Project for Pride in Living, Common Bond, SHAPE, Adult Education in Minneapolis or St. Paul, Neighborhood House, CLUES, and Success Beyond the Classroom. The RSVP program of Volunteers of America assigns tutors to the public schools and offers mileage reimbursement.

Another opportunity is that of housing a foreign exchange college student! Learn more about these opportunities so that you can decide which commitment will be best for you. Reply to [urvc@umn.edu](mailto:urvc@umn.edu) or call 612-625-8016 for info.

— Alan L. Kagan, URVC Project Director

— Jeanene Noll, URVC Tutor Coordinator

### On a much sadder note:

Many of you will remember George Brauer, our singular URVC office worker, who on July 31 left us for the heavenly Math Department. Truly a considerate and gentle person, George lives on in the legacy of all the volunteers he connected with purposeful work and worthy causes. Can you help continue this important work by volunteering three to four hours a week at the URVC office? Call 612-625-8016.

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

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**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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Info \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**In Remembrance**

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of losses to our UMRA community. Since the Newsletter was published last May, we have received news of the following. Our condolences to the family and friends of:

Wendell Josal, Theater Arts faculty, died March 28, 2013. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth Josal.

Brenda S. Zimmerman died July 5, 2013. Her husband, Ben G. Zimmerman, continues as an UMRA member.

George U. Brauer, Mathematics faculty, died July 31, 2013. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Brauer.

John Killen, Civil Engineering faculty, died July 28, 2013, in Brownsville, Texas. His wife, Mary Barbara Killen, General College, continues as an UMRA member.

**UMRA Cares Committee is here for support**

For assistance and support in the event of the death or serious illness of an UMRA member or family member, please email us at [umracares@umn.edu](mailto:umracares@umn.edu) or call 612-626-4403 and leave a message for UMRA Cares. We do care, and we will call you back.

Also, if any of you are volunteering (formally or informally) as advocates of either Health Care Directives or Caregiver Support Services, please contact us.

The Board of Directors and members of UMRA wish to thank the Center for Spirituality and Healing for sponsoring the UMRA September Newsletter. CSH offers discounts to UMRA members. See below for some of the CSH program offerings.

**CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY & HEALING** 

**UPCOMING CENTER PROGRAMMING**

**Working on Purpose**  
 Thursday, October 17

**Living on Purpose**  
 Friday, October 18

**Healthy Eating Healthy Living**  
 Monday, October 29  
 Monday, November 5  
 Monday, November 12

**Eat, Move, Sleep**  
 Thursday, November 14 with Tom Rath 3-4:30 pm

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**DID YOU KNOW?** If you are over the age of 62, you are eligible to sign up for a University of Minnesota course for free.

Contact Erin Fider for more information: [fider002@umn.edu](mailto:fider002@umn.edu) | 612-624-6743

[csh.umn.edu](http://csh.umn.edu)