

NOVEMBER 2019

President Joan Gabel to address UMRA at our November forum

University of Minnesota President Joan Gabel will be our guest speaker at the Retiree Association's luncheon on November 19. President Gabel is the 17th president of the University and the first woman to hold the position. She was unanimously elected by the Board of Regents on December 18, 2018, and assumed the office on July 1, 2019.

She was officially inaugurated on September 20 at a brief installation ceremony inside the McNamara Alumni Center, which was livestreamed for the first time in the University's history. President Gabel then proceeded along Scholars Walk, where members of the campus community lined up to greet her on her way to Northrop Mall, where she gave a rousing speech, also livestreamed, on the steps of Northrop Memorial Auditorium. She has been well received by the University community and is universally described as warm, energetic, and engaging.



President Gabel comes to us from the University of South Carolina, where she was the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost. Prior to that she served as dean of the University of Missouri's College of Business for five years. Earlier, she was a faculty member at Georgia State University and Florida State University, where she was a department chair. She is a 1993 graduate of the University of Georgia Law School and briefly worked as an associate in an Atlanta law firm before beginning her academic career.

We are honored to have President Gabel speak at our forum. We expect her to talk about her experiences to date as president and her vision and goals for the University. There will, of course, be time for questions. We hope to become better acquainted with the new president and learn some ways in which we can support her.

The West Wing should fill up quickly, so reserve your spot early.

—Bill Donohue, UMRA president, 2019–20

December 17 Holiday Party

Join the fun as UMRA hosts its very first Holiday Party from 4 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17, in the Campus Club West Wing Dining Room. The festivities will include a holiday buffet and cash bar, plus a performance by 7Days A Cappella—a U of M student choir.

See page 8 for details, including instructions for making your reservation(s).

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER MEETING At A Glance

Tuesday, November 19
Campus Club, Fourth Floor
Coffman Memorial Union

Luncheon + Forum

11:30–1 p.m.
West Wing Dining Room
Featured speaker
Joan Gabel, president
University of Minnesota

Living Well Workshop

1:30–2:30 p.m.
Dale Shephard Room
How to keep our brains healthy

Menu

Pan-seared catfish with lemon aioli over red beans and rice, with seasonal vegetables.

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

RSVP by November 12

Prepayment of \$23 per person. Annual prepayers, please cancel if you will NOT attend.

[Reserve and pay online](#) or send your check payable to 'UMRA' to:

Mary Ford
1147 Ivy Hill Drive
Mendota Heights, MN 55118

Parking

\$7 maximum in University ramps with UMRA's discount coupon.

To reserve parking in the East River Road Ramp, contact Mary at fordx045@umn.edu or 651-955-6118.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Exciting events ahead for November and December

Great News! At the October meeting of the UMRA Board, the University of Minnesota Foundation informed us that total contributions by UMRA members to the University's current fund drive now exceed \$26.9 million. Even more impressive, 80 percent of UMRA members have donated to the "Driven" campaign. Congratulations!

This fall has also been good for UMRA because our membership has been rising and our first two forums and workshops have been well attended. I hope, as a result of the retiree benefits update provided at the October 22 workshop by the Office of Human Resources and the four medical plan vendors represented, everyone is feeling better educated about their choices for health care providers and the upcoming changes in the U's retirement investment administration.

Fall has also been good for the University. As our students complete midterms and approach finals, our sports teams have done well. This is particularly true of the football team, which was 8-0 and ranked No. 13 in both the Coaches Poll and the AP Top 25 in late October; and Minnesota's perennially successful volleyball team, which was 15-3 and at No. 6 in the NCAA ranking. You may recall that when Athletics Director Mark Coyle spoke to us in February, he predicted such success, and also promised to keep up the academic success. (The U just announced that its student-athletes have posted a program-record 94 percent six-year graduation rate, up one percent from last year's record best). So far, Coyle has done well with the "front porch" of the university.

As the Retiree Association prepares to welcome President Gabel on November 19, we're also getting ready to inaugurate UMRA's first holiday event—on Tuesday, December 17. Please turn to page 8 for details.

