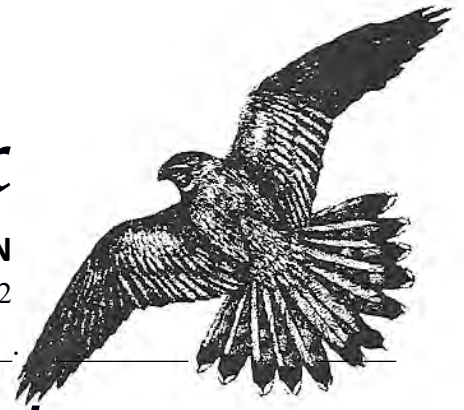


The Gray Hawk

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA RETIREES ASSOCIATION

October 2024 • Vol. XXXI, Issue 2



October UIRA Programming

Health Insurance Decisions

Tuesday, October 8, noon-1:30 p.m., 2520-D University Capitol Center (UCC) and via Zoom
Expect the Zoom link on Friday, October 4. If you lose the link, contact Deb Cobb, deborah-cobb@uiowa.edu.

Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) counselor **Kevin Ward** will clarify the distinction between traditional Medicare with Medigap and prescription drug supplements, in contrast to the all-inclusive Medicare Advantage plans. Kevin is beginning his third year as a SHIIP counselor. He is trained to clearly present enrollment guidelines, premium costs, and benefits for Medicare A, B, C, D, and supplements. If you are interested in specific topics you would like Kevin to address, send those ahead of the talk to Deb Cobb at deborah-cobb@uiowa.edu.

UI Health Care Enrollment Options for UI Retirees

Thursday, October 17, 1:00-2:30 p.m., 2520-D University Capitol Center (UCC) and via Zoom

Expect the Zoom link on Tuesday, October 15. If you lose the link, contact Deb Cobb, deborah-cobb@uiowa.edu.

Sonatina Fernandes, senior UI HR specialist, **Rebecca Olson**, senior director of Benefits, and **Anne Thurston**, client consultant with Health Alliance Medical Plans, will present an overview of the 2024-25 UI health care enrollment options available to UI retirees.

Future UIRA Programming

Trends in Children's Literature

Tuesday, November 12, 1:00 p.m., 1117 University Capitol Center (UCC). Refreshments will be provided. **Note special location.**

Deaccession and Restitution (Stanley Museum of Art)

Thursday, November 21, 1:00 p.m., 2520-D University Capitol Center (UCC) and via Zoom

A Conversation with UI President Barbara Wilson

Tuesday, December 10, 1:00 p.m., 2520-D University Capitol Center (UCC). Luncheon provided.

Walks and Nature Explorations

Explorers is a group of UIRA members interested in walking and hiking at various parks and trails in the area. We also schedule naturalist-led hikes with Johnson County Conservation or the Bur Oak Land Trust. If you are interested in joining the group or would like to RSVP to attend one of the events below, please email Lesanne Fliehler, lesanne-fliehler@uiowa.edu, or Alice Atkinson, amatkinson@mchsi.com. Details about each hike are emailed to registrants several days before the event.

■ **October 9** (Wed.), 10:00 a.m., Macbride Nature Recreation Area

■ **October 18** (Fri.), 10:00 a.m., Waterworks Park

■ **October 30** (Wed.), 10:00 a.m., Kent Park



Led by Jason Taylor, director of Bur Oak Land Trust, UIRA members toured the trust's newest and largest acquisition, Corriell Nature Preserve, nearly 200 acres of combined wetland, timber, oak savanna, and sand prairie near Atalissa. It was a beautiful day to hike through this ecosystem, containing many species of plants, animals, and migratory birds.

Emeritus Faculty Council Lecture

VR Research in Three Parts: My Life in Virtual Reality

Joe Kearney

Professor Emeritus, Department of Computer Science

Thursday, October 17, 4:00 p.m.

Kollros Auditorium (101 Biology Building East)



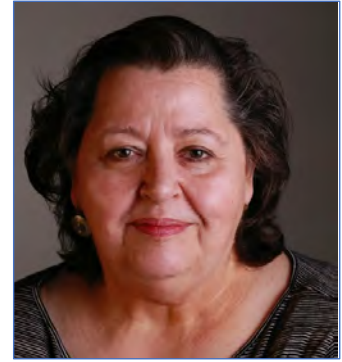
Joe Kearney

This talk will give an overview of three research initiatives that use VR technology. First, a series of studies that used large-screen pedestrian and bicycling simulators to examine how two people coordinate their decisions and actions when crossing a stream of traffic. The studies reveal the powerful influence that others have on how we make consequential decisions in performing routine but potentially dangerous activities. Second, a series of studies looking at how mobile technology can help pedestrians to safely cross traffic-filled roadways. And last, an experiment in using VR to create immersive theatrical experiences.

