

UMRA U NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

MARCH 2015

UMRA grant recipients take the stage at March program with stories about projects

Assisted by awards from an UMRA-initiated program—the Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR)—University retirees have been able to pursue 62 projects over the past six years, making many different and important creative contributions.

Like the very successful PDGR presentations last year, this year's panel will provide a sampling of those contributions. Jan Hogan-Schiltgen, chair of the PDGR program, will moderate the panel.

This luncheon presentation and discussion has been designed not only to bring you relevant new knowledge and perspectives, but also to show first-hand how the grants program fits into (and adds to) the lives of retirees. The format will emphasize memoir experience rather than technical reports.



Philip O. Larsen, emeritus professor of plant pathology, will relate some stories about training Tanzanian farmers in advanced farm management. He is a former associate dean, College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences.

In 2012, Professor Larsen with his colleague Fred Bergsrud, emeritus professor of bioproducts and biosystems, received a PDGR grant supporting their volunteer work at the Institute of Agriculture at Tumaini University, Iringa, Tanzania. Their roles were to advise, assist, and teach in a project that delivered maize seed and fertilizer at 44 crop demonstration sites in the Iringa Region in central Tanzania and to teach fertilizer application, planting, measuring yield, and weed management to local farmers at each site. Larsen will talk about this project and his experiences living for several weeks in rural Tanzania.

Travelers may wish to follow in their footsteps. Iringa, a city of 113,000 people at an altitude of 5,000 feet, has an ideal climate and lush, green terrain.

Ron Anderson, UMRA past-president and professor emeritus of sociology, received PDGR grants in 2009, 2013, and 2014. The last two supported his pioneering research on the concept and prevalence of suffering. With a topic that was new to him only five years ago, he has already published two books.

Human Suffering and Quality of Life was written in early 2014. He also edited *World Suffering and Quality of Life*, which he says is, “the first book to address global suffering head-on.

PDGR grants panel — continued, page 3

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MARCH
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, March 24, 2015
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speakers

Panel: Stories told by grant recipients; moderated by Jan Hogan-Schiltgen, chair of UMRA's PDGR program

Location

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

Menu

Corned Beef with Guinness
Mustard over Colcannon Potatoes.
For vegetarian or gluten-free
options, please request when
making your reservations.

Reservations ARE Required

Deadline: Thursday, March 19.
Prepayment of \$16 per person;
Annual prepayors **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 March 19.

Parking

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

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Retirement at Colleges and Universities

In 2014 the American Council on Education published *Faculty Retirement: Best Practices for Navigating and Transitioning*. It consisted of several chapters on the subject, first tracing the recent history of mandatory retirement and the changes that led to its end. Later chapters were devoted to the efforts of 13 institutions to mitigate the effects of this change.

In 1907 William Osler, chief physician of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, made a case for mandatory retirement in his outgoing talk. He claimed that faculty who were over the age of 40 were unproductive and that faculty over 60 were a nuisance. This attitude, along with a growing queue of well-qualified potential faculty who were waiting for places in the academy, led to the passing of mandatory retirement rules in many higher education institutions. By the 1960s these mandatory rules were putting a substantial percentage of the workforce into retirement, many of whom were not happy about it.

The population has aged since 1900. According to a CRS Report for Congress on life expectancy in the U.S. by L.B. Shrestha, average life expectancy went from 52.0 years in 1901–1924 to 75.8 years in 1982–2004. Many of these older people were able to continue working, and because of their extended lifespan they needed to work. But mandatory retirement rules blocked opportunities for their continued employment.

In 1967 Congress passed the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). The act protected employees between 40 and 65 from mandatory retirement. As 65 was commonly the retirement age for many faculty and staff in higher education, not much changed. But in 1978, an amendment to ADEA prohibited mandatory retirement before the age of 70. Again, in 1986, another amendment was passed to outlaw compulsory retirement in most sectors. But higher education continued to use mandatory retirement rules until 1993 when Congress concluded that, as few faculty members worked beyond 70, a mandatory retirement age in higher education was unnecessary. So, faculty members no longer were forced into retirement by their age.

This forces universities to become creative in managing their aging workforce, while also making efforts to replenish their activities with younger people. A popular

innovation has been the use of phased retirement plans. Our University had begun a version of phased retirement in the early 1980s. This has evolved into the current version, passed by the regents in 2003.

In 2003, the Regents of the University of Minnesota began offering phased retirement at age 55+ to tenured faculty and professional administrative (P&A) employees on continuous appointment. In exchange for surrendering continuous appointment/tenure they can reduce their work load and receive medical and dental benefits, vacation, and life insurance for between one and five years.

