

UMRA NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

FEBRUARY 2019

Athletic Director Mark Coyle to address the current state of Gopher Athletics

We are pleased that Athletic Director Mark Coyle will join UMRA at our February 26 luncheon to talk about “Gopher Advocacy,” addressing the current state of University of Minnesota Athletics and commenting on the national intercollegiate athletic scene.



Coyle returned to the University in May 2016 as athletic director and has been incredibly active in restoring the department and building a strong and well-respected organization.

Previously, Coyle served as the athletic director at both Syracuse University and Boise State. He also worked at the University of Kentucky for several years, eventually rising to deputy athletic director. Prior to that, he was at the University of Minnesota as associate athletic director for external relations, working for a portion of that time under Athletic Director Joel Maturi.

Coyle has been extraordinarily successful in each of these posts and is a great fit for his current job at the U. So far, the department has achieved great success in academics, competitively, and in attracting and retaining great coaches. He will undoubtedly comment on the hiring of women’s basketball head coach Lindsey Whalen, football head coach P. J. Fleck, and men’s hockey head coach Robert Motzko, as well as the retention of Hugh McCutcheon, head coach of Minnesota’s women’s volleyball team. Coyle has helped create a culture of compliance in the department and has continued a very strong program for monitoring, educating, and complying with NCAA rules. He has helped restore the reputation of the department through his clear, direct, and high-integrity leadership.

While the athletic department has always been a flash point for controversy, under Coyle’s leadership the focus has been on academic achievement and competitive success. The department has very high graduation rates, GPAs, and NCAA academic rankings, both on an absolute basis and in comparison to other programs in the country. The teams have also been incredibly successful. For example, this fall the football team finished the season very well, beating Wisconsin and then Georgia Tech in a bowl game. Even more impressive, the volleyball team was ranked in the top three or four all year and went far into the NCAA tournament. Expectations are, of course, high for women’s basketball because of the hiring of Whalen, and for men’s basketball because of the high level of talent on the team.

We look forward to hearing from Coyle about the department and his future expectations for Gopher Athletics.

—Bill Donohue, president-elect and chair, Program Committee

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY MEETING At A Glance

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

Location

Conference Room ABC
Campus Club, Fourth Floor
Coffman Memorial Union

Luncheon + Forum

11:30-1:30 p.m.

Current state of Gopher Athletics

Featured speaker:

Athletic Director Mark Coyle

Living Well Workshop

1:30-2:30 p.m.

Changes in ‘U’ Retirement Plans

Presentation:

Office of Human Resources

Menu

Ferndale market turkey and wild rice meatloaf with mushroom demi-glace, mashed sweet potatoes, and broccoli.

For special dietary needs, please request when making your reservation.

RSVP by Tuesday, February 19

Prepayment of \$20 per person; annual prepayers must make reservations.

Reserve and pay online, or send your check payable to ‘UMRA’ to:

Judy Leahy Grimes
1937 Palace Ave.

St. Paul MN 55105-1728

Or, jleahy4654@aol.com.

Parking

\$6 maximum in University ramps, including reserved space in East River Road Ramp, with UMRA’s discount coupon.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

UMRA is growing, active, and thriving

As UMRA moves into 2019, I thought I should offer a “State of the Association” report. (Spoiler alert—I think we’re doing pretty darn well.)



Our total membership is approaching 600, having nicely recovered from the drop-off we experienced after the Office of Human Resources stopped providing us with contact information for new University retirees (our primary mode for recruiting members). UMRA reached a new agreement with OHR last

spring and we now have more new members—105—than ever before.

Our longest-standing member, Francis Paulu, joined UMRA in 1978!

Helping to keep members engaged, the Social Activities Committee has introduced myriad new activities and events, including tours (e.g., the new Bell Museum, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum) and tie-ins with Campus Club events and Gopher Athletics. This past month it spun off a new “Armchair Traveler” series (see article on page 7).

Another new initiative, the Finance and Legal Issues Group (FLG), has been providing access to important information for UMRA regarding major changes in federal tax law, savvy strategies for charitable giving, and similar timely topics. FLG joins the Photo Club and the Book Club in creating vibrant communities for learning, sharing, and discovery.

Keeping us informed and in touch, the Communications Committee has overseen significant upgrades to our newsletter and website and is currently working to make our monthly luncheon presentations accessible online.

A major upgrade of our data systems has allowed us to establish a single database containing virtually every person who has been a part of UMRA since its inception in 1976.

A more active role

As evident in UMRA’s engagement in the search for the new University president and the selection of new regents,

UMRA is taking a more active role in advocacy and support for the University.