From UIRA President Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash

Life and UIRA...Change Is in the Air

Change is in the air! Autumn is upon us and it's time to unpack your sweaters and scarves. In retirement, it's also time to face the challenge and promise of a new or altered life. We may no longer have to wake up early to get to the office, but we do have new opportunities and challenges to meet head on. So, c'mon now, just get out of bed and face the day...but certainly take a nice afternoon nap if that appeals. Yay, you're retired!



Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash

We have had some changes in the UIRA as well, and I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to those who have volunteered in this effort, many for several years. To those who are stepping down or back a bit, we couldn't have done it without you. First and foremost, I wish to recognize the amazing **Lesanne Fliehler**, our erstwhile editor of *The Gray Hawk*, who has graciously agreed to assist with the formatting of the newsletter going forward. Stepping into her shoes as editor is Board member **Diana Lundell**. As we welcome **Rachel Stewart** to the board serving as webmaster, we wish to express our deep gratitude to **Phil Klein** for 10 years of devoted service to the UIRA. He navigated often complicated technological changes during that time and helped freshen and update our site. Thank you, Phil!

We wish a fond farewell to Past President **Ed Dove**, who, among many other things, oversaw the final steps in getting UIRA recognized in the UI Policy Manual. This achievement will serve us all well in the future and give retirees an advisory voice. We are sorry to see **Vicki Siefers** leave the board. She worked tirelessly to sort out our manual membership system and synced us with the UI Human Resources data. This will simplify applying for, renewing, and keeping track of UIRA membership. Also stepping down after serving a three-year term plus additional years of duty is former Treasurer **David Fitzgerald**. We proudly recognized him with the UIRA President's Award at our June 2024 meeting for his dedicated service. Joining the board this year are **Todd Stewart** as treasurer, and **Cindy Seyfer** and **Jean Florman** as directors-at-large. Jean is filling two years of **Lois Cox's** term as she steps into the president-elect role. Welcome, new board members, and thank-you to those who are stepping down.

We are still coordinating our various committees and would love to have general UIRA members serve, in addition to board members. **If you are interested in giving input into Membership, Nominating or Awards committees**, please let me know by email to van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu. The commitments vary but are not strenuous.

I hope you enjoyed last month's new feature "Reflections" (see this *Gray Hawk* issue at <https://uira.org.uiowa.edu/gray-hawk-newsletter>). **Send me your reminiscences from your employment, stories of navigating career change in retirement, any tips or advice to newbies, jokes, or even your favorite recipe.** Please direct them to me by email to van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu. Thank you.

Big 10 Retirees Association Conference 2024

By Lois Cox, UIRA President-Elect



Lois Cox

President Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash and I attended the Big 10 Retirees Association Conference, hosted by Ohio State, in Columbus, Ohio, July 24-26. Though the four recently admitted West Coast schools have not yet joined the association, the other Big 10 schools were represented with the exceptions of Wisconsin and Rutgers.

The conference schedule alternated between presentations by Ohio State faculty and staff selected to showcase the school's achievements in scholarship and public service (the very sort of programs, incidentally, that satisfy retirees' wish for intellectual stimulation and knowledge of recent activities in their former workplaces), and roundtable discussions led by attendees designed to highlight successes and challenges of member associations. The lead-off presentation, "Glacier Stories and Societal Impacts of Our Rapidly Changing Climate," was made by two Distinguished University Professors in the Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences who have spent their careers retrieving and studying ice cores from polar ice sheets and high mountain glaciers to further our knowledge of Earth's climate history. Ohio State now houses the world's premier collection of such cores, some of which had to be brought down from collection points by yak. One of the presenters quoted 6th-century BCE Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu: "If you do not change directions, you may end up where you are heading."

After that fascinating talk, roundtable discussion took up issues of leadership development and recruitment/retention in retirees associations. It emerged that all the associations represented at the conference struggle with these issues with greater or lesser success. Similarly interesting presentations (including one on obtaining World Heritage Designation for the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in Ohio and another on 3D printing applications for treating patients with head and neck cancers, to name only two) alternated with well thought-out discussion sessions for the remainder of the two-day conference.

