

# UMRA UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

OCTOBER 2014

## Dean Mary Nichols to address challenges of online learning at October 28 luncheon

At the October 28 UMRA luncheon, Dr. Mary Nichols will address the topic: “It’s Only Disruptive If You Can’t Be Disrupted: Lessons in Agility in our Online Era.”

Having spent 13 years as dean of the College of Continuing Education, Mary Nichols has been on the front line of nontraditional education. She has the responsibility for, and has helped create, a wide array of programs, many conducted in partnership with other colleges at the University, that respond to the needs of learners seeking individualized



or applied undergraduate or graduate degrees, academic certificates, and education for career advancement or professional development.

She has been on the faculty of the University since 1975 and holds an appointment as professor in the Carlson School of Management. Her research and teaching specialties are in strategy implementation, leadership, and change in organizations. She earned degrees in mathematics and Ph.D. in organization studies from the University of Kansas.

Prior to becoming dean of the College of Continuing Education, Dr. Nichols served in leadership positions in the Carlson School. She was associate dean for academic programs for more than six years, leading

curriculum redesign across all undergraduate and MBA programs. She helped deepen the linkages to the community through a range of education and research programs.

Since becoming CCE dean in 2001, Dr. Nichols has led her college through a period in which technology has enabled a great deal of change in the design and delivery of education. During those years, Dean Nichols has seen a number of “disruptors” that have come across the educational landscape—such as the recent appearance of MOOCs (massive open online courses).

It is important, as Dean Nichols reminds us, for some within the university to be monitoring, experimenting with, and evaluating emerging educational innovations. Under her leadership CCE has put that forward as one of its strategic priorities, aligning with the University’s strategic plan.

Dr. Nichols represents the University on the national Research University Continuing Education Deans group, the Governor’s Workforce Development Council, and the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of Minnesota Public Radio.

We look forward to the opportunity to hear and talk with her on October 28.

— Hal Miller, UMRA President

### More October 28 activities:

9 a.m.—UMRA board meeting

10:30 a.m.—New Member Welcome event

1:30 p.m.— Workshop: First of three workshops on housing choices as we age

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### OCTOBER LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, October 28, 2014  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

#### Featured Speaker

Mary Nichols, dean, U College  
of Continuing Education

#### “It’s Only Disruptive If You Can’t Be Disrupted”

#### Location

Conference Room ABC,  
Campus Club, Fourth Floor,  
Coffman Memorial Union

#### Menu

Ferndale Market turkey and  
wild rice meatloaf with cranberry  
demi-glace and sweet potatoes.  
For vegetarian or gluten-free  
options, please request when  
making your reservations.

#### Reservations ARE Required

**Deadline: Thursday, October 23**  
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 Oct.23.

#### Parking

Ramp and garage parking on U  
campus — \$6 for the day with  
UMRA’s discount coupon.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The September issue of *The Atlantic* carried an article by Graeme Wood titled “Is College Doomed?” The introductory description reads, “Traditional college—expensive, arguably inefficient, slow to change—is widely seen as ripe for dissolution.” Wood goes on to describe some of the competition to the traditional institution.

Some years ago, I served on an American Council of Education task force studying how to manage the impending entry of for-profit institutions into the higher education arena. After long discussions, we concluded that regional accreditation associations would be the gatekeepers to such entries. That was before the North Central Association accredited Phoenix University, an institution with few regular full-time faculty members, and no campus. That opened the door to dozens of other for-profit institutions with similar credentials.

But the insurgents aren't all for-profit colleges. Some of them are being birthed and nourished by traditional universities and colleges.

Best known of these is the MOOC movement. MOOC stands for Mass Open Online Course. These courses are offered free by some of America's most prestigious universities: MIT, Harvard, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Stanford, Duke, Yale, and Carnegie Mellon.

In a website called “MOOCs: Top Ten Sites for Free Education,” the claim is made: “Although there has been access to free online courses on the Internet for years, the quality and quantity has changed. Access to free courses has allowed students to obtain a level of education that many only could dream of in the past. This has changed the face of education.”

Hundreds of thousands of students have registered in these courses. For example, *The Atlantic* reported that, in a recent survey done at the University of Pennsylvania of these students, 1.8 million registrants took 36 MOOCs. The Harvard course, “The Ancient Greek Hero” recently enrolled over 31,000 students; and Stanford's MOOC course on artificial intelligence enrolled more than 160,000. Huge as these numbers are, the MOOC dropout rates are high. For example, only 5 percent of the students in the Penn study completed the average MOOC course and received a certificate.

