

The Extension



It Is Time To Retire But Not From Life

(Gary Pacernick, President-Elect of WSURA, retired Professor of English and noted poet used his gift to respond to a question that each of us has been asked as we have moved from employment to retirement. He shared it with Board members at a recent meeting and, with his permission, we share it with you.)

News flash: I am not yet dead.
I have retired
but not from breathing, talking,
being the same man I've always been.
In short, my friend, I am still alive.

Don't be surprised.
I have not arisen from the dead
to haunt you with my second coming.
I am just a persistent man.
I don't plan to leave until closing time.

When the singing stops, the lights turn low,
and the cashier starts counting the receipts,
then I'll say good-bye and walk into
the night, hoping, my friend,
you remember me.

The Extension

The Extension is published quarterly for the WSU retirees by the Wright State University Retirees Association (WSURA).

Cut off dates for articles:

- Nov. 1—Winter Quarter
- Feb. 1—Spring Quarter
- May 1—Summer Quarter
- Aug. 1—Fall Quarter

Editor: Marlene Bireley

Asst. Editor: Mary Gromosiak

Send articles to Editor:
139 Millett Hall
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435-0001

For additional information call
(937)775-2777
WSURA email address:
wsura@wright.edu
WSURA website:
www.wright.edu/admin/retirees

President's Message

Jim Uphoff, President

This issue of our Newsletter is being sent to ALL retirees of WSU including those who are NOT members of the WSU Retirees Association. I must remind all new retirees that they are eligible for a full year membership scholarship, BUT they must provide us with their written application for membership in order for us to "gift" them with the scholarship.

E-Mail Addresses: Many of our notices of upcoming events and activities are sent out via email since our newsletter, *The Extension*, is only a quarterly publication, BUT far too many of our members have changed their email address without us knowing the new one. Thus, we have several dozen returns which means several dozen members not knowing about a special event or activity. For example, we forward to our members news from STRS and PERS about major changes being considered by them. But some of us do not get these emails! PLEASE send us your new email addresses if/when you change one.

Activities: The Fall Health Festival was well-attended by both retirees and by many who anticipate retiring within the next year or two. Our WSURA booth was fully staffed and had many good conversations with colleagues from the past and friends still on the job. The first Socrates Cafe was held in November with a dozen members and guests attending. A great discussion about how to communicate best with others about major issues and values involved every person attending. More of these are being planned now! A Men's basketball game will be on the Winter schedule and a WSU Theater Performance will also be among our up-coming events. Food is always on our agenda and several events are being scheduled for 2012.

Leadership Opportunities are also available for our members. Serving on our Board, chairing or serving on a committee such as Scholarship, Activities, etc. is a fun way to keep in touch with WSU. Let us know if you have this type of interest.

Best wishes for a great 2012. Let your WSURA be a part of it!

WSURA—A Service Organization

We welcome all retirees to this issue of *The Extension* and urge you to consider joining or re-joining WSURA. As **President Uphoff** has mentioned in his column, we have a number of social activities each year mainly centering around eating, sporting events and arts activities. We have also increased our service imprint on the university in recent years. During the past year, these have included:

Supporting undergraduate pre-med student, **Kevin Dorney**, with a \$1200 scholarship

Supporting four undergraduate students at the summer Leadership training program

Organizing a food drive for the Student Food Pantry at the summer picnic

Organizing a tea for visiting international faculty and research associates and volunteering to support the attendees with travel assistance, home visitations, etc.

Donating a book to the Dunbar Library in memory of former WSURA President and Treasurer **Nick Davis** through the Legacy Book program

Participating in the Health Fair where the manned booth acquainted attendees with WSURA. This year we also gave away a gift basket and were assisted at the booth by four Leadership students

Honoring retirees who have been retired in multiple of 5 years at the summer picnic

Publishing *The Extension* quarterly to help retirees maintain contact with other retirees and with pertinent information from campus

If these seem to be worthwhile activities to support through your time and money, please consider joining our ranks.