The roundtable discussions left me with the impression that, here at Iowa, we're ahead of the curve in some ways and lagging behind in others. Our inclusion in the UI Policy Manual as an advisory body to the president, and formalized contacts with the Office of the President and HR mean that we are well supported and well positioned to promote retiree interests, as compared to many peer institutions. But as regards engagement with the retiree community, other institutions enjoy greater success, especially since the pandemic. Since our return, we have already begun efforts to experiment with ideas that have worked in other schools to try to engage more retirees with UIRA. In terms of organization and content, the conference exceeded my expectations, due in large part to conference organizer Sally Dellinger and her team from Ohio State. I really enjoyed chatting with and exchanging ideas with other attendees. I look forward to next year's conference in Ann Arbor!

Welcome to Our New UIRA Members!

Robert Brooks, Facilities Management, Vice President for Finance and Operations

Beth Dinoff, Psychiatry, College of Medicine

Janice Miller, College of Nursing

Karen Penick, Surgery, College of Medicine

John (Jack) Rosazza, College of Pharmacy

Mary Schlapkohl, Pediatrics, College of Medicine

What's Happening on Campus?

Damion Thomas: Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor Lecture, "Leveling the Playing Field: Sports at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture," Tuesday, October 8, 7:00 p.m. Main Library, Shambaugh Auditorium. Thomas is the museum curator of sports and the interim assistant director for the Office of Curatorial Affairs at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. <https://events.uiowa.edu/88281>

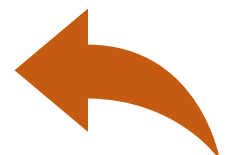
Discover Your University Tour, Tuesday, October 8. It's not too late to sign up for one or more of 11 options from the Carver College of Medicine to the International Writing Program. <https://tinyurl.com/2uupfa8s>

One Community, One Book, Sunday, October 20, 3:00-4:15 p.m. Boyd Law Building. The keynote address is by Corban Addison, author of *Wastelands: The True Story of Farm Country on Trial*. <https://events.uiowa.edu/86795>

Homecoming Week, Sunday-Saturday, October 20-26. So many ways to participate in this annual event, including volunteering! Organizers are always looking for an extra pair of hands. Check out the website <https://homecoming.uiowa.edu/participate/volunteer> for low-commitment, per-event signups that will help the Homecoming Council have a successful event, including:

- **Hawks Run Home 5K**—Sunday, October 20
- **Blood Drive**—Tuesday and Wednesday, October 22 and 23
- **Block Party**—Wednesday, October 23
- **Homecoming Parade**—Friday, October 25

Remember: **The UIRA Board of Directors is tracking volunteer hours to let the university know how our members give back.** If you volunteer for this or other UI events, please let us know. You may submit your volunteer hours to UIRA President Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash at van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu.



Gray Hawk Writers Special Interest Group

This month, we share one of the pieces written by a member of the Gray Hawk Writers special interest group. Want to join the group? Visit as a guest—you may decide to join! Contact Jennifer Wohn at lwsbws@gmail.com.

Whale Watching and Celebrity Sighting

By Judy Terry

The captain warned us if we were prone to seasickness not to sit on the upper deck for the sake of the passengers below. We headed for the upper deck. It was open to the sun and the ocean and we wanted to see whales. I had tagged along with my daughter, Ann, to her conference in Monterrey, California, and on this September afternoon, we signed up to take the “three-hour tour” on a boat that put slowly out into the Pacific Ocean in search of the whales.

There were few people on the upper deck, but we chatted with a man and his sister who were seasoned whale watchers, but enthusiastic about seeing them.

He said he was from New York City and was taking his sister on this cruise as a birthday present. I talked with her about California farming and gardening and Ann was exchanging thoughts with him on law or politics.

And then the whales came in sight and for the next hour the four of us were hanging on the railing, watching for the next sighting, and taking pictures. It was indeed a great show.

On the way back we talked more with the man and his sister. He said he did some singing and played the piano and would be in Denver in a few weeks, where Ann lives. As the boat pulled in, we finally exchanged names. His name was Brian Mitchell but he went by his middle name Stokes, he said. Ann was late for a meeting so we said goodbye and hurried off the boat.

A few days after we returned to Denver, I asked Ann what that man’s name was again because I was going to google him and see if he was a singer.

Oh yes! He was. Brian Stokes Mitchell had won a Tony, been nominated several times, had been in a TV series, just made a new CD, and was regarded on Broadway, as “the last leading man.”

Of course, Ann and I got tickets for his Denver show and it was fabulous. The next year he came to Iowa to Hancher to sing with the University of Iowa Orchestra. Again, fabulous! I wanted to go backstage but didn’t know how to go about that.

Then in another year or so, he was going to be in Des Moines singing with the symphony orchestra there. I called the box office for tickets. And I told them I wrote for the Iowa City Press-Citizen and would like to interview him. Sure, they would see what they could do, but it would probably be by phone.

