

APRIL 2019

## Drugs and their role in the economics of the U.S. healthcare system

Stephen Schondelmeyer, Pharm.D., Ph.D., an expert in the practice of pharmaceutical care and its role in the healthcare system, will join us for UMRA's April forum to talk



about the pricing of drugs in the U.S. and his views on the current marketplace. Dr. Schondelmeyer has a unique and extensive background that spans 40 years and includes experience as a pharmacist, clinical practitioner, health services researcher, public policy analyst, administrator, and health and pharmaceutical economist.

A professor in the College of Pharmacy, Dr. Schondelmeyer holds the CMC Endowed Chair in Pharmaceutical Management and Economics. He is head of the U's Department of Pharmaceutical Care & Health Systems and also serves as director of the PRIME Institute, which focuses on pharmaceutical research related to management and economics. His research projects have included prescription drug reimbursement under Medicaid, Medicare, and other programs; pharmaceutical prices and patents; and pharmaceutical competition.

As an expert on the cost, pricing, and utilization of pharmaceuticals, Dr. Schondelmeyer has testified for the University, state governments, and the federal government. He is a consultant to the University's UPlan health benefit program and has been uniquely helpful in setting up and pricing its drug benefit program. His work has allowed the University to be an active leader in this area.

Dr. Schondelmeyer is a much sought-after speaker and "star" academic on pharmaceuticals, their delivery and pricing. He is data driven and will likely present the latest statistics and information. He is also a person of strong opinions who will let us know what he thinks. We are lucky to have him at the University and as a speaker.

—Bill Donohue, Program Committee chair and president-elect

## Nominees for May election

At UMRA's annual meeting in May, the members present will vote on the following slate of nominees for the 2019–20 program year:

- President-elect: Frank Cerra
- Secretary: Lynn Anderson
- Treasurer: Carl Adams
- Board of Directors: Will Craig, Cherie Hamilton, Erick Hockert, Ron Matross, Jan Morlock

Current President-elect Bill Donohue will become president automatically. The May issue of the UMRA Newsletter will include candidate information. Thanks to everyone who contributed suggestions.

—Nominating Committee: Chip Peterson (chair), Bill Donohue, Laura Ericksen, Donna Peterson, and Terry Roe

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

APRIL MEETING  
 At A Glance

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

### Location

Campus Club, Fourth Floor  
 Coffman Memorial Union

**Living Well Workshop**  
 2-3:30 p.m.

Conference Room AB  
*Memoir and memory*

Featured speaker:  
 Regents Professor Emerita  
 Madelon Sprengnether

### Reception + Forum

West Wing Dining Room  
 4-6 p.m.

*Drugs and healthcare economics*

Featured speaker:  
 Stephen Schondelmeyer,  
 Pharm.D., Ph.D.

### Menu

Assorted light hors d'oeuvres and  
 a cheese tray will be served family  
 style at each table

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

### RSVP by Tuesday, April 16

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

### Parking

\$6 maximum in University ramps  
 with UMRA's discount coupon. To  
 reserve parking, contact Judy at  
 jleahy4654@aol.com or  
 651-698-4387.

## Strengthening our effectiveness

During its March meeting, the UMRA Board of Directors recommended a change in our by-laws that is intended to help us retain and leverage the experience and institutional memory of immediate past presidents. This proposal will be presented for approval at UMRA's annual meet-



ing on May 21. Because the change may seem a little complicated, the board suggested a detailed explanation from me might be helpful.

In our current structure, UMRA members can serve up to six years on the board (i.e. two three-year terms). The by-laws also state, somewhat

vaguely, that the president shall hold office for a period of one year and shall not be elected for more than one full consecutive term.

It often happens that a president-elect is either chosen from the board, prior to completing a three-year term, or is selected from outside the board without having served any prior term. When the latter occurs, it means the president will serve just three years on the board—one year each as president-elect, president, and past president.

