

TOWER TALK

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Spring Luncheon 2024: Research on Aging at UCR Featuring Dr. Ilana Bennett

By Raymond Russell

UCR retirees and emeriti gathered at the Alumni and Visitors Center for our annual Spring Luncheon on May 17. UCRRA President Andy Plumley welcomed all attendees, and called a brief meeting of the UCR Retirees' Association to order. Treasurer Al Chavez gave a financial report. Andy then briefly conducted an election of UCRRA Board members for 2024-25 and received the approval of the members for a set of amendments to the UCRRA Bylaws that had been circulated before the meeting.

Emeriti Association Co-President Darleen DeMason then convened a brief Annual Meeting of the UCR Emeriti Association. Treasurer Larry Zahn gave a financial report, noting that the UCREA had a balance of \$24,707.18 in its account at Provident Bank. Darleen then presented recent winners of the Emeriti Graduate Student Travel Award with certificates. Liz Wilson, winner of the Fall 2023 award, is a Ph.D. candidate in Psychology. The two winners of the Winter 2024 award were Pedro Garcia Lopez de la Osa (Music) and Patricia Holt-Torres (Microbiology).

Darleen then invited Emeriti Association Co-President Raymond Russell to introduce Dr. Ilana Bennett. Dr. Bennett is an Associate Professor of Psychology at UCR and Co-Director of the UCR Aging Initiative. She received her bachelor's degree in cognitive science from UC Irvine and a PhD in lifespan cognitive science from Georgetown University. Her research seeks to advance our understanding of the aging brain and how it affects the way older adults acquire and receive information.

Dr. Bennett reports that she and her colleagues at UCR take a "multifaceted" approach in their research, looking at the social, neural, cellular, and molecular effects of aging. Psychologist Dr. Rachel Wu and statistician Dr. Esra Kurum have shown how interventions such as learning new skills can improve seniors' cognitive performance. Dr. Bennett has worked with bioengineer Dr. Xiaoping Hu to use MRI to shed light on diseases like Parkinson's. Dr. Joshua Morgan is a bioengineer who studies the effects of aging on cellular and molecular processes. Researchers on aging at UCR are now seeking to expand their activities by developing ties to researchers on other UC campuses and hosting speaker series, workshops, and conferences.

When asked what we seniors should be doing now to help our brains resist the effects of aging, Dr. Bennett warned that "blueberries are not enough." Research at UCR continues to show that cognitive health requires us to engage in regular vigorous exercise and to take on mentally challenging tasks like learning complex new skills.



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R'Pantry - UCREA and UCRRA Members Giving

By Andy Plumley

Our programming committee was recently in touch with the UCR Basic Needs office. Their mission is to cultivate a campus environment where every student's essential needs are met, enabling them to thrive academically, personally, and socially. One of the ways they do this is through the R'Pantry, where they provide emergency non-perishable food, personal hygiene, household care and childcare items all year around. The committee decided to add an R'Pantry Drive at our Spring Luncheon, asking for laundry supply donations. And emeriti and retirees responded greatly donating almost 60 pounds of laundry goods which included over 700 dryer sheets, 400 laundry detergent pods, and 90 detergent sheets. Thank you to all who contributed and thank you to the R' Pantry Student Leads, Emily Macias and Karine Cuevas! Look for future donation events.



UCR Retirees' Association

Andy Plumley
UCRRA President



Hello UCR Retirees' Association Members!

I write this summer message after the first day of summer occurred last week. It is the time of year that many participate in trips and family gatherings, although as retirees we can do this all year long!

UCRRA has had a productive and active year, and the following are some highlights of 2023/24:

- Awarded \$11,000 in scholarships to three UCR undergraduate students.
- Participated in two UCR fundraising events, raising over \$10,600 for our undergraduate scholarship fund.
- Hosted three quarterly luncheons and the annual retiree and emeriti reception.
- Provided minor updates to our UCRRA Bylaws, keeping them current after last year's overhaul, which the membership approved.
- Recognized staff getting ready to retire at the quarterly Staff Assembly General Meetings.
- Represented UCR at the semiannual meetings of the Council of UC Retiree Associations.
- Continue to work with the campus for a physical space for the UCR Retirement Center.