We've also made progress in our efforts to arrange "get to know" sessions with the new regents. Our first will be with Mary Davenport at 1 p.m. on Monday, December 2, in the University of Minnesota Foundation large conference room on the fifth floor of the McNamara Alumni Center.

Regent Davenport is a former administrator with 30 years of experience with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, where she held local and statewide roles, including service as a faculty member, dean, vice president, and president. We look forward to getting to know her and learning her thoughts about being an at-large regent and the direction of the University.

I hope to see you at our upcoming events!

Finally, your Board of Directors has approved a new policy on membership to make it easier for people to join UMRA. The new policy makes it clear that eligibility for membership includes spouses and partners; anyone who retired from the University or worked for the University for at least five years and retired elsewhere, and wants to be a member; and anyone participating in the University's phased retirement program. The Board can still also invite people to become members by special exception.

—Bill Donohue, UMRA president, 2019–20

November workshop: How to keep our brains healthy

At our November workshop, Joseph E. Gaugler, PhD, will talk about keeping our brains healthy and our minds sound. Professor Gaugler holds the Robert L. Kane



Endowed Chair in Long-Term Care and Aging in the University of Minnesota School of Public Health Division of Health Policy and Management. He

is also the director of the school's newly relaunched and redesigned Center on Aging.

An applied gerontologist, Dr. Gaugler has won numerous awards for his work on long-term care for those with Alzheimer's disease and other chronic conditions.

Dr. Gaugler will summarize what we currently know about how the brain changes as it ages. He will then tell us about recent research on life course factors that are associated with the risk of dementia. From this research, he will offer suggestions for things we can do to help reduce our personal risk factors.

—Ron Matross, chair, Workshop Committee

Come at 10:30 for coffee and conversation

Thanks to the Campus Club, the West Wing Dining Room is available to UMRA members for coffee and conversation before our luncheons. There is no charge and no need to RSVP.

UMRA FY18–19 FINANCIAL REPORT

Bank balances	7/1/2018	6/30/2019
Checking account	16,912	6,972
Savings certificate	—	10,000
Savings account	<u>3,721</u>	<u>1,009</u>
Total checking and savings	\$20,693	\$17,981
Revenue		
Dues and prepaid lunches		26,667
Dues		1,591
Lunches		6,906
Sponsorships		4,000
Miscellaneous (pass throughs)		<u>1,365</u>
Total revenue		\$40,529
Expenses		
Lunches		22,680
Newsletter		9,710
Conferences		4,375
Communications		957
Memorials		771
Membership		966
Technology		995
Insurance		794
Planning, social, rooms, misc.		<u>2,628</u>
Total expense		\$43,876
Net loss*		<u>\$3,387</u>

* The net loss for the fiscal year (nominally \$2,712) does not reflect the movement of \$4,919 of expense and \$4,285 of revenue from July 2019 back into FY18–19 in order to better reflect the timing of major expenses and revenue that occurred in June but were not recorded in the bank statement until July.

Future directions in cancer care

At the UMRA luncheon on October 22, Douglas Yee, MD, a medical oncologist specializing in breast cancer and director of the Masonic Cancer Center at the University of Minnesota, gave a presentation entitled, “Can We Afford Personalized Medicine?”

Personalized medicine uses genes, proteins, and the environment to prevent, diagnose, and treat disease. Such an approach is being applied to breast cancer. Breast cancer survival continues to improve, and breast cancer care is undergoing a major shift in approach using personalized medicine.

As more of the basic biology of the cancer and the body’s response to it is understood, new treatments are being developed that focus on using the body’s own immune system for fighting or eliminating the disease. Based on what has been learned, Dr. Yee said, medical or adjuvant therapy is now generally used prior to surgical intervention, as these new therapies reduce the amount of tumor present. This shift is also the result of clinical trials involving volunteers.

Newer clinical trial designs occasionally employ a placebo control, but more often are using standard treatment as the control and testing a new agent against that standard. One such trial, the ISPY2 Trial, was discussed by Dr. Yee. These new agents are more expensive and can have side effects, but they also seem to improve both quality of life and patient survival.



Douglas Yee, MD, (second from right) visited with UMRA members Carol O’Boyle, Frank Cerra, and Karen LeBat at UMRA’s October luncheon.