Therefore, to help ensure that we do not lose the expertise and experience of such a key UMRA leader, the board is recommending a change to the current by-laws that will offer the immediate past president the opportunity to remain on the board until she/he has completed a full six years of service.

## Council of Past Presidents

I believe this change will also strengthen the link between our Council of Past Presidents and the board. The Council of Past Presidents serves as a think tank for UMRA, considering both overarching issues such as our relationship to the University and more specific concerns; for example, the council was a primary driver in the effort to secure better space for our monthly meetings. Having as members of the council up to three past presidents who are still current board members should help facilitate communication and effectiveness.

Please feel free to contact me or any of the current UMRA Board members if you have any questions or suggestions.

—Jerry Rinehart, UMRA president

## 2019–20 PDGR awards: from death to taxes

University retirees associated with the Law School, Medical School, Carlson School, College of Liberal Arts, and Libraries have been awarded 2019–20 grants from the Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) program. The five awards total nearly \$25,000 and will provide support for a variety of interests and projects.

UMRA member Jonathan Ravdin, M.D., for example, will use his grant to advance research on death and funeral transition (cremation, embalmment, caskets, burial, and religious services) in Minnesota, and the cumulative impact of these transition choices upon climate change. It is Ravdin's third consecutive PDGR award.

Attorney Kathryn Sedo, also an UMRA member and repeat PDGR grant recipient, will use her award to attend three American Bar Association meetings to stay current in tax law and procedure.

First-time PDGR award recipient and new UMRA member Randy Croce is producing a video documentary on the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Movement and will use his award to support that effort.

Go to [umra.umn.edu/Serving U>Grants for Retirees](http://umra.umn.edu/Serving%20U%20Grants%20for%20Retirees) for details about all the awards.

The relatively low number of proposals this year was disappointing. Members of the grants committee think we have not convinced enough retirees that this program can work for them and for the University. In addition, the program provides resources to engage undergraduate students in research. Perhaps the complexity of the online application made some retirees reluctant to apply. The grants committee will be looking into this issue in detail.

— Dick Poppele, PDGR Committee chair



*Will Craig, Sanford Weisberg, and Carol Weisberg enjoyed visiting in the West Wing dining room before the March program.*

## Memoir and memory: advice for writing life stories

Have you thought about writing your memoir? Do you plan to tell your family history for the next generations? Do you want to capture what inspired your academic studies? In “retirement,” we have time to reflect on life experiences, perspective to assess our contributions, and motivation to leave a record.

UMRA’s workshop on April 23 will provide advice for writing about your life from our University of Minnesota colleague and Regents Professor Emerita Madelon Sprengnether. The workshop will be an engaging session. Professor Sprengnether will introduce us to her own work, give us advice on writing, and lead us in one or two simple writing exercises.

Sprengnether is a poet, memoirist, and literary critic. A graduate of Bryn Mawr with a Ph.D. from Yale, she came to the University of Minnesota English Department in 1971 as a Shakespeare scholar. Through her academic inquiry, Sprengnether transformed herself, her department, and the University. With her colleagues, professors Shirley Garner and Toni McNaron, Sprengnether introduced women authors and feminist scholarship into the English Department curriculum and helped found one of the first women’s studies programs in the nation. Trained as an academic writer, she has taught creative non-fiction and was central to developing the University’s creative writing MFA program.



In recognition of her excellence as a teacher and mentor, Sprengnether was honored in 2004 with an Outstanding Contributions to Graduate and Professional Education Award, and in 2008 was appointed Regents Professor, the top honor given to faculty at the U.

Professor Sprengnether’s publications include two memoirs, *Crying at the Movies* and *Great River Road*; a collection of essays, *Rivers, Stories, Houses, Dreams*; and three poetry collections, *Near Solstice*, *The Normal Heart*, and *The Angel of Duluth*.

Sprengnether retired from the University in 2017, is a member of UMRA, and serves on the UMRA Grants Committee.