Even though the dropout rate for MOOC courses is high, some traditional institutions are beginning to adopt

and adapt the courses into their curricula and are giving their credits for them. Nathan Heller, in a *New Yorker* article entitled “Laptop U,” reported, “Following a trial run at San Jose State University, which yielded higher-than-usual pass rates, 11 schools in the California State University system moved to incorporate MOOCs into their curricula.”

The temptation to import MOOC courses, developed by leading institutions' teaching stars and offered free, into an engineering program at a second tier college is, at this time, economically seductive. But this might be a fatal embrace to some of those programs, as it may well lead to cutting down their own resident faculty and turning others into course assistants for the MOOC. And at what point will the MOOCs begin to cost the users?

Facing public concerns about rising tuition costs, student debts, and declining legislative support, the traditional universities are turning to adjunct instruction and the Internet to expand their audience to working adults who want the credential of a bachelor's or master's degree. Some of them have simply expanded their own offerings to attract the audience that MOOCs were designed to serve. For instance, Western Governors University is a consortium of public universities in those states, offering online degrees for courses provided by their members. Arizona State University recently announced the availability of more than 70 online degree programs. They have also announced a partnership with Starbucks Coffee to form the Starbucks College Achievement Plan, helping baristas and others to complete their “journey in higher education.”

The University of Minnesota's College of Continuing Education has been serving this population for years. At our October luncheon, Dean Mary Nichols will describe recent initiatives that Minnesota has been taking to address these developments.

Most of us who have spent our careers here might look at these developments and dire predictions, remembering Mark Twain's remark that “the report of my death was an exaggeration.” It was, but it was eventually true. Let's hope that the University of Minnesota can make the adaptations needed to thrive in this changing and dynamic higher education scene.

— Hal Miller, UMRA President  
miller@umn.edu

## Welcome reception and orientation for new members, prior to luncheon on October 28

Recently received members of UMRA are invited to the Welcome New Members Reception in the Campus Club Lounge, from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 28. (You are considered a new member if you joined since November 1 of 2013.)

UMRA Board members will be on hand to meet and greet you. Get acquainted with other new members and find out about activities and groups sponsored by your organization. This event will take place just before the monthly UMRA luncheon so you can plan to attend both with one trip to campus. Please RSVP to [ander049@umn.edu](mailto:ander049@umn.edu) if you plan to join us for the New Member Welcome reception.

The UMRA Membership Committee initiated this get-acquainted event two years ago. It was so well received that it has become an annual welcome session for those who join UMRA. We do hope you will attend. More information will be forthcoming in an e-mail invitation directed to those who have joined within the past year.

— John Anderson, chair, UMRA Membership Committee

## UMRA's annual financial summary available

The annual financial summary for the fiscal year 2013–2014 (July 1, 2013, though June 30, 2014) is available on the UMRA website. Go to [www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra) and click on 'About Us' section.

## Why didn't my parking discount coupon work at check-out?

Several thousand U of M parking discount coupons have been distributed and successfully used over the past three years. However, from time to time, a number of people have reported instances in which their discount coupons failed to work at the check-out stations.

Such failures are likely due to deactivation of the magnetic strip by exposure to a magnet, perhaps on a purse closure or a cell phone (there is a magnet in the phone's speaker). To maintain the effectiveness of your discount coupons, please keep them away from magnets and cell phones.

### On the subject of parking coupons...

UMRA 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; (3) by sending a request and self-addressed, stamped envelope to John Anderson, 1332 Como Blvd. E., St. Paul, MN 55117.

## Living well in later life workshop, Oct. 28: Choosing where to live as we age

The Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area is rich with housing options for an aging population. In this, the first of three workshops planned by the UMRA Cares committee, Professors Becky Yust and Marilyn Bruin of the College of Design will consider and explore the multitude of housing arrangements available to retirees.



To move from a single family residence is a major life decision, one that we face with feelings as well as logic. It is vital to “get it right” for our individual situations—circumstances that are often changing, sometimes on short notice. This first workshop will focus on the important factors in these decisions: choices, costs, locations, amenities, etc.

The workshop begins at 1:30 p.m. in the Campus Club shortly after the monthly luncheon meeting. Everyone, including guests, is welcome to attend.