It was great seeing so many at our Spring Luncheon and Business Meeting, where we elected our 2024/2025 Officers. I am grateful to continue serving as your President, and please join me in congratulating our 2024/2025 Executive Board:

- Sheryl Hayes, Vice President
- Kathy Blondel, Secretary
- Mike Donovan, Treasurer
- Patricia Smith-Hunt, Events & Programs Director
- Jorge Sanchez, Communications & Outreach Director

We will be recruiting members for our standing committees: Nominating Committee, Membership and Outreach Committee, Events and Programs Committee, and Scholarship Committee. If you are interested, please contact Cristina Otegui, the Retirement Center Director.

In closing, I would like to thank our outgoing board members for their great work:

- Karim Zahedi has served the last two years as our Vice President and is credited (along with Patricia Smith-Hunt) for the work of our bylaws overhaul last year. He has also shepherded our Scholarship Committee.
- Mitch Boretz has served the last two years as our Secretary and set a new standard in getting minutes out, along with archiving our materials with the UCR Special Collections.
- Al Chavez has served as our Treasurer for the last 5 years. The Treasurer position requires continual work of regularly making deposits and writing checks, and Al has done a tremendous job in keeping our finances straight.

As always, I hope you explore this publication and get involved in anything that interests you. And if you don't find what you're looking for, let us know. Have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Andy

UCR Emeriti Association

Darleen DeMason and Raymond Russell
UCREA Co-Presidents



Dear UCR Emeriti Association Members,

Spring 2024 Events

Among the most memorable events of Spring 2024, retirees and emeriti toured the glamorous new Education building at UCR's School of Medicine on April 30. On May 7, Dickson Fellow and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Entomology Brian Federici told us about an instance in which "Wasp Evolution Tricks Scientists." At the annual Spring Luncheon on May 17, Associate Professor of Psychology Ilana Bennett, Co-Director of the UCR Aging Initiative, provided an overview of the various forms of research on aging currently taking place at UCR. Detailed articles about all these events appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Emeriti Association Graduate Student Travel Award

We are very pleased to announce that during UCR's April 2024 Give Day campaign, \$6,021 was received in new gifts to the current use fund that supports the Emeriti Association's Graduate Student Travel Award, and another \$500 was contributed to the endowment. These new gifts brought the totals for each fund to \$19,354 in the current use fund, and \$35,501.21 in the endowment. Thanks to these generous gifts, the Emeriti Graduate Student Travel Award has expanded from a single award in 2021-2022 to one award per quarter beginning in 2023-2024. In Winter 2024, UCR's Graduate Division partnered with the UCREA to fund two Emeriti Graduate Student Travel Awards. To support future Graduate Student Travel Awards, emeriti and friends are encouraged to make gifts to the current use fund or to the endowment fund that support this award.

Changes in Leadership of the Emeriti Association

Larry Zahn served several terms as Treasurer of the Emeriti Association in the past, and when he was elected to a new term as Treasurer in May 2023, he agreed to serve only one year. In June 2024, Brad Hyman agreed to serve the remainder of Larry's two-year term as Treasurer through June 2025. This change means that Brad will no longer share the office of Secretary with Linda Tomko. Now that Linda has become our sole Secretary, Byron Adams has replaced Linda as Chair of the Dickson Committee. We are grateful to all of these volunteers for their willingness to fill these important roles.

Sincerely,

Darleen and Rusty



In Memoriam

We recognize and honor those who have passed this 2023 - 2024 academic year.



Helen Armstrong, Retired in November 1992
Sarah Blaker, retired in July 1986
Dewayne Brekke, retired in December 2009
David Burke, retired in November 1992
Jerry Carlson, retired in July 1994
Kuan-Wen Chuang, retired in August 2013
David Cudney, retired in May 2003
James Deal, retired in July 2017
Richard Goeden, retired in September 2002
Curtis Grassman, retired in April 2003
Sharene Greene, retired in November 1993
George Haggerty, retired in July 2018