WSURA Activities Calendar 2011– 2012

Sunday, January 8

Dining Out - New Year's Brunch

Place: Brio's at The Greene

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Cost: Individual orders

RSVP by December 28 to mary.gromosiak@wright.edu

Wednesday, January 25

WSU Men's Basketball Game (Against UIC) and Pizza Party

Place: Nutter Center, Suite 214

Time: Pizza Party - 6:00 p.m. / Game - 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$5.00 per person for pizza, Free tickets

RSVP by January 11 to mary.gromosiak@wright.edu

Indicate number of persons for pizza and number needing tickets

Thursday, March 1

Presidential Lecture Series

Time: 7: 00 pm Student Union Apollo Room

Dr. Robert Ballard - He is a "Deep Sea Explorer, and Discoverer of the *Titanic*"

Wednesday, April 18

Presidential Lecture Series

Time: 7: 00 pm Student Union Apollo Room

Mark Johnson—Grammy Winning Producer/Engineer -
"Playing for Change" and bringing the world closer
through music.

Wednesday, May 2

Presidential Lecture Series

Time: 7: 00 pm Student Union Apollo Room

Daniel Hernandez - "First Responder for Congressman
Gabrielle Giffords"

For further information, please visit www.wright.edu/lecture

Travel Opportunity

Jan Austin, who will be retiring from the Boonshoft School of Medicine, at the end of the year, has a local travel agency called Bee on the Go. She is planning area shopping and sightseeing trips. See her website www.BeeOnTheGoTravel.com for more details. She has met with the Board and has agreed to arrange trips for WSURA if there is sufficient interest. Please let a Board member know if you have an idea that might appeal to our membership.

WSURA Officers and Board Members 2011-12

Officers

President— **Jim Uphoff**
President-Elect— **Gary Pacernick**
Secretary—**Leone Low**
Treasurer—**Carol Stevenson**
Communications Director—**Marlene Bireley**

Board Members and Committee Chairs

Activities Committee—Chair, **Mary Gromosiak**, appointed
By-Laws and Elections—Chair, **Judy Rose**, appointed
Historical Preservation—Chair, **Lew Shupe**, appointed
Membership Development—Chair, **Gerry Petrak**, appointed
OCHER (Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees)—**Rich Johnson**, appointed
Scholarship—Chair, **Paul Wolfe**, elected Board member
Sunshine—Chair, **Marlene Bireley**
Gail Whitaker, elected Board member
Amy Hopkins, elected Board member
Donald Swanson, elected Board member

Liaisons

Athletic Council—**Chuck Willis**, elected Board member, and **Mary Kenton**, appointed
Friends of the Library—**Gary Barlow**, appointed
International—**Bob Wagley**, appointed



Scenes from the Tea for visiting
International Faculty and
Doctoral Students



News from WSURA

The Health Fair table was a great success this year. Our members who worked the booth were **Gerry Petrak**, **Amy Hopkins**, **Gail Whitaker**, **Paul Wolfe**, **Bob Wagley**, **Gary Pacernick** and **Jim Uphoff**. They were joined in one hour shifts by students from the summer Leadership training group that WSURA helped support. Student participants were **Marc Tshimanyika**, **Abi Galligan**, **Joey Gibbons** and **Bradley Custer**. For the first time, we awarded a door prize basket. The winner was **Kevin Dunajski**, Boonshoft School of Medicine, Student Affairs Office.

Continuing a tradition started last year, the Board took our scholarship recipient, **Kevin Dorney**, to lunch following the December Board. Student assistant, **Jasmine Ardister**, also joined us this year.

If you are an annual pay WSURA member, you will be receiving your dues notice shortly. Our dues year is from January 1 to January 1.

Following our November Board meeting, Librarian **Sue Polanka** (Head of Reference and Instructional Services) gave an informative presentation about electronic technology and how it is affecting library services. She compared several existing e-readers and described the differences between recreational and academic resources. Sue shares her knowledge in this area through a blog (www.libraries.wright.edu/noshelfrequired) as well as two books by the same name.

On October 26, **Bob** and **Lorraine Wagley** hosted a tea for visiting International graduate students and faculty. Several WSURA Board members also attended.



Librarian **Sue Polanka** speaking to the Board.

News from WSU

Three of the Dayton Daily News Top Ten Women this year were WSU faculty. They included **Margaret Dunn**, Executive Associate Dean, Boonshoft School of Medicine and president and CEO, WSU Physicians.; **Jennie J. Gallagher**, Professor of engineering, Director of Human-Centered Innovation; and **Carol Kennard**, Professor, surgery, Boonshoft School of Medicine. Congratulations to all of these outstanding women.