According to the University's Office of Human Resources reports, between 2004 and 2013, 625 faculty members and 684 P&A staff retired for a total of 1,309. Of that 1,309 total in those years, there were 350 qualified tenured faculty and continuous appointment P&A staff who took advantage of the phased retirement option (26.7 percent). It should be noted here that most P&A staff do not hold continuous appointments, therefore most do not qualify for the phased retirement option.

The average age of retired faculty members has crept up slightly during those years (age 66 in 2004–05; 68 in 2012–13). The average age of P&A retirees has fluctuated from year to year, but has also grown (age 58 in 2004–05 to 61 in 2012–13).

This reflects a trend reported in a 2011 study by TIAA/CREF that showed that only 25 percent of the “Baby Boomer” faculty intend to retire by age 66.

“Considering that the baby boomer generation is the largest cohort in academe (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), institutions will need to be prepared to work with this generation and to have supports in place to allow for them to work longer.”
 (“Faculty Retirement” page 7)

Given these figures, it is hard to say how effective phased retirement has been in moderating the trend toward later retirements at Minnesota. We will need to continue to find ways to balance longer career paths with the need for opening places for younger faculty and P&A staff.



— Hal Miller, UMRA President
miller@umn.edu

March 24 workshop: “Life is a Work of Art”

In March our workshop theme, exploring creativity, continues with Lucy Rose Fischer, “Life is a Work of Art.” The workshop begins at 1:30 p.m., in Campus Club ABC, following the luncheon program.

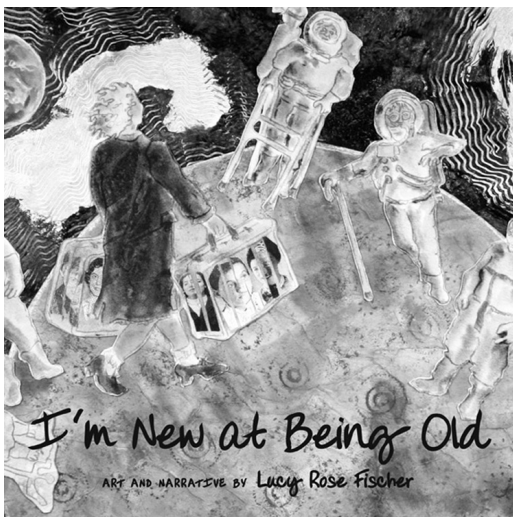


Lucy Rose Fischer— professor of sociology, noted expert in the study of aging—turned to art for an encore career. After 25 years of teaching and researching aging, including at the U of M and HealthPartners Research Foundation, she now devotes much of her energy to her art. A side passion while she directed studies

and wrote award-winning academic articles in gerontology, her art now has been shown in more than 50 exhibits and is on display in collections and public institutions. “Engaging art drew me into... recognizing and accepting the aging process within our own beings,” she says.

She and her art have been shown in more than 50 exhibits, and she was featured on the public television programs “The Creative Power of Aging” and “Life Changing Art,” which won a regional Emmy.

To come to terms with her own aging, she wrote and illustrated a book titled *I’m New at Being Old*, which received a Midwest Book Award and Independent Publishers Gold Award. With humor, imagination, and whimsical illustrations she deals with the issues of aging, including “the breakdown of movable parts,” the “fear of an unraveling mind,” and elusive sleep.



Her positive attitude and humorous presentation is bound to lighten our days and energize our spirits. The book will be available for purchase at this workshop.

February workshop demonstrated how to enhance creativity and mental agility

The February workshop in our Living Well in Later Life series was led by Professor Wilma Koutstaal, Department of Psychology. Drawing on cognitive and brain sciences research from her lab, she explored the benefits of mental agility and creativity in aging. She outlined and discussed nine contributors to mental agility: sensory attunement, physical activity, social engagement, control dialing, nutrition, learning to vary, cognitive challenge, novelty, and “detail stepping.”

Then she engaged the workshop audience in thinking exercises that illustrated creativity and agility. At the close of the workshop Professor Koutstaal presented “Five Take-Home Tips” to use in continuing to work on our mental agility. These are:

- Change your level of detail: think in different time-frames (one day, one week, one year from now...) or ask how and why.
- Challenge yourself and think with “all of your senses.”
- Use your “shower times” — and be prepared for them.
- Allow room for both spontaneity and deliberateness.
- Avoid procrastination; jump in and the environment will guide you!

Interested in exploring this further? Check out the following creativity and innovation blog: <http://innovating-minds4change.com>, which she co-writes. Also this spring, Oxford University Press will be publishing a new book that she co-authored with Jonathan Binks, *Innovating Minds: Rethinking Creativity to Inspire Change*.

PDGR Grants panel — Continued from page 1

With the intention to launch a new field of research, he is well into his third book, *Alleviating Suffering*.