Lawrence Harper, retired in July 2006
Donna Henderson, retired in July 2007
Kenneth Holtzclaw, retired in April 1991
William Howe, retired in November 1988
John Johnson, retired in July 2023
Larry Bruce Koenig, retired in March 2018
Victor Lippit, retired in July 2012
William Megenney, retired in July 2009
Richard Mercer, retired in June 2000
Madelyn Millen, retired in July 2014
Jan Marie Opdyke, Retired in August 2015
Robert Rosenthal, retired in July 2019

Suellen Rugg, retired in August 1999
David Rush, retired in July 2018
R. Robert Russell, retired in July 2010
Vahram Sevacherian, Retired in July 1993
Eugen Simanek, retired in July 1994
Susan Spranger, retired in July 2000
Caitlin St. John, retired in July 2016
Raymond Valencia, retired in July 2005
William W. Thomson, retired in July 1999
Irwin Wall, retired in July 2001
Sandra Willits, retired in September 2013
Janice Zlendich, retired in June 2002

UC Retiree Travel Program

View all 2023-2024 planned trips on the Council of UC Retiree Associations (CUCRA) website at:

<http://cucra.ucsd.edu/travel/>



UCR Osher Program

UCRRA and UCREA members receive a \$20 discount on the Osher Annual Membership. Details on the Osher webpage at:

<https://palmdesert.ucr.edu/welcome-ucr-osher>

Newly Designed Retiree and Emeriti Website By Jorge Sanchez

We are excited to announce the new [UCR Retirees' Association website](#). After working for the last few months, we have created an excellent website so you can enjoy the best possible user experience.

UCR Retirees and Emeriti members will still be able to find information about your retirement benefits and learn about updates to the UC retirement program including:

- Health and Welfare Benefits
- UCR Parking Pass for Retirees and Emeriti
- Emeriti and Retiree Email
- Resources for Retirees and Emeriti

You will also be able to learn more about our cultural programs such as:

- Emeriti and Retirees' Association Quarterly Luncheons
- Award programs such as the Mary Johnson Outstanding Retiree Award and the Edward A. Dickson Emeritus/a Professorship Award
- UC Retirees Travel Program
- Ways to participate and support the UCR Retirees' Association
- Mystery Book Club
- Walks, Talks and Tour Program



Please be sure to visit your new website with is rich with content to help make you retired life a healthy and happy one!

Join in on the Engaging Reads of the Mystery Book Club!

UCRRA and UCREA members who love to cozy up to a book full of mystery and wonder are invited to join the Mystery Book Club that meets monthly via Zoom on the second Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. to share in rich discussions about their perspectives and experiences. A book list is selected by the club and members take turns leading the discussions. Hear from some of the members on their experiences in their feedback below.

“

The group approach to understanding mysteries has been my first experience with a book club and of considerable enjoyment. The people involved are a harmonious group, keen on learning about the characters, plots, and devices of mysteries. Our focus upon detectives is most attractive to me.

John Levin, UCREA Member

“

I've really enjoyed the mystery book club. It's a great way to stay connected to UCR retirees and emeriti. Reading this genre has opened me up to more diversity in my reading.

Terri McDonald, UCRRA Member

Fall Book Activities

When: Tuesday, September 10, 2024

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Book Activity: *The Hunter* by Tana French

When: Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Book Activity: *Extraordinary People* by Peter May

When: Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

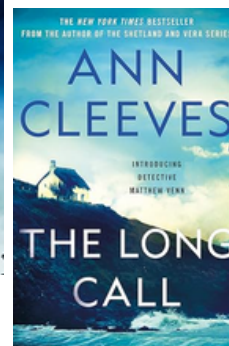
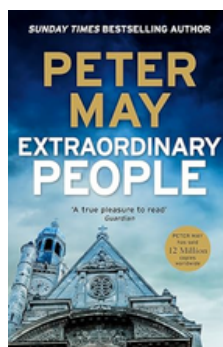
Book Activity: *The Long Call*, Book 1 by Ann Cleeves

When: Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Book Activity: *How the Light Gets In* by Louise Penny

Details: Interested members may contact the Retirement Center with the subject line, "Mystery Book Club" at: retirees@ucr.edu.



Garden to Table Vegetables

An expert from the Riverside Master Gardeners Program will be sharing best practices on how to manage a vegetable garden.

