Meet the U’s first senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations, Professor Tadd M. Johnson, Esq.

What does it take to navigate constructive relationships between the University of Minnesota and the sovereign nations whose histories go deep in the lands that are now the state of Minnesota? We’ll find out when we meet Professor Tadd M. Johnson, Esq., the University’s first senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations.

Please register to attend UMRA’s first all-member program of the new academic year, UMRA A.M. with Professor Tadd Johnson, at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, September 14, via Zoom.

A former tribal attorney, tribal court judge and administrator, Johnson has a broad and deep perspective on tribal sovereignty and the state and U.S. governments. Now he is advising the University on how to fulfill and enrich its mission as it intersects with the interests of the regional tribal nations. The University and the tribes are bound up in some common history since at least 1851. What does that mean for current relationships? What are areas for potential collaboration?

In addition to serving as the University’s first senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations, Johnson directs the University of Minnesota Duluth’s Master of Tribal Administration and Governance program and the Tribal Sovereignty Institute.

An enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Johnson served as a tribal attorney for more than 20 years, has also served as a tribal court judge and administrator, and is a frequent lecturer on American Indian history and Federal Indian Law. He served five years with the U.S. House of Representatives, including as staff director and counsel to the Subcommittee on Native American Affairs. In 1997, President Clinton appointed Johnson to chair the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Johnson earned his BA from the University of St. Thomas and his law degree from the University of Minnesota. He has served on the faculty of the National Judicial College and on the board of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. He is currently on the boards of the Native Governance Center and the Udall Foundation.

—Jan Morlock, UMRA president

How we became a speedboat in a time of crisis

Soon after Jakub Tolar, MD, PhD, assumed his current roles at the University of Minnesota, including dean of the Medical School and vice president for Clinical Affairs, the coronavirus pandemic was raging.

The pandemic focused enormous attention on the Medical School as it developed diagnostic testing capability, carried out dozens of clinical trials of COVID-19 therapies, and partnered in creating a COVID-only cohort hospital.

The story Dr. Tolar will share with us for the UMRA Forum on Tuesday, September 28, is how the remarkable faculty, staff, and students at the Medical School responded in an unprecedented effort of adaptation, collaboration, and service.

See FORUM on page 5 ...
From the President
This is my first column as UMRA’s president, and I’m looking forward to the year ahead. As I write this, it’s not yet clear when we will be able to meet again in person and inside, but we’ve begun to plan our transition back, or, maybe more accurately, our transition forward, since our post-pandemic UMRA activities may be different in some ways from the “before” days.

Despite not being able to get together in person during the pandemic, UMRA members found new ways to connect, and the organization was able to broaden and deepen its relationships with members and other retirees who may join in the future.

Starting in early 2020, UMRA began to experiment with multiple monthly programs, at different times of day. We found that the monthly living well workshops that were held previously at the Campus Club and had drawn typically 30 to 40 people could engage many more of our members online than what we thought was possible. During this last year, while meeting virtually, our workshops often have had 80 to 90 or more people in attendance, joining from wherever in the world they happened to be.

We started a Facebook group, mostly with members, but also open to other University retirees, and there are now 135 people using the page.

Reaching a broader audience
Our special interest groups are going strong. The leaders of the Photo Club, Armchair Traveler, Financial and Legal Affairs Group, and UMRA Book Club adapted quickly to using Zoom, and these groups have met throughout the pandemic. UMRA members also created and are leading three new interest groups, on family history, Zoom technology, and a second book club. Attendance at some interest group meetings has on occasion exceeded the attendance we used to expect for our monthly UMRA programs. UMRA programs are reaching a broader audience.

My thanks to all the members who completed our recent programming survey, designed and administered by UMRA President-elect Ron Matross.

Among the things we learned from the survey are that UMRA members want to meet again in person as soon as possible. However, and in overwhelming numbers, they also appreciate being able to attend virtually. In particular, a great majority of our members expressed a preference for keeping our January and February programs virtual, which would also preserve an option to participate for members who travel to other climates at that time of year.