Science is also discovering diagnostic tests using biomarkers that are more specific and predictive of a person’s response, so that the number of treatments needed can be limited to the individual patient’s ability to respond. Better biomarkers and improvements in biologic agents are two approaches to reducing the cost of these new agents.

—Frank Cerra, MD, chair, Program Committee, and president-elect

Food for thought

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

—John F. Kennedy

HELLO, my name is Eric Hockert

Hometown? I was born in Marshalltown, Iowa, but most of my childhood was spent in Grundy Center, a small farming community of about 2,000 people located in central northeast Iowa.

When did you join UMRA? Early 2016, immediately after I retired.

What was your very first job? Detasseling corn, typical for a young Iowan. The pay wasn't much (\$1.30 per hour), but the work was strenuous and outdoors, with the strong, good scents of rich black dirt and other farm things. I still feel at home when I sense a farm nearby.

What was your occupation when you retired from FT work? My last role at the University was in the Office for Technology Commercialization, where we patented technologies developed at the University and licensed them to companies that worked to transform them into useful products.

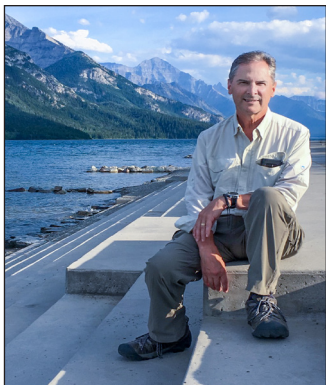
Where were you in 1969 when Apollo 11 landed on the moon? I remember this vividly. I was in my childhood home watching the landing on our black-and-white TV. The decade of the 1960s was very interesting. Science and space were driving forces that convinced a lot of us to pursue engineering and technology degrees and careers.

If you could learn a new skill, what would you like it to be? Acting in the theater. This would be a challenge and opposite to my personality.

Do you have a favorite spot on the U of M campus? The Mall. Every time I'm on campus I try to spend a few minutes there. The energy of young people instills a sense of hope for the future.

What is a fun fact about you we might not know? I'm an inventor of the laser technology used to produce the squiggly lines and circles on your car's license plates. Look closely with the sun behind you to see them.

What is something you currently enjoy doing? My wife, Jane Doyle, and I love traveling. Our next trips include Death Valley and an Alaskan cruise. Previous travels have taken us to China, Budapest, Prague, Rome, Venice, Yellowstone, Glacier, and many other places.



Eric Hockert in Waterton Lakes National Park, Canada

OHR benefits workshop drew a crowd

At the October workshop, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) and vendor representatives gave an audience of more than 70 UMRA members a preview of the latest information on the University's health care and retirement savings plans. Retiree medical plans will continue from last year with relatively minor changes in costs and coverage. However, dental plans will be offered from only one vendor, Delta Dental.

Details about next year's medical and dental plans can be found online in the [2020 Benefits Annual Enrollment Guide](#) (also to be mailed to retirees in late October) and at the Benefits Fairs held on campus November 6 and 7. This year's open enrollment period runs from November 1 to December 2.

The University is making a major change in its retiree savings plans, switching the administration of these plans from Securian to Fidelity, which will offer a new and different portfolio of investment options. Securian options will be mapped to corresponding Fidelity options. The Securian General Account and General Account Limited funds will still be offered as before, even though they will be administered by Fidelity.

Before the funds switch over on April 1, 2020, OHR will offer many ways to learn about the changes and new options, including mailings, workshops, videos, web pages, and individual consultations.

—Ron Matross, chair, Workshop Committee

Welcome new members to UMRA

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

- Kate Maple, College of Design
- Marilyn H. McClaskey, University Libraries
- Janet Stottlemeyer, College of Education and Human Development
- James Lewis, University of Minnesota Extension and Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and William L. Bloedow
- Gordon Leon Duke, Carlson School of Management

For contact information, please visit umra.umn.edu > Contact Us > [Member Search](#) (login required).



**As an UMRA member,
you receive a 10% discount
on all basic level Minnesota
Landscape Arboretum
memberships!**

A “tote”lly cool gift for your loved ones this year! Give the gift of the Arboretum to that special someone on your gift list, and receive an Arboretum tote to keep for yourself or give away. Each tote features the new Arboretum graphic! Offer through December 31, 2019. While supplies last.