For many, of course, the most visible elements of UMRA are our monthly luncheon presentations and workshops. Being able to hold these events in the Campus Club’s spacious West Wing Dining Room has certainly improved participant experience and allowed us to accommodate many more members. As those who saw Fred de Sam Lazaro’s January presentation and participated in the Meditation and Mindfulness workshop can attest, the quality of these sessions remains superb.

If you look through recent newsletters you certainly get a sense of the scope and range of events and services our members have created and organized. Additional good ideas are in the works, and the best news of all is that good ideas seem to spark more good ideas.

All of us currently in leadership positions stand on the shoulders of our UMRA predecessors. Thanks to our collective work and dedication, UMRA is thriving today and, I believe, well positioned to serve University retirees going forward.

—Jerry Rinehart, UMRA president

Candidates wanted

Following its appointment by the Board of Directors in February, the Nominating Committee will begin its work. Each year the following UMRA positions are up for election or re-election:

- At least four board slots, for three-year terms (renewable)
- treasurer and secretary, each for a one-year term (renewable)
- president-elect, for a one-year term followed by one year each as president and past-president

Member input can greatly aid us in our work. The Nominating Committee will collectively know only a small portion of the total membership. So please, please, please take a few minutes to go through the UMRA Membership Directory and/or your mental list of UMRA friends and acquaintances and then send me the names of anyone you think the Nominating Committee should consider. We welcome self-nominations, so don’t hesitate to include your own name.

— Chip Peterson, past president and chair,
Nominating Committee, c-pete@umn.edu

February workshop: changes to U of M retirement plan

Our February Living Well Workshop will present a preview of changes being made to the University's Faculty Retirement Plan (FRP). Specifically, representatives from the Office of Human Resources will present and discuss with us changes in the FRP's investment company vendor and the voluntary plans, and an updated core fund lineup. These changes will be rolled out during 2019 and should be of interest to all persons with funds in the FRP.

In April 2018, the University issued a request for proposals to vendors. This resulted in bids from six vendors which were then subjected to a comprehensive evaluation process. After interviews and discussion, the administration recommended to the Board of Regents in October 2018 that it contract with Fidelity Investments. The Regents approved the recommendation, and the University is now in the process of finalizing a contract with Fidelity. Fidelity will replace Securian, which has been responsible for record keeping and the investment fund options.

The upcoming change has been the subject of consultation with the Faculty Senate through the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs and its Retirement Subcommittee. UMRA has representation on both of these committees.

The final fund lineup and the details of the contract with Fidelity are still the subject of discussion. We hope to hear from the OHR representatives about the timing of the rollout and education program associated with these changes. Please attend the workshop to hear about the changes and ask questions.

—Bill Donohue, president-elect and chair,
Program Committee

January speaker offered insight into his life's calling

Journalism. It's a tough job with insane hours and pretty crappy pay. On the other hand, everybody hates you.

With that tongue-in-cheek tweet by fellow journalist Francis Lam, our January luncheon speaker, PBS correspondent and University of St. Thomas educator Fred de Sam Lazaro, commenced a marvelous presentation on his globe-spanning career as a broadcast journalist.

After graciously acknowledging the education his offspring have received at the U of M, where the three of them collectively have received or are completing a total of seven degrees, de Sam Lazaro briefly discussed

changes in the media landscape over his three-plus decades as a journalist, including the eroding credibility of many media outlets—PBS and the BBC being the most notable exceptions—and the drastic shortening of news segments and consequent increase in the difficulty of covering stories in sufficient depth.

Still, he has found a formula to teach about the world. He focuses on stories whose importance far exceeds their media profile. He typically finds one compelling figure—a person at once both ordinary and extraordinary—to captivate viewers and help them understand the larger issue. While some stories have tragic elements, their protagonists' resilience and creativity inspire.

To illustrate his approach, de Sam Lazaro shared video clips on subjects as varied as the garment industry in Bangladesh, water issues in Israel and Gaza, the tragedy of obstetric fistula in Kenya, and music's life-changing impact on child development in an Indian school.



Chip Peterson and journalist Fred de Sam Lazaro

Several personal strengths have fed his success as a reporter: his ability to sniff out important stories in unexpected places, the wealth of knowledge that permits him to put the local into global context, his deep admiration for those who people his stories, and surely, above all, the genuine empathy that his subjects sense in him.

UMRA members who were unable to attend the presentation, or those whose appetites were whetted for more, can find more than 300 of de Sam Lazaro's stories on the website of his Under-Told Stories Project at **undertoldstories.stthomas.edu**. There you can also sign up to receive the project's email newsletter and follow it on social media.