Soon they had set it up and he would call me at 10:00 on the following Wednesday, but to expect only about 20 minutes.

Believe me, I was ready for that call by 9 a.m., with a yellow pad filled with questions, at least three pens, a glass of water, and a bit nervous. At about 10:10 the phone rang and he said “Hi Judy this is Stokes.”

When I mentioned the boat tour, he remembered Ann and me. We talked about that and the concert coming up, and that I had tickets and was coming with a friend, also a big fan. He said to come backstage afterward. He would put my name on the list.

We talked for about 45 minutes in all, as he said he had plenty of time. Stokes, as I was soon calling him, is an extraordinarily nice person, who loves singing, acting, people, his country, and his family, and with his natural talent and hard work enjoys thoroughly the art of entertaining.

Our tickets were in the fourth row and the concert was fantastic. He shared it with Megan Hilty and they sang a couple of duets. His energy was incredible. He sang, “The Impossible Dream,” with a standing ovation after.

When it was over we hustled upstairs to where they said he would be seeing people and got in line. When I approached I told him who I was and he responded by giving me a big hug. I was grinning from ear to ear and then he, who had just finished a great performance with ovations and encores, said the best thing. He turned to Megan Hilty standing next to him and said, “This is Judy. We went whale watching together and she’s a writer!”

Consider a Donation

Food Pantry at Iowa

Did you know that the University of Iowa has its own Food Pantry? The pantry provides free nutritious food and personal necessities for University of Iowa students, graduate and professional students, postdocs, staff, and faculty. The Food Pantry is in room G200 on the ground floor of the Iowa Memorial Union and shares space with Clothing Closet. For more information: <https://tinyurl.com/ycy8mj56>.

Clothing Closet

The Clothing Closet provides access to quality, new or used, professional clothing at no cost. Each semester, any student, postdoc, faculty or staff member can obtain up to 5 free professional attire items free of charge and to keep forever for interviews, jobs, class presentations, and more. The Closet accepts cash donations, Amazon gifts, and donations of professional and business wear, which can be dropped off during open hours. Please ensure all donated items do not have stains, rips, etc. For more information: <https://tinyurl.com/2x47s5dp>.



Above: Homestead owners Pam Terrill and Steve Scheckel talk with Scott and Jan Miller.

Below: 2024-25 UIRA President Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash welcomes everyone. Ron Clark tells us a tale.

Another Successful Fall Barn Party Is in the Books

What a beautiful day for this year's barn party at the O'Meara Homestead (owned by Steve Scheckel and Pam Terrill)! (Those who attended last year will remember it was damp and chilly.) More than 80 UIRA members gathered together to enjoy each other's company, meet new members, and enjoy a picnic meal. Our special guest this year was Ron Clark, who co-founded Riverside Theatre four decades ago with his wife, Jody Hovland, and Professor Bruce Wheaton. Ron shared a "possibly semiautobiographical" story about a young boy growing up in a small Iowa town, who eschews football for the theater. There were plenty of laughs and tears as he told the tale. Finally, we are happy to report we received \$109 in donations at the barn party for the UI Food Pantry, bringing our total for 2024 to \$309.

Eight over 80 Awards

The University of Iowa Center for Advancement is once again honoring Iowa alums, age 80 and over, who carry the Hawkeye spirit of achievement and continue to help others. You can do your part by nominating an extraordinary alum who, at 80 and older, is making an impact.

To submit a nomination, visit <https://www.foriowa.org/form/8over80.php>. Nominations for 2025 will be accepted until Wednesday, November 13.

IOWA

UI Retirees Association Board of Directors 2024–2025 (year term on board expires)

Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash	President (2026) van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu
Lois Cox	President-Elect (2027) lois-cox@uiowa.edu
Deb Cobb	Past President (2025)
Cathy Wilcox	Secretary (2027)
Todd Stewart	Treasurer (2027)
Diana Lundell	Director and Editor, <i>The Gray Hawk</i> (2026)
Rachel Stewart	Director and Webmaster (2027)
Michael Barron	Director (2026)
Chris Peterson Brus	Director (2025)
Jean Florman	Director (2026)
Mike Hovland	Director (2025)
Cindy Seyfer	Director (2027)
TBD	EFC representative (ex-officio)

The UI Retirees Association maintains a continuous connection to the University of Iowa and supports the interests and welfare of retired University of Iowa faculty and staff members.

Meetings of the Board of Directors are held at 1:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. Meetings are hybrid (in person at USB and via Zoom).

Contact Info: UI Retirees Association
University Services Building
1 W. Prentiss Street, Iowa City, IA 52240
Email: ui-ra@uiowa.edu
Website: <https://uira.org.uiowa.edu>