Thursday, July 18, 2024 from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ba2sElu7uiRztgg



UC Retirees Travel Trip Preview Webinar

UC Retirees Travel offers worldwide group tours for retired UC staff and faculty as well as their friends and family. UC Retirees Travel will preview the group's newest 2025 trips, including adventures to the Galapagos, Costa Rica, Finland, Italy, Japan, Northern Spain/Portugal, Africa, Canada, France, Niagara Falls and Cuba, as well as a Danube River cruise and a small ship adventure from Albania to Greece. See details about upcoming trips at <http://cucra.ucsd.edu/travel/>.

Friday, August 2, 2024 from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

Register on the UC Retiree Travel Program webpage at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZwtceGuqT4iGdQ4CM1eAEdPyTgHOcqUFRf-#/registration>



Fall Luncheon

"Particle Physics and Dark Matter"



Ernest Ma

UCR Professor Emeritus of Physics and Astronomy

Friday, October 4, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

In-person at the UCR Alumni & Visitors Center

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vipwXXxCR3Tcma



Assorted wines will be provided

Retiree and Emeriti Reception

Chancellor Kim Wilcox will discuss the state of the campus while we honor retirees and emeriti and their years of service.

Friday, November 15, 2024 from 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

In-person at the UCR Alumni & Visitors Center

Register on the retiree and emeriti webpage at:

https://ucriverside.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9p2BPwGjDag3lWu



A Day of Fun Lawn Bowling at Fairmount Park

A group of retirees and emeriti came together to try out the game of lawn bowling on Friday, May 31. When asked to raise their hand if it was the first time playing, all hands were raised! The day was spent being welcomed by the Riverside Lawn Bowling Club Leaders with coffee and donuts, learning about the equipment and rules and navigating the field playing several games. We hope to do this activity again and welcome all interested retirees and emeriti to attend. A special thank you to the Riverside Lawn Bowling Club!



Spring Dickson Lecture

By Darleen DeMason



On May 7, Professor Brian Federici from the Department of Entomology gave his Dickson Lecture entitled "Wasp Evolution Tricks Scientists." He provided support for a paradigm shift relating to the mechanism by which parasitic wasps circumvent the immune system of their insect hosts when they oviposit eggs into them. A paradigm shift is a significant change that happens when the usual theory about something is replaced by a new and different theory. Paradigm shifts promote interest and a surge of research bringing new information about the system in question. When a female parasitic wasp oviposits into a caterpillar, she releases some "particles" that circumvent the immune system which then allows the eggs to hatch and complete the larval stage of their life cycle, to the demise of the host. These particles have always been interpreted to be products of polydnviruses.

But Dr. Federici, who is a virologist, came up with the idea in 1991 that these were not viruses but some other type of cellular entity. He initially came to this idea because unlike other viruses, the genome does not replicate in the cells and no new virus particles are assembled or released. In the following decades more and more molecular information about these particles has come to light, which continued to show that the particles are not really virus-like. Among these data were that the organization of the genome is not similar to other viruses and the encoded gene sequences are similar to the parasitic wasp genes and not to virus genes. Dr. Federici and his research colleagues have posed a new theory that these particles are more similar to mitochondria and chloroplasts, which are organelles that also have DNA and which are thought to have originated by the encapsulation of bacteria into ancient eukaryotic cells during early evolution of the life forms on earth. Federici and his colleagues' new theory is that these wasp particles originated evolutionarily as encapsulated viruses and then evolved to become "immunosuppressant organelles" by losing their original genome and replacing it with insect immunosuppressant genes over time. This is a very exciting hypothesis with important evolutionary implications. Very recently, in 2023, Eugene Koonin and Jens Kuhn, two prominent virologists at our National Institutes of Health, unaware of Professor Federici's earlier papers, came to the same conclusion, that the polydnviruses are not viruses. Professor Federici along with these and other scientists are now working to change the wasp virus concept to one modeled on the organelle paradigm.

This lecture was in person and live streamed with support by the UCR Emeriti and Retiree Associations, the Osher Institute and the Office of Planned Giving.