—Chip Peterson, past president

HELLO, my name is Vernon Cardwell

Hometown: Fort Morgan, Colorado.

When did you become a member of UMRA? 2016.

What was your very first job? Branch station agronomist for Colorado State University, in Hesperus.

What was your occupation when you retired from FT work? Morse Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Agronomy.

Do you have a favorite place on the U of M campus?

In the fields on the St. Paul Campus looking back at the water tower.

If you were an Olympic athlete, what would you like your sport to be? A marathoner.

What is a fun fact about you we might not know?

I like to work with wood and travel.



Vern Cardwell, "pushing" a team of oxen harvesting peanuts in Malawi.

What is something you currently enjoy doing with your time? I volunteered as an engineer-agronomist for Compatible Technology International (CTI) from 2010 through 2018. I designed hand-powered harvesting and threshing tools for small landholders in Africa, specifically Malawi, Tanzania, and Senegal. In East Africa, the work was with peanuts (ground nuts). I developed a peanut lifter that was oxen powered and reduced the lifting time for the women farmers by a factor of 10; a peanut stripper that removed the pods from the plant in one-third the time the women spent picking by hand; and a peanut sheller that increased shelling from 2 pounds to 70 pounds per hour. In Senegal, I designed a hand-powered pearl millet/sorghum thresher that increased clean grain from 25 pounds with the traditional mortar and pestle to nearly 100 pounds per hour. In December, CTI decided to close prototype work in St. Paul and have all the work done in Africa, thus terminating my activities. I'm now volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to nine new members who have joined UMRA since mid-December. Encourage anyone you know to attend our monthly meetings, greet all newcomers, and help introduce them to other members.

- Gary Brisbin, Office of the General Counsel, senior associate general counsel, P&A
- Jane Gehan, Office of Information Technology (OIT), business analyst, civil service
- Christine Karim, College of Biological Sciences, Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Biophysics, faculty
- Leo Lewis III, Athletics, associate athletic director, P&A
- Elizabeth Ann Lindeke, School of Nursing, Center for Neurobehavioral Development, faculty
- Charles Muscoplat, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, faculty
- Joel Rudloff, OIT, senior database analyst, civil service, and Virginia Rudloff
- William D. Swisher, Graduate School, business/systems analyst, P&A.

For contact information, please visit [umra.umn.edu/Contact Us/Member Search](http://umra.umn.edu/ContactUs/MemberSearch) (login required)

Come at 10:30 before luncheons

Thanks to the Campus Club, the fourth floor Bar and Lounge are available to UMRA members for coffee and conversation before our luncheons. There is no charge and no need to RSVP.

Parking reservations available

Email or call Judy Leahy Grimes (see p. 1) to make a reservation for parking to ensure your space in the East River Road Ramp. Inform the attendant (on duty 10 a.m.–noon) when you arrive that you have a reservation. Pay as usual when exiting, using the UMRA discount parking coupon.

Food for thought

“Be the kind of person the world needs.”

—John Pavlovitz, writer, pastor, activist, and blogger

Meditation workshop offered a respite from agitation

Our first workshop of 2019 was billed as an experiential event on meditation and mindfulness. Three meditators began by describing what got them into mindfulness meditation and then offered testimonials to its benefits.

Ron Matross, chair of UMRA's Workshop and Cares committees, told about his long recovery from a bad bike accident. He turned to guided meditation using a phone app to deal with his persistent and negative rumination, worry, and physical and mental pain. He eventually recovered from his accident and continues regular use of the Headspace app and website produced by Andy Puddicombe.

Michael Dennis Browne—a well-known writer, poet, and retired professor who led an UMRA workshop in 2012 on aging and becoming—said meditation saved his life by teaching him “self-compassion.” Over the years he has studied many forms of mediation, including Hatha Yoga. His current approach is “centering prayer,” a Christian-based method emphasizing interior silence. “Meditation gives me a place to be, a haven, a harbor,” Browne said. While he may follow the contemplative tradition, Browne quoted extensively from Buddhist writers, including Charlotte Joko Beck, Jack Kornfield, and Thich Nhat Hanh, author of *The Miracle of Mindfulness*.



MaryAnne Mauriel spoke with Michael Dennis Browne at the January workshop

Eric Storlie has been teaching courses on both mindfulness and meditation at the U of M's Center for Spirituality & Healing for the past 15 years. He first learned sitting meditation in the Zen tradition from a temple priest in Japantown while attending the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1960s. Storlie helped found the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis in 1973. He said one of his goals in meditation is to get through a proverbial “traffic jam” without feeling anger or an automatic

fight-or-flight response. During meditation in such situations, he can feel “adrenaline drain from my body.”

