



University of Iowa Retirees Association

20th Anniversary

The President's Report 2014-15: Kenneth Starck

The focus of the year has been striving to honor the past while looking to the future. We've tried to observe UIRA's two decades of accomplishments and recognize some—unfortunately not nearly all—of the individuals who have made the UIRA's record of achievement possible. Two projects stand as bookends for the year: One, the presentation of the UIRA's 20-year history; two, the inauguration of two service awards exemplifying contributions UIRA members make to the Community and University.

Activities of the past year included:

Terrific Programs—From the Driving Simulator to the Beatles, from the internet to health, monthly programs have been interesting and informative. For those unable to attend programs, we've followed up with reports in the newsletter, and two programs—UI Benefits and the Health Fair—were videotaped and are available online. President-elect Beverly Robalino and her committee have done an outstanding job.

UIRA's History—With perseverance and diligence, Jean Hood has documented the association's history. With assistance from Intern Jennifer Dybicz, we managed to arrange a meeting of past presidents to talk about their experiences, culminating in the preparation of the booklet which is being unveiled today. We'll make sure it's available on the UIRA website too. Thanks, Jean and Jennifer.

Service Awards—Now seemed the appropriate time to recognize the association and its members for outstanding service; to draw attention to contributions that retirees make; and to encourage retirees to continue to offer their talents and skills in ways that benefit the Community and University. Thanks to Pam Willard and her committee for inaugurating what we hope will become an annual awards program.

Special Interests—This year UIRA initiated a series of Special Interest Groups. Three such groups are meeting: one focused on film, another on Latin America and a third on international events and politics. Other such groups may emerge. Thanks, Rick Walton, Phil Klein and Gene Spaziani.

Travel Photo Contest—This is the second year of the contest. We are indebted to Hills Bank and Trust Co. for its support. Hills Bank also hosted a photo exhibit at the Coralville branch of last year's winning entries. Thanks, Keith Jones of Hills Bank.

Big Ten Retirees Association Conference—I represented UIRA at the annual Big Ten Retirees Association Conference August 8-10 at the University of Minnesota. Following that meeting, I stayed on for the biennial conference August 10-12 of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE). These are valuable meetings for the ideas they generate.

Survey—A survey of members' contributions to the university and community revealed that more than two-thirds of UIRA members contributed to more than 30 organizations throughout the university and community. Results for the University were sent to all UI administrators. (By the way, the Independent Sector estimates that each hour of volunteer time in Iowa has a calculated worth of \$21.75.)

Other activities included: annual Flu Shot Clinic (administered by the Visiting Nurse Assn); switch to electronic delivery of *The Gray Hawk* to most members with significant savings in money and paper; makeover of the UIRA website as mandated by the UI (thanks to long-time UIRA webmaster Feather Lacy for overseeing this transition, still a work in progress); initiation of a new membership plan of \$25 for three years (227 have opted); acquisition of a debit card to facilitate financial transactions; discussion of conducting future elections of officers electronically to increase voter participation; implementation of a plan to reimburse parking costs for Board members who do not have parking permits during meetings at the Levitt Center; presentations about UIRA to new retirees (thanks for the assistance of UI Human Resources); and a mailing sent to about 200 new retirees in the fall inviting them to join UIRA.

Finally—A heartfelt thank you to everyone—including those not mentioned by name—for efforts to maintain and expand the vitality of UI retirees and the UIRA.

April 23, 2015