A task force led by Past President Frank Cerra is now at work looking at when and how we return to in-person programs and what the post-pandemic operations of UMRA may look like. Its members include three additional past presidents, with many cumulative years of experience with UMRA, and members who are newer to the organization and bring fresh perspectives.

As a member of the task force, I can say that it is a joyful task because of the great current of energy that is running through our members and this organization, even in these times that challenge us to stay connected.

I’ll end this month’s column with Frank Cerra’s devout “Stay well,” and add “Stay connected.”

—Jan Morlock, UMRA president
SPECIAL FORUM

Minneapolis Government Structure Charter Amendment

UMRA will hold a special forum on Tuesday, September 21, to discuss the proposed amendments to the Minneapolis city charter that will be on the ballot November 2 (early voting starts September 17).

The primary focus will be the amendment, initiated and unanimously supported by the Minneapolis Charter Commission, that proposes to establish a government structure that clearly defines and separates power between an executive mayor and a legislative council. Commission Chair Barry Clegg has described it as “probably the most important charter amendment that has come before the city in 100 years.”

The special forum, starting at 11 a.m. and replacing UMRA’s September Living Well Workshop, will be held via Zoom webinar. Please register and attend!

A government structure like no other

Minneapolis has never adopted a comprehensive city charter to govern the management of the city. In 1920, Minneapolis simply adopted all the state laws related to Minneapolis so it could qualify as a “home rule charter city.” Thus, Minneapolis government structure is like no other in the U.S.

The proposed amendment would clarify and define the roles and responsibilities of the mayor as executive and the City Council as legislative, like the state and federal governments and other large U.S. cities.

Proponents—including supporters of Charter for Change, a city-wide, non-partisan, grassroots group of Minneapolis residents—contend that the amendment would align authority with responsibility, increase accountability, and ensure city services are delivered more equitably.

The amendment is opposed by some City Council members on the grounds that it would make city government less responsive.

University President and Professor Emeritus Robert Bruininks, a supporter of Charter for Change, and Humphrey School Senior Fellow Jay Kiedrowski, a former commissioner of finance and chief financial officer for the State of Minnesota and budget director for the City of Minneapolis, will present the history of Minneapolis city government, the current context, the pros and cons of the Government Structure Charter Amendment, and respond to questions.

They will also explain and be prepared to discuss the other amendments on the November 2 ballot in Minneapolis, including the Public Safety Charter Amendment, organized by the Yes 4 Minneapolis Committee, that proposes to remove the Minneapolis Police Department as a standalone department and create a new Public Safety Department.

Please register and plan to attend this special forum at 11 a.m. on September 21.

—Kathleen O’Brien, UMRA member, retired vice president for University Services, former Minneapolis city coordinator, and Ward 2 council member

2022 Professional Development Grants for Retirees

Each year UMRA provides professional development grants to support faculty, P&A, civil service, and bargaining unit retirees wishing to pursue projects related to their research, instruction, or other work history, and that contribute to the educational, scholarly, and academic reputation of the University.

The competition for next year’s awards opens October 15. The application deadline is December 31. Approved proposals will be announced in February 2022. Grants will start on April 1 and extend to June 30, 2023.

Allowed expenses for PDGR awards include travel and per diem costs related to research trips and conference attendance; stipends for undergraduate and/or graduate research assistants; the purchase of books, computers, and software; photocopying; and other relevant costs of scholarship.

The Application Instructions provide information about funding requirements and how to apply.

See PDGR on page 5...
HELLO, my name is Julie Medbery

Hometown: Browns Valley, Minnesota. I grew up on a farm in South Dakota, just over the state border, but attended school in Browns Valley.

When did you join UMRA? 2007. I was the second civil service retiree to join, following Ginny Hanson (and at her invitation).