If you have entered campus from the west entrance, you may have noticed a new building and new athletic fields. The building is for the Wright State Physicians who are leasing the land for their practice. The major field is, indeed, a football field, but, contrary to rumors you may have heard, WSU is not starting an NCAA program. The field, which will have multiple uses, is for the club football team which has been active for a number of years and is self-supporting. The field upgrades are being funded by a generous private donation and student fees.

Deaths

Ralph Underhill, Basketball Coach-1978-96, September 2011

Robert "Cy" Laughter, Board of Trustees, September 2011

Oris Amos Cross, Professor, College of Education and Human Services, September 2011

Elmer "Bill" Tompkins, Printing Services, October 2011

Kevin Smith, Academic Advisor, University College, October 2011

Paul Belcher, Research Scientist, Engineering, October 2011

Antonio Guiao, Assistant Clinical Professor, Boonshoft School of Medicine, November 2011

An American Story

Marlene Bireley

I smiled as I saw the familiar handwriting on the envelope. It was a letter from my friend, Oris Amos Cross, announcing the completion of her autobiography. I knew that this was more than a gift to her grandchildren or a vanity piece. I knew this was an important American story. We had been acquaintances for fifty years and friends and colleagues for thirty-five years, so I had witnessed much of her life, but I knew only a bit of her story before we had met in the early sixties. I emailed my congratulations and asked if I might share some of her recollections in this issue of *The Extension*. I was delighted when she mailed back her consent. It was early September.

I ordered the book immediately and received the response that the copies were not yet ready, but would be shipped in two or three weeks. When it did arrive, I sat down and read it in one evening, often through tears. Those of you who knew Oris will remember her as the consummate professional, a good teacher and a compassionate mentor. She was articulate and immaculately dressed—the term “lady” was often applied to her with great admiration. Those of us who knew her always loved her sense of humor and her hearty laugh when she was amused. The book revealed the story of the child who became this woman.

I knew the story of how she came to Ohio, but I did not know “the rest of the story.” Oris was born in the small town of Martinsville, Virginia in the early 1930s. Her home was in the Standpipe Hill area of the segregated town—an area where the men worked as factory laborers and the women worked as maids, cooks and housekeepers for the white population. She wrote proudly of her heritage, descended from slaves and Native Americans, and her community that provided a sense of protection for its children. Once, when a predator attempted to carry her off into the nearby woods, the neighbors ran en masse into the woods and rescued her. While she healed from this incident, it left her with a lifelong concern for children who were abused or kidnapped.

At school, she was recognized as an able and engaged student. The books available to the students at her school and been “recycled” from the nearby white schools, but this did not deter her love of learning. It saddened her that she was not allowed to visit the Martinsville Library, but as a junior high student, one of her mother’s employers checked out books for her. She wrote, “...I guarded those books like they were gold.”

As a high school student, she became known for her academic accomplishments. Although none of her immediate family had gone to college, this became

her goal. As class valedictorian she received a \$300 scholarship to Virginia State University. Armed with money that she had earned as a babysitter and housekeeper supplemented by gifts from her family, neighbors and friends, she started her long journey in higher education.

She continued her academic success and earned a bachelor’s degree with the aim of becoming a teacher. During the summer after graduation, she became the nanny of the son of a wealthy white family. This was a very positive experience where she “learned so much about social graces, home decorating, serving meals and high end clothing.” The family wanted her to continue on with them and offered to match a teaching salary, but she wanted to be a teacher and took a position at a Williamsburg high school. She lived across the road from William and Mary College and decided to apply to a master’s program there, even though it was still a segregated school. Under family pressure, she returned home to Martinsville to teach and, while there, met her first husband, Winsom Amos.

As a newly married couple, they began to plan their future. He supported her desire to attend William and Mary. They were not surprised when her application was denied, but were shocked that the state of Virginia offered to pay for tuition, travel and other fees to a university of her choice (so long as it was at a “black” college or in another state). After much soul searching, she decided to take the offer and apply to The Ohio State University which a number of her Columbus relatives had attended. She attended one year on her own while rooming with a cousin. At the beginning of the second year, she and Winsom decided to move to Columbus together. They packed the car with belongings, lots of food and few beverages. because they were not sure if they could find restaurants or rest rooms along the way that would allow them access.