Ron Anderson will put forward answers to such questions as: Why is global suffering rising when poverty and hunger supposedly have declined? Is suffering greater for those with lower income, and if so, why? Why is the meaning of suffering different for the elderly? His brief presentation will show how visual images and icons of suffering differ across news media, entertainment media, social media, and the public sphere.



TBA: a third project grant recipient for this panel.

Sharing our ideas and resources—

From the Cares Committee desk

Chemotherapy—a dreaded word for a medical procedure no one wants but may at some point require. For those told they will need “chemo,” the first reaction may be fear because the treatment is not well understood.

There are two references that will be very helpful to a patient facing this treatment option:

The Chemo Zone: Your guide to living and flourishing during chemotherapy. Linda Rubietta with Tracy Rubietta, 2011, Beaver Pond Press, Edina, Minnesota.

This is a workbook developed by a patient (Linda) and her daughter, Tracy. Described by the authors as a survival guide, it was reviewed by a team of medical advisors for accuracy and relevance and is available through Amazon.com or BeaversPondBooks.com. I have used this reference and found it to be an excellent resource.

Chemotherapy and You: support for people with cancer. National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health. 2007 NIH publication # 09-7156.

This is a helpful Q & A discussion about chemotherapy, the side effects and ways to manage them, foods to help with side effects, helpful organizations for support, and a brief explanation of several medical terms. It is available free by calling 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER) or ordering online at www.cancer.gov. It is another excellent resource, which I have used.

If you or someone you know and love is facing chemotherapy, tell them for me that there are some excellent resources available to help them through the experience.

— Earl Nolting, Cares Committee



Program speaker Michael Osterholm (left), chats during the February luncheon with President Hal Miller and President-elect Jean Kinsey.

Health benefits update: Results of open enrollment for U retiree health plans

According to Employee Benefits, a total of 2,856 of us who are 65 years of age and over (1,994 retiree only and 862 family) signed up for health coverage under the University's Retiree Health Plan.

By plan option, Health Partners 65+ was the most popular selection, with 972 enrollees (34.0 percent), up 2.0 percent, followed by Blue Cross/Blue/Shield's U of M retiree plan with 822 (28.8 percent), up 2.4 percent. Medica's Group Prime Solution has enrolled 707 (24.8 percent), which is down 3.4 percent. U Care for Seniors has 284 (9.8 percent), up 1.1 percent.

In addition to these numbers, 417 retirees (14.6 percent) signed up for secondary plans first offered for 2014 by each of the carriers. Coverage under these plans featured lower premium, higher out-of-pocket-costs. The numbers included 144 with Health Partners 65+, 138 with Medica, 76 with U Care, 34 with BC/BS, and 25 with the Health Partners National Plan.

— Ted Litman, UMRA Representative to the University of Minnesota Benefits Advisory Committee

February speaker Michael Osterholm discusses the why and how of epidemics



Ebola is not the only epidemic the world faces, but it has revealed that the world is dangerously ill prepared. February's speaker, Michael Osterholm, illustrated how our changing world—the volume of people, global transportation and shipping, and ever-rising political chaos—is a virtual petri dish for epidemics.

The Ebola crisis is not, and will not be, the only disease to challenge human existence. The growth of mega-cities, failed states, slums and refugee camps, and diminishing barriers are making disease increasingly difficult to contain. Addressing emerging global microbial threats will require partnerships, planning, preparedness with surge capacity, and proactive communications. Fundamentally, he said, we must learn to “tell the truth” and “expect the unexpected.”

2015–16 grant awards announced

On February 27 Vice President for Research Brian Herman announced the 13 recipients of Professional Development Grants for Retirees for the seventh cycle of project grants. Congratulations to:

- Peter Reed, Department of English: “The Graphic Art of Kurt Vonnegut”
- Wayne Potratz, Art Department: “Clay Molding Workshop Participation and Creative Research in Japan”
- Hans-Olaf Pfannkuch, Earth Sciences: “Anatomy of Fraud in the Comstock Lode, U.S., and German Mining Laws, and Role of Immigrant Miners from Saxony in the 1870s”
- Kathleen O’Brien, University Services: “Women in Minnesota Local Government, 1970 to 2000”
- Donald Clay Johnson, University Libraries: “Local Versus Global Perspectives of Indian Textiles”
- Denise Guerin, Design, Housing & Apparel: “Development of Research Summaries: Transforming Research Findings into Evidence-Based Design Criteria for InformeDesign (website)”
- Joanne Eicher, Design, Housing & Apparel: “Documentation of Eicher Textile Collection for Online Portfolio”
- Steven Colman, UMD Geological Sciences & Large Lakes Observatory: “Glacial and Post-Glacial Sediments Below Central Lake Superior”
- Terence Collins, College of Education & Human Development: “How Can We Possibly Read the Poems of Phillis Wheatley?”
- Patrick Brezonik, Civil, Environmental & Geo-Engineering: “Use of Optical Remote Sensing to Estimate Total Dissolved Organic Matter in Lakes: Effects of Iron & Spatial Variability in Chemical Characteristics of DOM”
- Richard Beach, Curriculum & Instruction: “English Teachers’ Perceptions of Enhancements to Websites Related to Teaching Literature, Composition, and Digital/Media Literacy”
- Subir Banerjee, Earth Sciences: “Past Monsoon Intensity over China from Magnetism of Top Soil Nanoparticles of Iron Oxides”
- Ron Anderson, Sociology: “Completing a Book on the Topic of Suffering Relief (global perspective)”
- For abstracts and additional information, see www1.umn.edu/umra/grants.php.