What was your very first job? I had two, actually, both brief, between my freshman and sophomore years at Augsburg College (now University). The first was on a manufacturing line in south Minneapolis, where I joined several other women wearing thin white cotton gloves to inspect small pieces for big lighted, animated Hamm’s Beer bear signs. After a week, I was offered a supervisory position, which I knew would be ill-fated, so I quit. That same month, my college roommate recommended me for a job as a kitchen assistant at a hospital in south Minneapolis. A big part of the job was to wheel food carts around to deliver meals and collect the dishes. Because of my propensity for getting lost, I often found myself in strange places, and way off schedule.

The culmination was when I accidentally wheeled my cart into the morgue—the deciding factor for me to part company with that job as well. My long-suffering parents subsidized the rest of my summer in Minneapolis before I returned to Augsburg in the fall.

What was your occupation when you retired from full-time work? I was staff assistant to the dean of the (agricultural) Extension Service, where I managed and staffed a state-wide citizens’ advisory committee, produced a weekly newsletter for Extension personnel, started a student intern program that lasted several years, and performed the usual tasks. At one time I knew the names of all the nearly 200 Extension educators across the state.

What was your first car? A dark-green Plymouth Fury III, which my dad bought for me in the belief that bigger was safer. I traded it in for a Datsun B-210, one of the smallest cars available at the time. The first time I drove it home, one of my brothers lifted the right front wheel off the ground. I don’t think my dad was impressed.

If you were an Olympic athlete, what would you like your sport to be? After seeing Gophers wrestler Gable Steveson win gold this summer, I think I’d like wrestling to be my sport. My favorite take-away was when he told a reporter, “Little cat came out to play with the big dogs.”

What is something you currently enjoy doing with your time? For the last few years, I’ve been sorting through long-ignored boxes and writing up stories about family items and photos and then sending both items and stories off to various nieces and nephews. The latest was handing off a small jar of marbles—some clay, some porcelain, among more recent glass ones—along with the marble bag that had belonged to my dad, to my nephew who lives on the home farm. He was tickled to get them.

Family History Interest Group 2021-22 schedule

Mark your calendars and join us via Zoom for the UMRA Family History Interest Group (FHIG) meeting on October 13, 2021. UMRA member Vicki Gaylord will describe ways that she has found to encourage family members to join in the adventure of learning about the lives of those who’ve gone before us, including ideas for using digital communications.

FHIG was formed in October 2020 to learn how UMRA members have researched their family histories and what they have done with the important pieces of their stories. During 2021–22, we will continue to meet by Zoom from 10 to 11 a.m. on the following Wednesdays: October 13, December 8, February 9, and April 13.

An email with links to join the Zoom meetings will be sent to all UMRA members via the UMRA Listserv at least one week before each FHIG meeting. Please email Lynn Anderson at boundarywaters07@gmail.com or Craig Swan at swan@umn.edu for more information.

Links to recordings of earlier Zoom presentations, slides, and resource handouts can be found on the UMRA web-site Family History page.

—I Lynn C. Anderson, co-chair, UMRA Family History Interest Group
Please register for this truly special opportunity to hear directly from Dr. Tolar how we turned the big ship around and became a speedboat in a time of crisis, and what we will take forward from that lesson. The forum will be a Zoom webinar starting at 12 noon.

**Distinguished McKnight University Professor**

In addition to serving as dean and vice president for Clinical Affairs, Dr. Tolar is a Distinguished McKnight University Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and a clinician in the Division of Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation & Cellular Therapy. He also serves as board chair for University of Minnesota Physicians and is co-leader of M Health Fairview, the joint clinical enterprise between the University of Minnesota Medical School, University of Minnesota Physicians, and Fairview Health Services.

Dr. Tolar received his MD from Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and his PhD in molecular, cellular, developmental biology and genetics at the University of Minnesota.

His clinical and research interests are focused on finding cellular and genetic therapies for incurable genetic disorders, including Fanconi anemia, Hurler’s disease, dyskeratosis congenita, and severe variants of the skin-blistering disorder epidermolysis bullosa.