For information about levels and benefits visit arboretum.umn.edu/join.aspx or call 612-301-1257 and mention University of Minnesota Retirees Association when ordering!



Thank you to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum for helping to sponsor our November newsletter.

Book Notes: Quirky characters bring WWII WASPs to life

Fannie Flagg’s *The All-Girl Filling Station’s Last Reunion* is a fictional story whose main character, Sookie Poole, a Southern Alabama housewife, is taken on a journey that turns her life upside down. The author intertwines fictional characters with the history of the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), an organization of brave, patriotic women who served during World War II.

The book starts slowly, but with humor, quirky characters, and plot twists, it evolves into an engaging, informative story. The reader is taken back and forth in time from Alabama to Wisconsin to California. The story spans generations, following two families—one steeped in Southern culture in present time, the other a polka-loving Polish family in 1940s Wisconsin.

Author and actress Fannie Flagg was born in Birmingham, Alabama. She is perhaps best known for her 1987 novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*. While *The All-Girl Filling Station’s Last Reunion* is also based on Southern culture and interesting characters, the story line is much different.

The café portrayed in *Fried Green Tomatoes* was based on a café owned by Flagg’s aunt. Following the success of the book and subsequent movie, the café became a popular tourist attraction. Many years later, while in California, Fannie called the café to “check in.” The owner mentioned that a group of 80-year-old women, former WASPs, was there. It was 1999, and the women were having their last reunion. Flagg had never heard of the WASP but was intrigued. Thus, the seed for this novel was planted.

Most UMRA Book Club members enjoyed the book for its humor, and for its introduction to the history of the WASP. It’s well worth reading if you’re looking for a book that touches on family identity and eccentric characters, provides a touch of mystery, and deftly describes how women aided the war effort during World War II.

—Mary Jane Towle, member, UMRA Book Club

Book Club to meet November 15

Kathryn Sedo will lead a discussion of *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis when the UMRA Book Club meets at 2 p.m. on Friday, November 15, at the 1666 Coffman Building in Falcon Heights. Members will also select books to read in 2020. Contact Pat Tollefson at p-toll@umn.edu to learn more.

In remembrance

We report the passing of UMRA members and University leaders as we learn of these losses to our community. Our condolences to the families and friends of our colleagues.

Carl Mohn passed away on August 8, 2019. After service in the U.S. Army, he enrolled in the University and earned a doctorate in forestry. Dr. Mohn had a long career at the U of M, teaching and conducting research in forestry genetics, with a focus on forest tree improvement.

George Kenneth Gordon passed away on September 26, 2019. Originally trained in ministry, he volunteered as a missionary in Egypt for three years and served as a Presbyterian minister in Wyoming before earning a PhD in education. Dr. Gordon joined the U of M School of Public Health faculty in hospital administration, where he led the Center for Long-Term Care Administration and developed a curriculum that transformed this work into an academically based profession.

Walter H. “Cork” Johnson Jr. passed away on September 24, 2019. He earned his BA, MA, and PhD degrees in physics at the U of M. After a brief stint at GE, Professor Johnson joined the U of M physics faculty where he served as an outstanding teacher and researcher, and was an administrator in the Institute of Technology.

Gerhard Hans Weiss passed away on October 2, 2019. A survivor of the Holocaust, he came to the U.S. with his parents and family in 1946, then served in the U.S. Army in Japan. A distinguished professor of German, Dr. Weiss served in the U of M German Department from 1956 until his retirement in 1998, then continued his research and teaching and in administrative positions, for many years. He received numerous honors and awards for his scholarship and service, including the U of M President’s Award for Outstanding Service.

All four were members of UMRA along with their wives.

UMRA Cares supports members

If you learn of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge, or 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.

Photo Club to meet November 12

“Costumes” will be the theme when the UMRA Photo Club meets at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, in the **St. Anthony Library** at the east end of the St. Anthony Shopping Center. Join us at 11:30 a.m. for lunch first at the Great Dragon Buffet across the parking lot. New-comers are welcome! Contact Sherilyn Goldsmith May at golds009@gmail.com or Craig Swan at swan@umn.edu for more information.