Following questions and answers, Storlie led the approximately 50 participants in a typical mindfulness meditation for about 15 minutes. In a remarkably soothing voice, he gave instructions on how to relax various muscles, similar to that of the Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique. Browne described this semi-spiritual experience as not so much *feeling* as *observing* our muscles and our thoughts.

In my opinion, workshop participants took home a rich array of beneficial ideas and experiences.

—Ron Anderson, UMRA Cares Committee

In Remembrance

Mary Louise (Mary Lou) Hill died November 9, 2018. Mary Lou grew up and lived most of her 102 years in the Minneapolis Bryn Mawr neighborhood and studied history, political science, economics, and public administration at the University of Minnesota. In her professional career, she was the executive director of the Minneapolis League of Women Voters, administrative assistant to Governor Karl Rolvaag and, finally, executive assistant to the dean and associate dean of the University's School of Management (now the Carlson School). In her volunteer life, she was a leader in the League of Women Voters, AAUW, DFL, and the Minnesota International Center. She also served on the Minnesota Commission on the Status of Women and the State Board of Human Rights. Mary Lou participated in the U of M Women's Club and was a member of UMRA. An activist throughout her long life, she was a highly respected leader and a cherished colleague and friend. Mary Lou Hill is survived by three daughters, one granddaughter, one great granddaughter, and two great great-granddaughters.

—Kathleen O'Brien, UMRA Cares Committee

UMRA Cares supports members

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 or call 612-626-4403 and leave a message for UMRA Cares. Also, if you learn of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge, please contact the UMRA Cares Committee.

Tutoring opportunities seeking volunteers

Studies show that developing a caring relationship is critical to academic success in school. Consider contributing your skills by volunteering for one or more of these opportunities.

The **Reader/Writer** program pairs public school adolescents with writing-proficient adult volunteers. Each volunteer serves as a writing coach for one or two Metro-area middle- or high-school students in a writing exchange conducted by mail throughout the academic year, approximately two to three times per month. This process builds writing fluency and resilience in teens. Volunteers work in their own homes and on their own schedules.

The International Institute of Minnesota is looking for people to assist in piloting a new **Volunteer Navigator** program to help adult English language learners reach their career, educational, and personal goals. Navigators meet weekly for two hours with their student(s) at the Institute in St. Paul. Program staff is available onsite when help is needed.

Hospitality House Youth Development in Minneapolis provides **intensive academic support** in a caring environment to build self-esteem and confidence in at-risk youth. Volunteers commit to one shift (one to two hours) per week between 2 and 5 p.m. at HHYD's Urban Learning Center and spend 30-40 minutes with each student assigned to them—reading aloud, practicing sight words, the alphabet, and reading games. HHYD teachers help define the appropriate materials for individual students.

Murray Middle School in St. Paul provides **one-on-one tutoring** for academically challenged students, typically those who do not have strong home support and are often living in crisis. Volunteers meet weekly with 7th and 8th grade students on developing solid study skills for core subjects including English, science, math, and social studies.

More information about these and other opportunities can be found at the University Retirees Volunteer Center website at urvc@umn.edu.

—John Anderson, chair, URVC board

Firsthand—experiences with aging

By Ron Anderson

Many of us retire at age 65 and live 15 to 25 more years, which has sparked a movement to put us back to work. The U of M, under the influence of sociologist Phyllis Moen, recently launched a new academic program called “Encore Adulthood,” which seeks to bring boomers back to campus to explore new ways of working and living. Another U program, “Encore Transitions,” aims to help retirees transition into post-career living whether through work, service, learning, or other meaningful activities.

When I retired 14 years ago, I felt pressured to keep my research and writing going full steam and do a lot of volunteer and humanitarian work as well. Societal expectations do not allow us to relax at retirement any more. My retirement years have been filled with at least six PDGR-funded projects and publishing three books, plus a huge amount of volunteer work.

I could not complain as I have always been work-driven. That is, until three months ago when my doctors pulled the plug on a sleep medication I had been taking for 15 years. Within days I could not sleep, lost my appetite, got spells of chills with shaking, hallucinations, hypertension, dizziness, anxiety, and memory loss. I could not focus and had to give up writing. I did not know if I ever would recover.

But for two months I was freed from my compulsion to contribute, and I was forced to discover a meaning for my life that did not depend on doing things that helped others or was otherwise productive.

To make a long story short, the new year brought freedom from most of my suffering and I can write again, for which I am very grateful. And now I know that my life has meaning even if I can no longer work. I have nothing against “encore programs” as long as they help us derive meaning not just from work, but also from play and being still and just existing.