Dean Tolar took a leadership position in understanding the coronavirus, its testing, and treatments. With the University’s talented faculty, much progress has been made. Dr. Tolar will inform us of those efforts and his view of what is to come as he speaks with us on September 28. Please register and attend.

—Frank Cerra, MD, UMRA past president

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**New QR code for campus parking discount**

When you park your vehicle on campus, use the square QR code on the back of your new 2021-22 UMRA membership card to obtain the UMRA parking discount. Here’s how:

- Use a paystation in the main lobby or centralized parking lot area BEFORE returning to your vehicle.
- Insert the parking ticket obtained when you entered the parking facility. The paystation will indicate the fee.
- Use the card reader to scan the square QR code on the back of your UMRA membership card. The paystation will indicate the discounted fee.

If you have not yet received your 2021–22 UMRA membership card, use the intercom. Swing the “i” cover aside and press the intercom button for assistance. Say you are a member of UMRA requesting the UMRA parking discount.

The discount coupons distributed in prior years are no longer valid. They have no face value and should be discarded.

— John Anderson, chair, Membership Committee

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**PDGR from page 3.**

All University of Minnesota retirees from the Twin Cities, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and Crookston campuses who will be fully retired by the time of their award may apply for grants of any amount. However, awards will not likely exceed $3,000 unless a student mentee is part of the proposal, in which case awards of $4,000 or more will be considered.

UMRA’s PDGR Committee reviews applications and makes recommendations regarding funding.

One may review a list of grants awarded since 2009 on the UMRA website at Previous PDGR Awards. Highlights of things accomplished by these awards can be found at PDGR Impact Study.

**Support the PDGR program**

If the PDGR program is to continue, member support is essential. One can make a tax deductible contribution by credit card online or by check payable to the University of Minnesota Foundation (P.O. Box 860266, Minneapolis MN 55486-0266). Please note “UMRA Fund 4867” on your check.

Contact John Bantle, MD, if you have questions or suggestions.

—John Bantle, MD, PDGR Committee chair
In remembrance
As we learn of the passing of UMRA members and University leaders, we share this news with our community. We send our condolences to the families and friends of our colleagues.

Frederick “Rick” Asher died June 26, 2021. A professor emeritus, Dr. Asher served as department chair of art history and associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and was respected for his contributions to Asian studies. As a mentor to undergraduate and graduate students, he was recognized with the Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Cathy Asher, and family.

Evelyn Franklin died December 14, 2020. After the death of her husband in 1965, she taught housing in the College of Home Economics and earned her PhD in 1980. She retired from the University in 1995. Dr. Franklin was on the first board of Project for Pride in Living, a Minneapolis nonprofit. She is survived by her daughter, Shawna Franklin, and family.

Mary Anne Page died July 26, 2021. The widow of Associate Dean of Liberal Arts Roger Page, she earned a master’s in organic chemistry from the U and did cancer research for 20+ years at 3M. She was also a leader in DFL politics. Mary Anne is survived by her Page family stepchildren.

Virginia Provencher died February 25. A long-time member of the Facilities Management civil service administrative staff, she is survived by her sister, Sharon Singleton, and family.

Deborah Swackhamer died on May 4. An internationally renowned environmental chemist, she joined the School of Public Health faculty in 1986, serving until her retirement in 2016. She also served on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Science Advisory Board and Board of Scientific Counselors, and initiated the UMN Sustainability program. She is survived by her husband, David DeVault.

James “Jim” Turman died April 4. He served the Twin Cities campus student body as a manager and eventually associate vice president of Recreational Sports for more than 30 years, retiring in 2016. He is credited with the expansion and improvement of the University’s RecWell facilities, as well as enhancing the programming and services provided in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. He is survived by his wife, Susan Turman.

UMRA Cares supports members
For assistance and support in the event of the death or serious illness of an UMRA member of family member, please email umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403 and leave a message for UMRA Cares.

