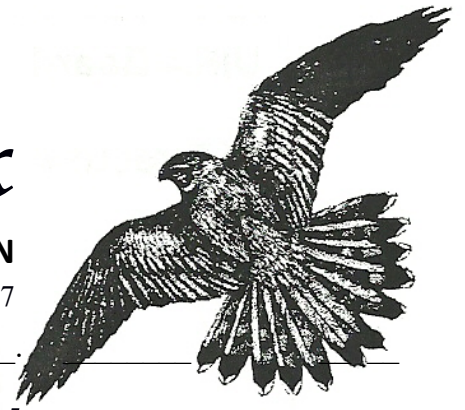


The Gray Hawk

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA RETIREES ASSOCIATION

March 2025 • Vol. XXXI, Issue 7



March UIRA Programming

Theater in the Corridor

Tuesday, March 11, 1:00 p.m., Riverside Theatre,
119 E. College St. (entrance on the Pedestrian Mall).
Light refreshments will be served.

Riverside Theatre's Producing Artistic Director Adam Knight will lead a panel discussion of theater professionals from the Cedar Rapids/Coralville/Iowa City area. Panel members will touch on types of theater organizations and theatrical performances in the Corridor, as well as the joys and challenges of working in the theater. There will be time for questions and comments from attendees, and a backstage tour will be available at the end of the program.



Adam Knight

Adam Knight joined Riverside Theatre in fall 2018, after 17 years in New York City. He was founder and co-artistic director of Slant Theatre Project, an Off-Off Broadway company that produced more than two dozen world premieres, working with a large roster of emerging artists. Past directing includes Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Folger Shakespeare Theatre, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. He received a bachelor's degree in theater from the University of Evansville.

Coming Attractions

The Program Planning Committee has great programs planned for April and May, so hold those days and times on your calendar now! Look for details on these programs and more in future issues of *The Gray Hawk*.

- **Campus Building Update and Bus Tour**, Rod Lehnertz, Tuesday, April 8, 10:15 a.m.
- **Athletic Compliance**, Andy Banse, Tuesday, April 17, 1:00 p.m.

Recent Recording

If you missed February's program, it is posted on the [UI Retirees Association website](#).

- "Money Management for Seniors" (February 11 program)

Explorers Walking Group

This month's walks will be local and on fairly flat surfaces for easy walking. Please RSVP to attend by emailing Lesanne Fliehler, lesanne-fliehler@uiowa.edu. Details about each walk will be emailed to registrants a day or two in advance. If the weather isn't conducive for an outdoor walk, look for an email about 1:00 p.m. on the day of the walk with information about an alternative location or cancellation.

- **March 13** (Thursday), 2:00 p.m., Clear Creek Trail (details coming by email to those who register to attend)
- **March 25** (Tuesday), 2:00 p.m., Terry Trueblood Recreational Area

Emeritus Faculty Council Lecture

Co-crafting the Just City Revisited

Jim Throgmorton

Professor Emeritus, Urban and Regional Planning

Thursday, March 13, 4:00 p.m.

Kollros Auditorium (101 Biology Building East)



After retiring in 2010, Jim served as a member of Iowa City's City Council from 2012 through 2019 and as mayor during the last four of those years. He focused much of the next two years on writing a book about what he had witnessed, done, and learned. The result, *Co-crafting the Just City*, offers a fine-grained story about how the real flesh-and-blood residents and elected leaders of a city, using democratic processes of governance, tried to co-craft their city's future while being immersed in a complex,

emotionally charged, and often politically contentious flow of action. After summarizing the book, Jim will report how major events and recent scholarly work have affected his thinking about how the project of co-crafting a more just city can be continued in light of challenging new conditions.



One Day for Iowa

Mark your calendars! One Day for Iowa, the UI's 24-hour online giving day, is Wednesday, March 26, 2025. Each year UIRA members have contributed about \$2,000 to the UIRA Scholarship Fund. More information will be published in the March issue of *The Gray Hawk*.