—Kathleen O’Brien, Cares Committee

## Welcome new members to UMRA

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

- Kathryn Carlson, Carlson School of Management, MBA programs, assistant dean, P&A
- Gary Christenson, Office of Student Affairs, Boynton Health, chief medical officer, P&A
- Faith Courchane, Medical School, Department of Otolaryngology, administrative associate, civil service; and Paul Courchane
- Robert J. Danforth, College of Continuing and Professional Studies, Inter-College Program, senior academic adviser, P&A
- Melinda Soderberg, Office of Human Resources, Employee Benefits, senior employee benefit counselor, P&A

Go to [umra.umn.edu/Member Login](http://umra.umn.edu/Member Login)>[Member Search](#) for more information.

## URVC launches new website

After months of preparation, the University Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC) has scheduled the launch of its revised website for April 8. The new URVC website will serve as the front door to an online volunteer management system powered by *Better Impact*. Persons who have volunteered through URVC in the past couple of years received an email in late March alerting them to the launch, and in the second week of April are to receive a second email with information for accessing the new system.

*Better Impact* will enable volunteers to review projects supported by URVC, select and sign up online to volunteer, and view and record their volunteer hours. Most of the administrative effort leading to the implementation of *Better Impact* was done by URVC office staffer and volunteer Sally Schakel.

—John Anderson, chair, URVC board

## 1666 Coffman open house

1666 Coffman Condominiums will be hosting an Open House on Sunday, May 5, 1–4 p.m., with tours of the units, building, and gardens plus refreshments.

## HELLO, my name is Virgil Larson

**Hometown:** Thief River Falls, a small town about 300 miles northwest of the Twin Cities, known as the headquarters for Arctic Cat and Digi-Key.

**When did you join UMRA?** 2009.

**What was your very first job?** I grew up on a farm, and my very first job was working for a neighboring farmer driving a tractor and haying. My first job at the U of M was in the cryobiology laboratory in the Department of Animal Science. This lab studied the preservation of living cells by freezing, especially sperm cells from farm animals used for breeding. The work was related to the research I did for a Ph.D. in low temperature physics.

**Where were you in 1968?** I was teaching physics at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. It was one year after getting married and one year before starting graduate school at Texas A&M University.



*Virgil Larson, seen here canoeing on the Charles River between Boston and Cambridge, enjoys a variety of outdoor activities.*

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

My favorite places are on and near the St. Paul campus, including the Display and Trial Garden at the corner of Folwell and Gortner avenues, the Sarita Wetland restoration area west of the state fairgrounds, and the old streetcar line that once connected the St. Paul and Minneapolis campuses.

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

Before looking for real jobs in 1971, my wife and I spent a year touring Europe while living in a VW camper van.

### **What is something you currently enjoy doing**

**with your time?** I enjoy outdoor activities, including gardening, hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

## Volunteer opportunities: Bell Museum, Festival of Nations

### **Bell Museum**

The Bell Museum brings together science, art, and the environment with a unique Minnesota perspective. The museum's new home on the St. Paul Campus features a digital planetarium, high-tech exhibits, the Bell's famous wildlife dioramas, outdoor learning experiences, and more.

Volunteers are currently wanted for positions as Gallery Cart Attendant and Docent. These positions contribute to the Bell Museum mission to engage the public in understanding, appreciating, and preserving nature.

The museum is looking for enthusiastic, cheerful, volunteers who are willing to learn. They must be able to work with groups of children, be able to work independently, and have interpersonal and customer service skills.

**Gallery Cart Attendant.** Multiple activity carts are located throughout the museum to enhance the visitor experience. Volunteers provide information and instruction.

**Docent.** Volunteers work within the permanent and temporary gallery spaces answering visitor questions and providing a welcoming and engaging environment.

Duties for both positions include creating a positive environment; engaging visitors in interactive activities; assisting visitors with questions and directions; and monitoring assigned area or permanent and temporary galleries for safety and security.