Help wanted: UMRA historian
Are you curious about UMRA’s past or are you someone who simply enjoys working with others to put together innovative projects? If so, UMRA needs you.

At present, our written history covers only the first seven years of UMRA’s existence, from 1976 to 1983. Please consider helping UMRA begin filling in the nearly four decades since then, whether in the role of historian or as part of a team working with him or her. (New special interest group, anyone?) Although experience is helpful, interest is far more crucial; the volunteer(s) we seek need not have any academic background in history. If you would like to learn more, or if you know someone we should contact, please email us at g-rine@umn.edu or c-pete@umn.edu.

—Jerry Rinehart and Chip Peterson, co-chairs, UMRA Organizational Continuity Committee
Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to 17 new members who have joined UMRA since early April.

**Antonio Alba Meraz**, University of Minnesota Extension, Family Development, Extension educator

**Louise Delagran**, Center for Spirituality & Healing, director, Learning Resources Group

**Vicki Everett**, College of Pharmacy, executive office and administrative specialist

**Joan Garfield**, College of Education and Human Development, Educational Psychology, professor

**Erin George**, University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections, archivist

**Jean Gorell**, University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF), chief development officer

**Brenda Herzig**, Academic Administration, director of financial aid

**Carol Kivi**, College of Education and Human Service Professionals, Psychology, instructor

**Francine Linhart**, musician, educator, and University Retirees Volunteer Center volunteer

**Patricia McGovern** (and **David Cossi**), School of Public Health, Division of Environmental Sciences, professor

**Rose Munns**, Medical School, Family Medicine and Community Health, assistant professor

**Paul Pagel**, School of Public Health, Minnesota Technical Assistance Program, senior engineer

**Robin Sauerwein**, U of M Tickets and Events, accounting

**Lynn Slifer**, UMF, associate vice president for central development programs

**Wayne Tauber**, Auxiliary Services, systems analyst

**Elly Verhagen**, UMF, Finance and Gift Administration, senior gift administrator

**Sharyn Wang**, University of Minnesota Libraries, data management and access

For contact information, visit the Member Login page at umra.umn.edu (login required).

Armchair Traveler resumes September 22

Join UMRA members Charles Muscoplat and Lynn Anderson to learn about their personal journeys through Europe and Scandinavia when UMRA’s Armchair Traveler program meets from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 22, via Zoom.

An email invitation will be sent to all UMRA members a week before the program.

Charles Muscoplat, professor and dean emeritus of the College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences, will present “Personal journey to WWII concentration and death camps in Poland, and Jewish historical sites in Budapest and Prague.” After starting their 2018 journey in Amsterdam’s Keukenhof Botanical Garden, Chuck and Sue Muscoplat went to Warsaw, where they toured various WWII memorials, including the Umschlagplatz Monument, the former loading yard where trains carried hundreds of thousands of Jews to their deaths at Treblinka. Next, they visited Auschwitz-Birkenau, where more than 1.1 million were killed. They then went to Budapest and toured pre-WWII Jewish history. Lastly, they stopped in Prague to learn about the pre-WWII history of Jews in the Czech Republic. While most of Muscoplat’s family came to the U.S. before WWI, many stayed behind and suffered the consequences.

Lynn C. Anderson, former administrator in the College of Liberal Arts and the Learning Abroad Center, will present “Sweden and Norway: monuments, mountains, and memories.” Anderson has visited relatives in Sweden and Norway numerous times since 1975; her most recent sojourn was in spring 2019. She will share pictures and information about the incredible landscapes, amazing buildings and art, and fascinating history—plus a few goofy pictures of relatives.

Please plan to join us, and mark your calendars for our January 26 and April 27 presentations, too.

—Lynn C. Anderson, chair, Armchair Traveler
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*Share upcoming events anytime by emailing the UMRA webmaster at leegi001@umn.edu. Include event title, date, time, a brief description, and contact information.*