

UMRA Cares Committee “In Remembrance” Toolkit 2019-2020
by Kathleen O’Brien, 8/8/20

“In Remembrance” Assignment

Kathleen O’Brien assumed this assignment from Earl Nolting in September, 2017. Condolence cards are sent on the passing of UMN retirees and on the passing of the spouse/life partner of UMN retirees to their surviving next of kin (i.e. spouse/life partner, child, sibling, grandchild, niece, nephew...). Most weeks Kathleen receives the encrypted list of UMN retirees who have passed away from the UMN Human Resources department. HR information is sketchy and incomplete, so KO’B researches the UMN retirees work history and location of surviving kin from University Directories, Obituaries and Google. Sometimes KO’B needs to phone a surviving relative to verify the information and make the best deduction as to whom and where to send a condolence card.

K O’B then sends the information on those who have passed to her assignment partners—UMRA volunteers: Helen Carlson and Nancy Helmich. Helen sends condolence cards to the families of retirees from the UMN Coordinate Campuses, MN Extension Service and Research/Outreach Centers across Minnesota. Nancy sends condolence cards to the families of UMTC retirees. Nancy purchases greeting cards wholesale from a local firm (Julu Cards) who designed and produces the cards. She is reimbursed by the UMRA Treasurer for the cards and postage. Helen purchases and sends Sympathy cards and funds these costs as a donation to UMRA.

The condolence card message is similar to this:

“The University of Minnesota Retirees Association extends to you [and your family] our sincere sympathy on the passing of your [husband/wife/father/mother/aunt....Name for example: your mother, Mary Lou Hill].”

Frequently a personalized note that recognizes the unique contribution of the person is added.

When UMRA members or their spouses pass away, K O’Brien sends a \$30 donation on behalf of UMRA to their designated charity or the UMRA Retirees Research Grant fund at the UMN Foundation. K O’B donates the materials and postage. She is reimbursed for each \$30 donation from the UMRA Treasurer. Below is the list of UMRA members and spouses/partners who passed away during this year.

In addition, K O’Brien writes the “In Remembrance” column for the UMRA newsletter. Also when we learn of a serious illness of an UMRA member or their spouse/partner, K O’Brien sends a hand written card of support on behalf of UMRA colleagues.

The UMRA Treasurer’s Annual Report identifies the cost of the “In Remembrance” assignment.