### **Requirements for both positions:**

1. Volunteer application and screening
2. Orientation
3. Background check
4. Specialized training as needed

### **Festival of Nations**

Would you like to participate in one of the premier multi-cultural events of the year? The Festival of Nations is the longest-running multicultural festival in the Midwest and attracts 50,000 people each year, including nearly 20,000 students.

The Festival will be celebrating its 87th year May 2-5 at the St. Paul RiverCentre, and the International Institute of Minnesota is now accepting applications for volunteers! The Festival is not a commercial venture; its purpose is to bring together the whole community for a weekend of singing, dancing, and eating together, on the basic

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assumption that when Americans, old and new, become acquainted as individuals, prejudices that infect their thinking will drop away and the barriers that separate them will dwindle.

Volunteers work three- or four-hour shifts staffing booths, helping with setup and teardown, and greeting visitors. Volunteers receive free admission to the Festival.

If you wish to volunteer at the Bell Museum or for the Festival of Nations, please contact URVC at [urvc@umn.edu](mailto:urvc@umn.edu) or 612-625-8016.

—John Anderson and Marva Sullivan, URVC

## Providing justice to Minnesota

Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea returned to campus to speak to the retirees association at our March forum. She offered a comprehensive review of the Minnesota judicial system, addressing everything from the selection of judges and the handling of 1.3 million cases annually, to the emergence of treatment courts throughout the state. Gildea has been chief justice for nine years. During her tenure, Minnesota's court system has been called out by experts as one of the two best-managed in the country (along with Utah).



*Chief Justice Lorie Gildea: 'It's such an honor for me to be a part of the University.'*

Gildea is an iconic University of Minnesota success story. She is from a small town in northern Minnesota, a distinguished graduate of U of M Morris, and a lawyer who represented the University for 11 years. She told us her great passions in life are the University and providing justice to the citizens of Minnesota.

One of her major issues, Gildea said, is assuring that self-represented litigants are properly supported in Minnesota's judicial system. "If U.S. Bank Stadium (66,000 people) were filled with individuals in need of legal aid there would be only 22 legal aid attorneys to assist them," is how she characterized the current "justice gap."

She also described a number of treatment courts that have been created across the state to assure justice and appropriate referrals for drug and DWI offenders, family dependency cases, as well as juvenile, mental health, and veterans affairs. "Studies show these courts work," she said.



*Chief Justice Gildea with UMRA members Jerry Rinehart, Donna Peterson, and Bill Donohue.*

Gildea emphasized the need for judicial selection to be free of partisan politics. In her view we need to avoid the politicization of judicial elections and promote the selection of men and women for our courts based on their merits and experience, not their affiliations.

Finally, she talked about the modernization of the courts through electronic filing systems, and ended with a call for us to assist in keeping Minnesota's judiciary among the nation's leading systems. Specifically, she urged us to become involved in guardian ad litem programs, which are desperately in need of volunteers.

It was an engaging presentation that concluded with an enthusiastic set of questions from our members, which were addressed articulately.

—Bill Donohue, Program Committee chair and president-elect

## Firsthand—experiences with aging

By John Anderson

I retired in June 2006 after 39 years in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Biophysics. One of my post-retirement activities has been participation in Nature of Life (NOL), a College of Biological Sciences (COB) program I helped develop in response to a U-wide initiative to improve student retention and graduation rates. Since retirement, the details of my participation have changed, but the fun of interacting with young people enthusiastic about joining the U of M community has not.

All CBS freshmen are required to attend NOL prior to their first semester at the U. Sessions occur in July at the Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories and last three days. NOL provides opportunity for the students to get acquainted with some of their future classmates, meet faculty, and participate in activities designed to help the freshmen feel a part of the college and succeed as university students.

Each evening I have the privilege of introducing the traditions of the college and the university. Topics range from unique aspects of CBS to why we are known as Gophers. The students also learn to sing *Hail! Minnesota* and the *Minnesota Rouser*.