The second workshop on housing, November 25, will feature a panel of volunteers—UMRA members who have made a move—who will share how they handled the decisions and the pros and cons of their moves. A third workshop on January 27 will focus on successful “aging in place” (deciding not to move and making that work).

Plan to join us for these valuable discussions, examining the factors in decisions about where to live as we age.

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## Mark your calendars for upcoming programs

November 18—Speaker: UMRA's own past president, John S. Adams, speaking on how metropolitan areas work.

December — No meeting, no newsletter; enjoy the holidays

January 27— Speaker: Tom Fisher, dean of the College of Design, School of Architecture, “New Ways of Living.”



## With Eastcliff reception, URVC and Karen Kaler honor the work of University volunteers

Outstanding in a spectacular afternoon filled with sunshine, smiles, good food, acknowledgements, and awards, were the remarks offered by Karen Kaler, who has hosted this recep-



tion in each of the four years since she and her husband, U President Eric Kaler, have lived at Eastcliff.

After recalling what she had learned in her first three years, Mrs.

Kaler said, “We know that volunteering has been rightly called the glue that holds a community together. We know that volunteering has enormous benefits to the volunteer as well as to the community. But being we are at a major research university, I thought [this year] we should consider research on volunteerism.” She went on to cite numerous studies investigating the benefits of regular volunteering; among the findings: greater happiness, lower rates of depression, physical well-being, measurable health, longer life. Among the results: “robust evidence that volunteers are more satisfied” with their lives than non-volunteers. Judging by the smiles that day, her sources must indeed be right.

Read the full text of her remarks online at [www.urvc.umn.edu/pages/rewards](http://www.urvc.umn.edu/pages/rewards) and click “Remarks from Karen Kaler.”



A beautiful afternoon sun greeted guests on the garden terrace at Eastcliff as they arrived September 17 for the reception honoring volunteers. Volunteers from the University Retirees Volunteer Center, the University of Minnesota Retirees Association, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute enjoyed some well-deserved leisure and treats.



UMRA President Hal Miller (rt) stops for a chat with Rodney Loper and Elfrieda Hintze at the Volunteer Reception.

### From the Cares Committee desk...

With this issue of the Newsletter, the UMRA Cares Committee is launching a new column, which will offer the opportunity for readers to share books, ideas, and resources. The committee encourages UMRA members to share a resource they have found useful in understanding aging and caregiving. Send in your contributions with a short descriptive note to UMRA Cares at [umracares@umn.edu](mailto:umracares@umn.edu) or talk with the committee co-chairs Earl Nolting <[enolting@umn.edu](mailto:enolting@umn.edu)> and Val Linck <[avlinck@comcast.net](mailto:avlinck@comcast.net)> for more information about how to contribute to this monthly column.

#### Experiencing hearing loss—

As my dad’s caregiver, I struggled with how hearing loss negatively affected his dementia. Now as I age, I find my ability to hear is also diminishing, especially in book clubs and noisy restaurants. Looking for more information, I jumped

at the chance to read a book recommended by a friend—*Shouting Won’t Help; Why I and Fifty Million Other Americans Can’t Hear You* by baby boomer Katherine Bouton.

In her retrospective work, Bouton recounts her own hearing difficulties when she worked as an editor for the *New York Times* and later, when she experienced deafness in both ears at age 60. Expanding her own story through extensive research, she explores the personal, psychological, and physiological dimensions of hearing loss. She points out that struggling to hear can use so much mental energy that little is left for understanding what is being said. This book has a wealth of information and will assist readers themselves as well as in their roles as caregivers for others.

Bouton is working on another book detailing ways to hear better; I plan to read it and will share more when it appears.

— Helen Carlson, member of UMRA Cares committee

## Beware of scams, Humphrey warns

At UMRA's September luncheon, "Skip" Humphrey spoke on "Scams against Seniors." In his speech, he recommended that we become familiar with the website of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ([consumerfinance.gov](http://consumerfinance.gov)), and he alerted us to protect ourselves and our assets with five rules: "It's your money, ask questions; it's your information, protect it; it's your retirement savings, plan ahead; it's your house, keep it; and it's your money, you can say no."

Look for more information about these guidelines for protecting your assets on the consumer website under the topic "Older Americans" in the pull-down "Get Assistance" window of the CFPB home page.