Gail Sauter and Linda Lorenz were among those who attended the lively UMRA New Member Reception held in the Campus Club Lounge in October.

Tax planning strategies

UMRA’s Financial & Legal Issues Group (FLG) invites you to a presentation on tax planning at 2 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, at **John A. Knutson & Co., PLLP**, in Falcon Heights. Making tax-wise contributions to charities is one important issue to be considered.

A good way to make a contribution if you are age 70½ or older is with a Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA. These gifts satisfy Required Minimum Distributions and are not included in taxable income. To learn more, including what instructions to give the financial institution holding your retirement account and what documentation is required for tax purposes, please attend the FLG tax planning session on November 21.

For directions or instructions for participating by computer or phone via GoToMeeting, contact Kim Elm at kelm@jakcpa.com or 651-379-5732.

Contact Andy Whitman at awhitman@umn.edu or 612-747-6015 if you have other questions or suggestions.

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.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FOUNDATION

Thank you to the University of Minnesota Foundation for helping to sponsor our November newsletter.

PDGR deadline reminder

If you're still thinking about applying for support from the Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) program for the 2020–21 academic year, the deadline is December 13.

Grants may provide up to \$5,000 to support professional interests, including expenses for travel and per diem costs related to research trips and conference attendance; stipends for undergraduate and/or graduate research assistants; photocopying; the purchase of books, computer hardware and software; and other relevant costs of scholarship. Grants do not cover salary for the applicant or institutional overhead charges.

Instructions for submitting applications can be found on the UMRA website along with abstracts of all the grants awarded since 2009. It is an impressive list and shows the value the PDGR program has played in helping retirees from all parts of the University remain actively engaged in their professional lives.

—Dick Poppele, chair, PDGR Committee

Firsthand—experiences with aging

By Ron Anderson

Do you often feel cold when others don't? At age 78, I started feeling cold most of the time. When I put the problem to my doctor, who is a bit overweight, he joked that not all of us are lucky enough to have a layer of fat to help us keep warm.

Upon further research I discovered that abnormal sensitivity to cold temperatures is called “cold intolerance” and may be due to low metabolism, especially insufficient production of thyroid hormones. Or, it may be due to Raynaud's disease, a disorder affecting circulation, especially in the fingers and toes, or even anemia, which yields a low red blood cell count.

Eventually my doctor determined I have a type of anemia often found among those my age. He seemed really happy to have uncovered the problem even though it lacks a cure.

I used to feel comfortable in a 72-degree room, but now I need it to be at least 79 or 80 degrees to keep from shivering. My wife has a normal “internal” thermostat. This has led to great training in compromise: sometimes we work in separate rooms that can be individually heated; other times, we set the temperature to a midpoint.

After a few months of working out these compromises, it dawned on me that feeling cold is a lot like feeling pain. And, just as mindfulness can be used to ignore pain, if I think of shivering as mild pain, I can make the cold, in effect, go away. And what better place to practice acceptance of extreme cold than Minnesota?



UMRA members Jerry Rinehart, Leo Lewis, and John Anderson enjoyed the opportunity to socialize at the New Member Reception in October.

UMRA University of Minnesota Retirees Association

University of Minnesota
McNamara Alumni Center
Room 264, Suite 250
200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2002
612-626-4403 | umra.umn.edu

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 _____
Address _____
City, State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____
Other Info _____



December 17 UMRA Holiday Party

Join the fun as UMRA hosts its very first Holiday Party from 4 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17, in the Campus Club West Wing Dining Room. The festivities will include a holiday buffet and cash bar. After a short program at 5 p.m., 7Days A Cappella (pictured above)—a diverse group of U of M students connected by their love of music and performance—will sing some seasonal and not-so-seasonal music. We will then invite everyone to make some predictions for the coming year, to test our futurist skills. ¶ Tickets for the event are \$25 per person and reservations are required. You can make your reservation(s) immediately by sending a check payable to ‘UMRA’ to Mary Ford at 1147 Ivy Hill Drive, Mendota heights, MN 55118. Please note ‘Holiday Party’ on the memo line. Reservations may also be made online via the UMRA website starting November 20.

—Frank Cerra and Bill Donohue