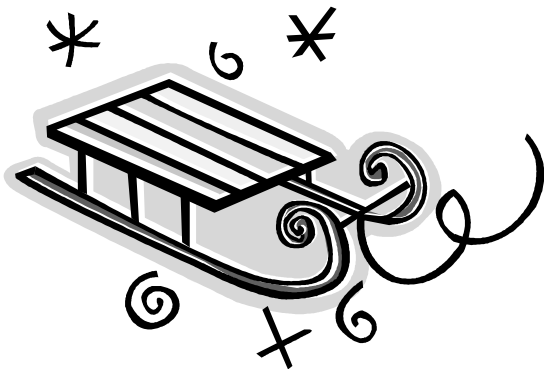
It was shortly after this, around 1960, that I first met Oris. She was teaching a class of orthopedically handicapped (in the parlance of the day) in a Columbus school and I, as an OSU graduate student in Special Education, visited her class. I remember being impressed by her teaching skills. My memory is fuzzy about the next few years, but we crossed paths several times over the next few years. I completed my doctorate in 1966 and, in 1969, came to Wright State as the first faculty member and Director of Special Education. Within a few years, we were expanding the program offerings to include the training of teachers for the moderately and severely handicapped (again, the terms of the day) and I thought of Oris. I was aware that she was now teaching at Otterbein College and that there was a limited special education program there. I suggested that we contact her.

While I would like to say that it was my brilliant salesmanship, in her book, Oris describes her decision to come to Wright State in another way. It was a combination of an opportunity to develop a graduate program, a good salary and the attraction of the diversity of the Yellow Springs community that lured her to our institution. Since that time, in the fall of 1975, our lives have intertwined. We shared the usual ups and downs of life, deaths and disappointments and great joys, both personal and professional. In 1987, the Board of Trustees awarded her The Trustee Award for Faculty Excellence. She was selected as the first faculty member to address a commencement. The subject of her speech was, "The Satisfaction of Struggle."

In the years after we both took the 1988 retirement buyout, our day to day interactions were less frequent, but the bond remained the same. I felt pride when she was named one of Dayton's Top Ten Women in 1997. I mourned the death of Winsom in 2001 and rejoiced when she found love again with Charles Cross in 2002. All of her local friends were saddened by her move to Charles' home in Charlotte, North Carolina, but, in a visit to them a few years later, I saw first hand that this was a good and right decision for her.

I have left out many interesting stories. I hope you will read them for yourself. When, in early October, I received her book and sat down to read it straight through, I thought how lucky I was to have known this exceptional human being. As I closed the book, a notation on the last page caught my eye. It said "Made in the USA, Charleston, SC, 26 September 2011." The irony of the date did not escape me, for, on September 27, 2011, her work completed, Oris embarked on her next Great Adventure. Rest in peace, dear friend. Well done!

(Excerpted in part from Cross, Oris, *The Lord Laid His Hands on Me*. Holam Books and Media. Available at www.holambooks.com)



Carol Stevenson and Gail Whitaker at the Basically British Tea Room.



Amy Hopkins and Gail Whitaker man the WSURA Health Fair booth.



Student leader **Marc Tshimanyika**, **Gerry Petrak**, and **Jim Uphoff** chat at the Health Fair.

WSURA Membership Form
New _____ **Renewal** _____ **Date** _____

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Spouse's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Primary Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Wright State Department at Retirement _____ Year _____

Spouse's Department at Retirement _____ Year _____

Email Address _____

Check One: Faculty Unclassified Classified

Life Membership:
 _____ \$100 (Ages 59 and below)
 _____ \$75 (Ages 60-69)
 _____ \$50 (Ages 70 and above)
 Classified employees may deduct \$10 from each of these categories.
 *NOTE: If you and your spouse are retirees from WSU, use the age of the younger spouse for determining the Lifetime fee. If you have paid the current annual fee and would like to become a Life Member, subtract the annual fee and remit the difference.

Annual Membership:
 _____ \$10

Please fill in the information requested above and send it with your dues (please do not send cash) to:
 WSURA, Attn: Treasurer, 139 Millett Hall, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435