Reflections

Submitted by Lucille Heitman, retired from the Office of the President

“On Tuesday, November 20, 2001, shortly after 8:30 a.m., the Office of the President staff member whose desk was in front of the south-facing windows on the first floor of Jessup Hall noticed that the cupola and dome of the Old Capitol building was ablaze. The staff gathered at the window, and I literally could not believe my eyes. It took several seconds for it to sink in that the beautiful and historic building at the center of the Pentacrest was on fire. The Iowa City Fire Department responded swiftly, and we were evacuated from Jessup Hall. We watched from a distance at the north end of the Pentacrest, while the fire fighters used tens of thousands of gallons of water to extinguish the blaze. The effort took some time. Fortunately, a fire-wall built during a 1920 reconstruction of the building contained the blaze to the cupola and dome, although the rest of the building sustained extensive smoke and water damage.



After four and a half years of repairs and renovations, the Old Capitol reopened to the public.” oldcap.uiowa.edu/fire-old-capitol

Reflections is a new feature in The Gray Hawk. We invite you to submit a remembrance of your working years, share an experience you've had post-retirement, or nominate a retiree to highlight in The Gray Hawk newsletter. You may send submissions to Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash at van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu.

Nominations Due for UIRA's Service Awards

Each year two UIRA members are honored for their volunteer service post-retirement. The Community Service Award honors a UIRA member for service to the community at large and the University Service Award honors a UIRA member for service to the university. Any UIRA member may submit a nomination.

Nominations are due Wednesday, March 5, 2025, to the Awards Committee via Committee Chair Michael Barron at michael-barron@uiowa.edu. Contact Michael for more information and criteria for the nominations.

From UIRA President Evalyn Van Allen-Shalash

Programming to Enjoy; Committees to Join

As we continue making plans for our 30th anniversary celebrations, we're excited to offer some fantastic programs along the way. Please join us *in person* on **Tuesday, March 11, 1:00-2:30 p.m. at Riverside Theatre (119 E. College Street)** for a panel discussion on "Theatre in the Corridor" led by artistic director Adam Knight, followed by a behind-the-scenes tour of the space.

GET INVOLVED WITH UIRA! Important Deadlines this month:

Board Nominations—Due March 1

We are seeking nominations for President-Elect and three positions on the UIRA Board of Directors. Feel free to nominate yourself or a fellow member. Motivated individuals are always welcome to help guide and promote our organization. Please send nominations to Michael Hovland (michael-hovland@uiowa.edu) by **March 1**.

Volunteer Community & UI Service Awards—Due March 5

Know someone who has made a meaningful impact? Nominate them for these special recognitions! Full details are available in the [February issue of *The Gray Hawk*](#). Submissions are due by **Wednesday, March 5**, to Awards Committee Chair Michael Barron (michael-barron@uiowa.edu).

Welcome to Our New Member!

Clarence Kreiter
College of Medicine

UIRA Photo Contest—Due March 15

Showcase your photography skills! Sponsored by Hills Bank & Trust Company, this annual contest is a great way to share your creative vision. Find detailed contest rules in the [February *Gray Hawk* newsletter](#) (see page 5).

Save the Date!

The UIRA is co-sponsoring "Fighting Racial & Sexual Harassment," a talk by Professor Jean Jew and Attorney Carolyn Chalmers, on Thursday, April 10, at 12:45 p.m., in the Boyd Law Building, Room 235. More information will be in the April issue of *The Gray Hawk*.

[One Day for Iowa](#)—March 26

A simple yet powerful way to aid students is by contributing to our annual **UIRA scholarship fund**. Last year, we raised upwards of **\$2,000** to support two University of Iowa undergraduates: **Max Halbach** (Social Studies Education, Ankeny, Iowa) and **Olivia Mayer** (Elementary Education, Saint Ansgar, Iowa). Your generosity makes a difference—please consider donating during **One Day for Iowa!**

As always, we're eager to hear from you! If you have ideas for member engagement or would like to share reflections on your career or life beyond retirement, please reach out to me at van-allen-shalash@uiowa.edu.

Gray Hawk Writers

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.

“Where is everybody?”

By Mark Gromko

To see the stars in their full splendor, you need to find a place with little or no light pollution. The International Dark Sky Places is an organization that conserves and protects dark-sky areas. The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in northern Maine is one such place. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is another. Looking up on a clear night in a dark sky area, the number of stars is overwhelming. Without binoculars or telescope, all the stars you see are in our own Milky Way galaxy. Given that there are between 100- and 400-billion stars in our galaxy and the high likelihood that planets orbit many of those stars, one might expect intelligent life to be common in our galaxy. Enrico Fermi had that expectation when he asked, “Where is everybody?” He intuited that there must be intelligent life elsewhere in our galaxy and found it paradoxical that they had not contacted us. The failure to have any evidence of intelligent life beyond Earth is known as the Fermi Paradox.

