

# The Extension

## President's Message: Barbara Bullock

It's a new academic year at Wright State, and the Retirees Association has moved into our new office in the Student Union. Besides getting to mingle with the students (more on that later), we're happy to be in the same office suite with the offices of Alumni Relations and University Advancement, which, it turns out, is a perfect fit.



We've been wholeheartedly welcomed, and Tim Littell from Advancement happily helped us move into our new space. Bill Bingham, from Planned Giving, and his office generously contributed the sandwiches for our picnic. We also have plans to work with them on events later in the year.

And, best of all, we are mingling with the students again. Somehow I'd forgotten how much I've always liked the students at Wright State! They smile. They hold doors open. They greet you and talk to you. They have energy. And, they truly seem to enjoy being at Wright State—at least at this point of the semester.

As much as we love our new space, it is smaller and we've had to pare down our belongings. Years ago Abe Bassett donated a large box of travel guides and maps for anyone to borrow, but we no longer have the space to store them. He has graciously offered to give them to anyone who would like them. If you are interested, just let us know. Somebody will be happy to meet you at our new office to pass them on and to give you a quick tour of our space.

Several activities have been scheduled for the coming year. In addition to the events we've already had (a Wetlands Walk and the fall picnic), Lee Hannah and Paul Leonard led a discussion on the election results Tuesday after that event. Many other events are being planned, so stay tuned! We will definitely have our poetry reading with wine and cheese in April, our spring luncheon in May, featuring WSU Athletic Director JoyLynn Brown, and we are working with Planned Giving to offer discussions in conjunction with that office.

*Continued on next page*

### In This Issue

President's Message	1-2
Meet New Leadership	2
The Poetry Corner	3
Picnic Collage	4
Corn Souffle Recipe	5
WSURA Board	
STRS News	
Post Election Discussion	6
Members Wanted!	
WSU Library Book Club	7
Communication Issues	8

### Upcoming Events

Estate Planning with Expert Panel  
February 5, 5 pm  
Shepard Conference Room,  
Foundation Building

Paul Laurence Dunbar Poetry  
Reading by Herbert Woodward  
Martin  
April 4, 3 pm  
Shepard Conference Room,  
Foundation Building

Author Tracey Enerson Wood  
*Katharine - The Wright Sister*  
April 14, 7 pm  
Apollo Room, Student Union

Annual Luncheon  
May 8, 11:30 am  
Nutter Center, Berry Room

WSURA sponsored activities  
are announced by email, so  
make sure that we have yours  
on file!



But back to the students. After some disappointing years, enrollment has been increasing over the past three years. Here are some of the numbers:

- First-time undergraduate students at Wright State increased by more than 17.5% compared to fall 2023.
- Total student headcount at the Dayton and Lake campuses increased 7.12% from last year.
- 2,300 new and returning students are living on the Dayton Campus, the highest number of students living on campus in more than 10 years.
- First-year retention from 2023 is 68.4%, an institutional record.

When I run into young people around the community and they reveal that they go to Wright State, their enthusiasm and happiness to be WSU students always makes me smile. These numbers suggest that students are once again getting the word that Wright State is a good place to go to school—and their experiences are leading them to stay and succeed.

## Meet Our President

Before retiring in 2015, I was the Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research, providing data on our students and researching student success. Since joining the Wright State University Retirees Association three years ago, my only regret is that I hadn't joined sooner. Although I was active in several nonprofits in Yellow Springs, I didn't realize the value of the connection with my friends and colleagues at Wright State. I also hadn't attended the programs WSURA offered. So what changed? Friends encouraged me to join the Board and I haven't regretted a second of it. Attending more meetings seemed like the last thing I wanted to do at this time of my life, but it turns out they're fun! We manage to be productive but still have time to enjoy each other's company. Much of our time is spent brainstorming possible programs and activities, and working out the logistics is generally quite easy; both current and retired employees have a wealth of knowledge that they are happy to share at our events. However, we always have time for good conversation on all sorts of topics. I'd love to have you join us!

*by Barbara Bullock*

## Meet Our President Elect

As I look forward to becoming president of the Wright State University Retirees Association next year, I send my best wishes for 2025 to all of our retirees.