In his advice, Humphrey offered three key principles: *Don't be pressured into any financial step; if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is; and trust but verify.*

On the subject of selecting a person to give one's power of attorney, he quoted one elderly person as saying, "I have seven children whom I love; I have two I can trust."

And, he concluded, "When the phone rings at 6:30 p.m., and you answer to a salesperson...Hang up!" To which one questioner asked, "What if the caller represents the DFL?" With that, Mr. Humphrey joined in for gales of laughter.

— Hal Miller

## New Northrop fascinates UMRA tour group



Guided by David Russell, audience services manager (right), UMRA members were treated to an extensive behind-the-scenes tour of the transformed Northrop after our September luncheon. More than 50 "tourists" learned about all the planning and technology involved in the renovation as we made our way from the new west lobby entrance to the preserved Memorial Hall and new atrium. From the rebuilt stage, we had a performer's view of the three new balconies. Proceeding through vibrant rehearsal and meeting spaces, viewing study and gallery spaces, the group finally arrived (above) to experience the soaring heights of the third balcony. All agreed, the Northrop is a spectacular campus venue and public destination.

## Retired, but still continuing to discover—

**Consider applying for a professional development grant**  
The Professional Development Grants for Retirees is initiating its seventh cycle this fall. This program continues as a collaboration of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association (UMRA) with the University's Office of the Vice President of Research. All faculty, professional and administrative, and civil service retirees are eligible to apply.

We encourage you to consider submitting an application to complete a project, present a paper, or propose new scholarship or other professional development action. A description of past funded projects and current information for applying is available on the UMRA website: [www1.umn.edu/umra](http://www1.umn.edu/umra) or you may send an e-mail to Jan Hogan ([jhogan@umn.edu](mailto:jhogan@umn.edu)). The deadline for submission is December 10.

— Jan Hogan-Schiltgen, chair, PDGR Committee

## 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 UMRA Directory lists.

William J. and Virginia S. Craig, CURA, P & A  
212 N 1st St #609, Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612-377-8888; 612-625-3321; [wrcraig@umn.edu](mailto:wrcraig@umn.edu)

Gail H. Frethem, CURA, Civil Service  
5241 10th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55417  
612-823-6633; [gailywaily.frethem@gmail.com](mailto:gailywaily.frethem@gmail.com)

Peggy Ann McCarthy, Facility Mgmt, Civil Service  
5696 Royal Oaks Dr., Shoreview, MN 55126  
651-634-0575; [pmcsolutions2@gmail.com](mailto:pmcsolutions2@gmail.com)

Gerald D. and Peggy M. Rinehart, Student Affairs, P & A  
929 Portland Ave #1601, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-545-5725; [g-rine@umn.edu](mailto:g-rine@umn.edu)

Sonja Ann Sheriff, Purchasing, Civil Service  
4141 3rd St. N.E. #203, Columbia Heights, MN 55421  
763-782-9039; [s-sher@umn.edu](mailto:s-sher@umn.edu)

Joseph M. and Kaimay Y. Terry, Dept. of Ophthalmology,  
Faculty  
2058 Shoreline Dr., Wayzata, MN 55391  
952-484-5555; 952-933-4963; [terry003@umn.edu](mailto:terry003@umn.edu)

## Father of India's 'Green Revolution' to speak

UMRA member Ron Phillips invites you to attend a special lecture, 2 p.m., October 13, in the St. Paul Student Center Theater. M. S. Swaminathan, considered the Father of the Green Revolution in India, will speak as part of the Borlaug, Hayes-Phillips lecture; he will receive an honorary doctorate. Reception follows in the Larson Art Gallery.

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

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[www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra)

**In Remembrance**

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

James L. Duffy, former U Bookstores director, retired after 42 years of work for the University, died June 5, 2014, at age 89. He had been an UMRA member since 1993.

**Call on the Cares Committee for support**


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

If you know of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge and would like support, please let the committee know how they might help.

—Earl Nolting, UMRA Cares committee member

See the newsletter online, look for friends in photos of past events, connect to resources for retirement information, and stay current on news for retirees —  
 on UMRA's ever-expanding website: [www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra)

The Board of Directors and members of UMRA thank the College of Continuing Education and its LearningLife program for sponsoring the UMRA October Newsletter. LearningLife also offers discounts to UMRA members.

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[cce.umn.edu/umra](http://cce.umn.edu/umra)      **612-624-4000**

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