UMRA board votes to supplement funding for the 2015-16 PDGR grant projects

On February 24 the UMRA Board of Directors approved using \$10,000 from the account invested at the University of Minnesota Foundation to supplement funding from the Office of the Vice President for Research, thus making it possible for 13 of the 23 applicants to receive a grant.

To support the eighth cycle of grants next fall, the PDGR committee has submitted a request for funding to Provost Karen Hanson.

Please consider a donation to the Foundation account to support future grants to retirees [UMRA Fund 4867]. For more information, contact Lynn Praska, Planned Giving Officer, U of M Foundation at 612-624-4158; e-mail lpraska@umn.edu or Jan Hogan, UMRA grants chair, jhogan@umn.edu.

Your nominations are requested for UMRA board and officers for 2015-2016

If you’d like to know how UMRA operates from the inside (and comes up with all the great lunches, programs, and workshops we enjoy every month), now is your chance to nominate yourself, or someone you know, for next year’s board and office positions.

Positions for which we need nominations are: president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and two board members. Descriptions of terms and duties can be found in the Operating Manual on the UMRA website (www.umn.edu/umra).

New members, you are encouraged to volunteer. Feel free to jump right in. UMRA is for all of us.

The Nominating Committee would appreciate your suggestions by **Friday, April 17**. They will meet the next week to consider and call nominees. Please contact any of the following Nominating Committee members: John Adams, chair; Hal Miller, John Anderson, Gayle Graham Yates, and Nancy Helmich. They look forward to hearing from you.

The election will be held at the annual meeting in May.

— Julie Medbery, UMRA Secretary

See the newsletter online, connect to resources for retirement information, and stay current on news for retirees on UMRA’s website:
www.umn.edu/umra

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200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2002

Website: www.umn.edu/umra

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

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2. Cut out this form **and address label**.
3. Mail both to the address above.

Name _____
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E-mail _____
Other Info _____

UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to a new member who has recently joined UMRA. Please greet her at luncheon meetings, and add her information to your UMRA Directory lists.

Betty B. Okusanya, Boynton Health Service, Bargaining Unit
1524 Meadowwood Dr., Brooklyn Park, MN 55444-2458
763-566-5056; betty.okusanya@gmail.com

In Remembrance

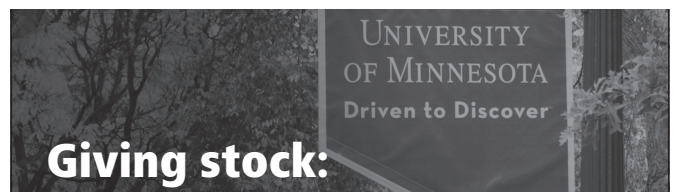
We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of losses to our UMRA community. Since the Newsletter was published in February, we have received news of the following. Our condolences to the family and friends of:

Mary G. Weisensee, Nursing faculty, died August 26, 2014. She had been an UMRA member since 2003.

Please assist the UMRA Cares Committee

When you become aware of a family in our midst who is in need of assistance or support, please notify the UMRA Cares Committee at umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403, and leave a message for UMRA Cares.

The board and members of the U of M Retirees Association thank the University of Minnesota Foundation for sponsoring UMRA's March 2015 Newsletter. Please note the opportunity in the announcement below.



Giving stock: a win for you...and the U!

Giving appreciated securities to the University can provide an immediate benefit for the U and is more tax-efficient than giving cash.

By gifting appreciated securities you have held for more than one year to the U, you may receive a double tax benefit. You will avoid capital gains tax on the appreciation of the stock, and you can claim an income tax deduction for the current fair market value of the gift—subject to applicable tax limitations.

For more information, contact Lynn Praska at lpraska@umn.edu or call 612-624-4158.

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FOUNDATION