*John Anderson says mentoring students helps him to maintain a youthful perspective.*

More than 6,000 students have participated in NOL over the past 16 years, and it is gratifying to know that I have played a role in helping these students integrate into the University community and graduate in a timely fashion. It is great fun to be a part of this activity, and interacting with young people helps me maintain a youthful perspective in life. So, I have eagerly agreed to participate in six more NOL sessions this coming July.

Ski-U-Mah!

## Strategies to reduce income tax

All members of UMRA are welcome to attend the next meeting of UMRA's Financial and Legal Issues Group (FLG) on Thursday, May 9, 2–3 p.m. The topics to be discussed include:

1. Strategies to reduce income taxes using before- and after-tax accounts with appropriate asset mixes
2. Multiple-year strategies for retirees over age 70 ½ with direct charitable distributions from IRAs; these vary with tax filing status and ability to convert to Roth IRAs in relatively lower marginal tax years
3. Applications of the higher standard deduction and bunched deductions; these vary with tax status
4. Working with experienced professionals

The meeting will be at John A. Knutson & Co., PLLP, 1755 Prior Avenue North in Falcon Heights. For directions, contact Kim at [kelm@jakcpa.com](mailto:kelm@jakcpa.com) or 651-379-5732.

For questions and suggestions, please contact me at [awhitman@umn.edu](mailto:awhitman@umn.edu) 612 747 6015.

—Andy Whitman, Financial and Legal Issues Group

## Book Club to discuss *The Shoemaker's Wife*

Laura Erickson will lead a discussion of *The Shoemaker's Wife* by Adriana Trigiani, when the UMRA Book Club meets at 2 p.m. on Friday, April 19, at the 1666 Coffman building on Larpenteur Avenue in Falcon Heights. For information, contact Pat Tollefson at [p-toll@umn.edu](mailto:p-toll@umn.edu).

For a review of the club's March read, *Educated* by Tara Westover, go to [umra.umn.edu/Events/Interest Groups >Book Club](http://umra.umn.edu/Events/Interest%20Groups%20Book%20Club).

## In Remembrance

**Douglas “Doug” Fenderson** died February 2, 2019. A professor emeritus in the U of M Medical School, Department of Family Practice and Community Health, Dr. Fenderson provided leadership at the federal level as director of the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research. He served for nine years as the U's Director of Continuing Medical Education, during which time he established the Bush Clinical Fellows Program to provide professional development to mid-career rural physicians.

Dr. Fenderson was also a talented trumpet player and private pilot. He is survived by his wife, Joyce Fenderson, and family, and was a member of UMRA.

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**Cherie R. Perlmutter** died February 23, 2019. A valued leader of the U of M Medical Center and Academic Health Center executive team from 1973 until her retirement in 2004, Perlmutter helped numerous people receive access to University health care and its physicians and supported University colleagues in their professional careers. She received the Weaver Medal for her support of the College of Pharmacy. Perlmutter was predeceased by her husband, Irving Perlmutter, and is survived by family and many friends.

—Kathleen O’Brien, 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](mailto: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.

## **Dreaming of sleep**

At UMRA’s March workshop, sleep expert Muna Irfan, M.D., gave us an enlightening and useful presentation on sleep, sleep disorders, and ways to improve sleep. Dr. Irfan, a neurologist, began by reviewing the medical evidence for the benefits of good sleep, noting that the National Science Foundation recommends 6–9 hours of sleep a night to promote better cognition, as well as good mental and physical health and quality of life in older adults.

Sleep maintains healthy brain cells, Dr. Irfan said, citing groundbreaking research published in 2012 that shows sleep actually helps clear out toxic metabolites from the brain, including beta-amyloids that have been linked to Alzheimer’s disease.

Dr. Irfan then reviewed the sleep cycle, and how that typically changes with age. People normally cycle through the stages of sleep from near wakefulness through deep sleep several times a night. As we age, we tend to go up and down through those cycles more often. Other changes associated with aging include earlier sleep onset and earlier morning awakening.