If you would like to share a firsthand experience related to health and aging, please submit a brief essay to Ron Anderson, UMRA Cares Committee, at rea@umn.edu.

Armchair Traveler invites you to visit Hong Kong and Poland

Join us for our second UMRA Armchair Traveler program! We will again meet in the Community Room on the second floor of the Highland Park Community Center and Library. Our program on Tuesday, April 9, will run from 3:45 to 5:15 p.m. but the room is reserved from 3:30 so come early to get a good seat.



During their travels in Mongolia, both Craig and Janet Swan were invited by a noted tailor and artist to try on beautiful traditional costumes she had made.

Here are brief descriptions of the places we will learn about from our two travel guides in April.

Hong Kong, with Ron Anderson. Over the past two decades I have had the privilege of crossing the Pacific seven times to go to Hong Kong. Most of the trips were made to participate in museum exhibitions of my grandfather's photographs of China in the early 1900s. While the focus of my travel story will be upon the colorful city, rich culture, and jaw-dropping skyscrapers, it also includes side trips to Macau and Shenzhen, China.

Poland, with David Hansen. Since 1973 I've visited Poland six times. My most recent trip was leading a U of M study abroad class. We visited farms, forests, and university research sites from Warsaw south to Krakow. My presentation will highlight Poland's natural resources with glimpses of historic urban areas. I'll include photos that document changes I have observed over almost 50 years.

Our program will include time for discussion with both presenters. The Community Room has space for 45 attendees. Please email me if you plan to attend.

—Lynn C. Anderson, boundarywaters07@gmail.com

Book Club to discuss *The Radium Girls*

Judy Helgen will lead a discussion of *The Radium Girls* by Kate Moore when the UMRA Book Club meets at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 15, at 1666 Coffman in Falcon Heights. For more information, contact Pat Tollefson at p-toll@umn.edu.

For a review of the club's January read, *The Care and Management of Lies*, go to umra.umn.edu/Events/InterestGroups/BookClub.

FLG seeks input, co-facilitator for 2019

All UMRA members are invited to the Finance & Legal Issues Group (FLG) meeting on February 21. It will be held at John A. Knutson & Co., PLLP, in Falcon Heights. (Site contact: kelm@jakcpa.com or 651-379-5732).

Meeting agenda

1. FLG 2019 sessions, structure and topics
 - a. dealing with wild stock market fluctuations—panel including two experts (CPA, CFP) experienced in working with seniors and two UMRA members
 - b. planning for when you no longer can or want to manage finances (incapacity)—panel led by one or two attorneys experienced in elder law and two UMRA members
 - c. making distributions to family and friends, including gifts to minors (UGMA, UTMA) and 529 plans; strategies for funding and spending from them; tax implications, including income, estate, and gift tax
 - d. year-end income tax planning, led by Todd Koch, as he did in fall 2018
2. Need for a co-facilitator to work with Andy Whitman, and an editor to write and post announcements in the UMRA Newsletter and website, review emails and feedback from UMRA members, engage qualified speakers and UMRA panel members.

Whether or not you can attend the FLG meeting, please send your comments on the meeting agenda to Andy Whitman at 612-747-6015 or awhitman@umn.edu.

UMRA University of Minnesota Retirees Association

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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 _____
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Other Info _____

UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403
Website: umra.umn.edu

Thank you to the College of Continuing & Professional Studies for helping to sponsor UMRA's February newsletter.

Take Your Seat!

Get a sneak peek of three LearningLife short courses



learninglife Sampler

In person or online

March 2, 9:30–11 a.m.

Admission is free!

ccaps.umn.edu/sampler



College of Continuing
& Professional Studies
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Photo Club to meet February 12

Members of the UMRA Photo Club will share pictures related to transportation and discuss ideas about printing pictures when they meet on Tuesday, February 12, 12:30–2:30 p.m. at the St. Anthony branch of the Hennepin County Library. Bring your pictures, questions, comments, and concerns. Come at 11:30 for a buffet lunch first at the nearby Great Dragon.

Meetings are full of good conversation and laughter. Join us and share in the learning and fun. Contact Sherilyn Goldsmith May at goldsmith009@gmail.com or Craig Swan at swan@umn.edu for more information.

Photo Club gallery now on Shutterfly

The UMRA Photo Club starts each of its meetings with theme pictures. Members bring pictures consistent with the theme to share and discuss. Themes to date have included People, Repetition, Red, Old, Structures, and Cozy. When the theme was Structures, the first pictures shown were by Carol Urness and they were of spiderwebs. If you want to see these theme pictures from the last few months, go to umraphotoclub.shutterfly.com.