To place Fermi’s intuition on more solid ground, Francis Drake, an American astrophysicist and astrobiologist, developed an equation to estimate the number of advanced civilizations in the Milky Way galaxy. The equation is a string of variables, probabilities, and percentages, some of which can be estimated with high reliability. For instance, astronomers have excellent measures of the rate of star formation, and good estimates for the proportion of stars that have planets. Other variables in the equation have less secure estimates, such as the proportion of planets in a habitable zone that have evolved life. Other terms, like the proportion of planets that have intelligent life, and the proportion of those that have developed sophisticated communications technology, are guesswork.

One of the more problematic terms in the Drake Equation is the duration of an advanced technological society once it has evolved. Using our own world as the only known example, some assume that our species and technology will persist indefinitely, or at least millions of years. Conversely, one might note that the first radio was invented around 1900, just 124 years ago, meaning we have been an advanced technological society for little more than 100 years, a miniscule fraction of the 4,500,000,000-year-old Earth. Currently, we face many serious societal, resource, and political challenges. The continuing development of weapons of mass destruction, global climate change, destruction of habitat, and human-driven extinction of species ... any of these could suggest that - if other advanced civilizations are like ours - the average duration of a technological civilization is on the order of a few hundred years.

Estimates of the number of advanced civilizations in the Milky Way galaxy based on the Drake Equation are only as good as the estimates of its parameters. Jill Tartar, who with Carl Sagan co-founded the SETI Institute, summarized as follows: The Drake Equation is “a wonderful way to organize our ignorance.”

With favorable estimates of parameters, the Drake Equation supports Fermi’s intuition of a large number of advanced civilizations “out there.” Even if that is true, the idea of encountering those civilizations through space travel is generally regarded as impossible. If we were to develop much faster space vehicles, it would still take many lifetimes – tens of thousands of years – to travel to a planet around another star. Therefore, efforts to find other intelligent life have pursued scanning the heavens for radio signals. These efforts take it as a given that the presumed aliens are – like us – trying to find intelligent civilizations and are using the most likely radio frequencies to send messages. In 1977, Ohio State’s Bear Ears Radio Telescope detected what was dubbed the “Wow!” signal, the first indication that could be of an extraterrestrial civilization. Others think the signal was a natural phenomenon. In either case, detection of the signal has not been repeated, and we still have no reliable indication of intelligent life elsewhere.

So where is everybody? The distances between stars are vast and the time scales of celestial events enormous. How do those immensities play into ideas about the distribution of advanced civilizations in our galaxy? Many possible values of terms in the Drake Equation are consistent with the following metaphor, which likens advanced civilizations to fireflies. In this metaphor, each firefly blinks only once, for a time that represents the duration of a civilization. Furthermore, the fireflies are separated by distances commensurable to the light-year distances between stars in our galaxy. Imagine that one such firefly in your backyard blinks on, and a few seconds or a minute later turns off. A few minutes later, across town, another shines its light briefly. Perhaps it’s light overlaps in time with a third, but that one is in another corner of town. The firefly metaphor embraces the likelihood of extraterrestrial civilizations, but because of the vastness of space and the enormity of time, the metaphor suggests why advanced civilizations do not – and perhaps cannot – know of one another’s existence.

Some might take this possibility to be pessimistic. I prefer to understand it as emphasizing how rare and wonderful is our Earth, its seas, skies, and lands teeming with incredible abundance and variety of life. Perhaps civilizations like ours are few, separated by vast amounts of time and space. Perhaps we are at a brief, rare moment in time.

UIRA Photo Contest Deadline Is March 15

The deadline is almost here! Just a reminder that you may submit images of the University of Iowa, Iowa, the United States, and international. For complete contest details, see the February issue of *The Gray Hawk* or visit uira.org.uiowa.edu/get-involved/photography-contest.

Submit your photos to **Diana Lundell**, dianalundell@gmail.com. Entries must include (1) name, (2) email address, (3) number of photos submitted, (4) category in which each photo is to be judged, and (5) brief captions for each photo (or group of photos).

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)
Minnetta Gardinier	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](#) [Website](#)