Winter Graduate Student Travel Award Winners

By Darleen DeMason

During the Winter Quarter the Graduate Student Travel Award Committee reviewed ten applications from graduate students on campus who needed funding for travel to meetings to present research results or for travel to obtain research needed for their dissertations. The applicants were evenly divided between the two travel types and between science and humanities/arts/social sciences. The committee members were very impressed by the quality of work being done by the graduate students on our campus and were delighted when Dr. Emma Wilson, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division, told us we could pick two awardees and they would share the funding 50:50 with us.

The students selected were: Pedro Garcia Lopez de la Osa, a music historian, who traveled to Spain to review new documents made available by the government of Spain about the treatment of artists during the Franco regime; and Patricia Holt Torrez, a microbiologist, who was invited to give a talk on biomaterials for medical use at the World Biomaterial Congress in South Korea. Both students have now completed their travels and have received their reimbursements.

We wish them both success in their future scholarly endeavors.



Walks, Talks & Tours

School of Medicine Education II Building

By Andy Plumley

On April 30, 2024, our Walks, Talks & Tours took us to the School of Medicine, specifically the School of Medicine Education II Building, and our tour was led by Ross French, the SOM Digital Communications Manager.

The UCR School of Medicine (SOM) welcomed its first class of students in fall of 2013, but the dream of teaching physicians at the University of California, Riverside dates back to 1971, when then – UCR Chancellor Ivan Hinderaker presented the idea of building a medical education program in Inland Southern California.

The facilities to support the SOM include the SOM Research Building, which opened in March 2011 and features faculty offices and lab space; the SOM Education Building, which opened in spring 2013, in the newly renovated Stat/Comp Building; and the SOM Education Building II, which opened in fall 2023.

Our tour began with a video welcome from the Dean, and we then progressed to walking through this 5-story building. On our tour we saw and learned:

- The building was designed and constructed in partnership with CO Architects and Hansel Phelps Construction, and cost \$100M.
- The building is almost 100,000 gross square feet.
- The building meets LEED Platinum certification and is one of the most energy efficient buildings on campus.
- The building includes a 200kW solar array.
- The building houses: classrooms, student support and study facilities, study and lounge space, specialized teaching spaces, lecture halls, academic and administrative spaces, and open terraces and patios.

In addition to our walking tour, we learned about how the dream of a UCR SOM started with Chancellor Ivan Hinderaker and began with a partnership with UCLA's Chancellor Charles Young, on a Biomedical Program. Chancellor Young was in UCR's inaugural undergraduate class, and earned his undergraduate degree at UCR and was the first student president of Associated Students of UCR. In 2013, under the leadership of Chancellor Tim White and founding Dean Richard Olds, UCR opened the SOM. And recently, the UCR SOM celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2023 after graduating nearly 400 medical doctors.



The Mary Johnson Outstanding Retiree

By Andy Plumley

UCR's Staff Assembly presents the "Outstanding Staff Awards" at the end of each year, and UCRRA has partnered with them to include recognizing an outstanding retiree. The Mary Johnson Outstanding Retiree award is given to those retired staff who have demonstrated a high level of volunteer service to the campus and surrounding communities and participate in campus activities/programs in retirement. This year's recipient is Kathy Barton. Kathy retired in June 2018 from the School of Medicine, and she was nominated by Mary Voss, Executive Administrative Specialist, who wrote:



Kathy Barton's pivotal role in navigating us through the rigorous Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Accreditation process over the past couple of years cannot be overstated. Her profound expertise and deep understanding of this intricate process have been indispensable to the success of our Medical School. Kathy's dedication to ensuring our institution meets the highest standards set by the LCME is truly commendable. She has demonstrated unwavering commitment to excellence, working tirelessly to streamline procedures, address any challenges, and ensure compliance with accreditation requirements. Beyond her expertise, Kathy's passion for advancing medical education and her genuine investment in the success of our school shines through in every aspect of her work. Her guidance and leadership have not only facilitated our successful accreditation but have also contributed to the ongoing improvement and enhancement of our medical education programs. Kathy's contributions have been instrumental in strengthening the foundation of excellence upon which our School of Medicine stands. We are immensely grateful to her dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to our institution's success.

Kathy was recognized at the UCR Staff Assembly Outstanding Staff Awards event on June 3. The UCRRA will also recognize Kathy at our Fall Luncheon on October 4. Congratulations Kathy!