“Sleep disorders are common and distressing,” Dr. Irfan said.

What to do? Sleep management should be approached as a multifactorial geriatric health condition, Dr. Irfan said,

not as a problem that can be solved with a magic pill.

There are medical, physical, psychiatric, and psychosocial factors to consider. “Sleep is not passive; we need to train our brains.”

Regular exercise early in the day can benefit sleep along with light stretching before bedtime. Alcohol may help to hasten sleep onset, but it also causes sleep fragmentation.

“Reserve 45 minutes before bedtime to relax by doing something vaguely interesting, like knitting, or even boring,” Dr. Irfan said. “Avoid watching Stephen Colbert, otherwise you’ll just go to bed thinking about politics!”

Dr. Irfan is an assistant professor of neurology at the University of Minnesota and program director of the sleep medicine fellowship at Hennepin Healthcare. She was asked to lead the UMRA workshop by her colleague, Michael Howell, M.D., who was scheduled to speak but had to cancel.

—Ron Matross, chair, Workshop and Cares committees



*UMRA member Terry Roe spoke with Dr. Muna Irfan after her well-received presentation on the challenges and benefits of sleep in older age.*

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### ***Food for thought***

“Nature is painting for us, day after day,  
pictures of infinite beauty.”

—John Ruskin, English writer and artist

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# UMRA University of Minnesota Retirees Association

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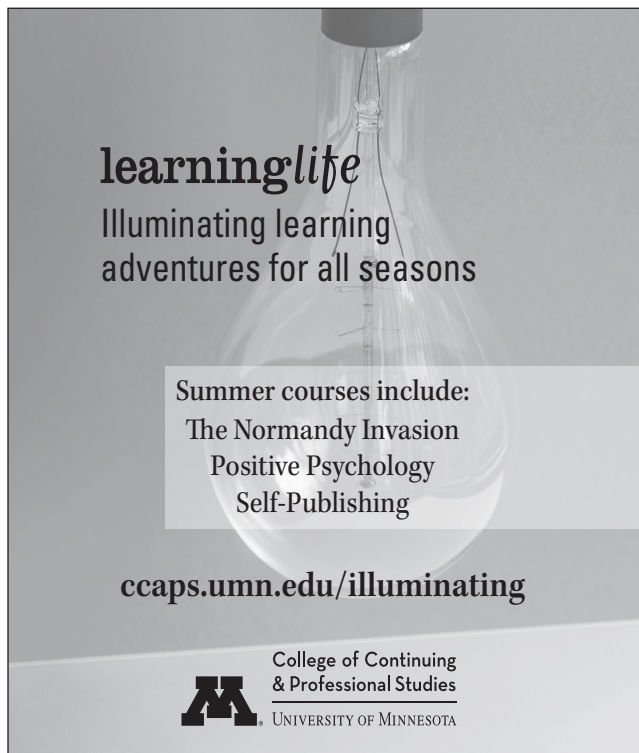
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UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403  
Website: [umra.umn.edu](http://umra.umn.edu)

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## Photo Club to meet April 9

The UMRA Photo Club will meet on Tuesday, April 9, 12:30–2:30 p.m., at the St. Anthony branch of the Hennepin County Library. The meeting will start with a discussion about where we might go for a spring/early summer photo shoot. Bring your ideas and suggestions. We will then share member pictures illustrating “detail” followed by pictures that members have chosen without regard to the theme. All are welcome. Come at 11:30 if you can for lunch at the Great Dragon Buffet across the parking lot. For more information contact either Sheri Goldsmith [Maygold009@gmail.com](mailto:Maygold009@gmail.com) or Craig Swan [swan@umn.edu](mailto:swan@umn.edu).



*“Signs” was the theme of the Photo Club’s March meeting. Craig Swan shared this picture of a particularly arresting sign he encountered while traveling in Albania.*