I taught Spanish and Portuguese at Wright State from 1979-2009, serving as chair of Modern Languages from 1999-2007. I have been a member of the WSURA since my retirement, and I have been on the board for two years.

The Association does a lot of interesting things. We give out scholarships and organize all kinds of events—a fall picnic, a spring luncheon, lectures, and trips.

Last year, for example, we presented a talk on Social Security benefits, a lecture on the Hopewell archaeological site at Fort Ancient, a wetlands walk, a debriefing on the 2024 elections, and a poetry/prose reading. We also represent Wright State at the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees.

Please let us know if there are programs you would like us to do or ways in which we might be of service. I hope you will join in our activities and keep in touch with old friends through the association.

*by David Lee Garrison*

## Poetry Corner

### The Wisdom Package

by Hayden Saunier

I ask the youngish eye doctor why my eyes itch  
and burn and why new floaty bits  
of paramecium-shaped debris swim

through my view each day, and he tells me  
enthusiastically that this comes *absolutely free*  
with the wisdom package—an honor

I have been awarded. I blink. And, he adds,  
the wisdom package comes with lots of other  
free stuff too, but just like life, some people

will get more than others. I guess he's in his thirties,  
forties tops, and I am falling in love with him  
for his gentle way of reminding me I'm getting old

and that it's a privilege. I've passed  
the air-puff test, seen my retinal scans, which look  
like the red-orange surface of the sun, each

with its pinprick dot of optic nerve—thin thread  
connecting the eye to the dark, ornate theater  
of the brain, where the picture shows of our lives play.

I laugh and ask him about knees and knuckles,  
liver spots and forgetfulness, and to each complaint  
he answers: Wisdom! Wisdom! Wisdom!

We do not know one another's stories, how many  
each of us has lost, the who or how of it,  
from war, disease, or fate's unfairness doling out

more death to some than others. He and I give  
each other's hand a quick squeeze, let go,  
and get back to the business of my sight.

He swings a heavy black heart suspended  
from a giant arm in front of me,  
clicks through pairs of lenses

with the careful ticks of a slowing clock.  
I blink and answer him each time: clearer,  
better, thank you, yes, much clearer now.

Intro by David Lee Garrison

In this poem an eye examination tells us we are aging. The optometrist, with his gentle sense of humor, refers to aging as a gift, “the wisdom package.” We are lucky to be growing old.

The poet describes the medical procedure with similes and metaphors. Retinal scans “look like the red-orange of the sun”; the optic nerve sends signals to “the dark, ornate theater of the brain”; the apparatus used by the eye doctor is “a heavy black heart suspended from a giant arm.”

The poem does not rhyme, but it certainly has musicality. The lines are iambic (tah – TAH, tah – TAH) and most of them have four stresses; each stanza has three verses. Free verse is not free of organized harmonies, all good poems interweave sound and sense.

Hayden Saunier is an actress and a poet. She has published five books and won many awards, including the Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry.

## WSURA's Fall Picnic

On a perfect September day, about fifty retirees and friends shared a picnic lunch at Rotary Park in Beaver Creek. Delicious Jimmy Johns sandwiches were provided by Bill Bigham, director of Planned Giving, and the WSURA board provided salads and desserts.



## Corn Souffle

Preheat oven to 350.

Mix:

1 stick of butter or margarine  
melted

2 eggs beaten

8 ounces of sour cream or  
yogurt

1 8-ounce can whole corn,  
drained

1 8-ounce can creamed corn

1 box Jiffy Corn Muffin mix

Wheat germ (optional)



Add margarine or butter to beaten eggs. Add sour cream. Mix in corn and Jiffy mix. Pour into greased pan. Bake for 45 minutes to an hour until done. Should be like a very moist cornbread, not soupy. Serves six and makes a great side dish at Thanksgiving.

## Welcome Christmas News from STRS

With the results of a good year for STRS investment portfolio, the STRS Board announced a one time supplemental payment for retirees who retired prior to January 2024 and are eligible to receive a December 2024 benefit payment. The one time payment is expected to be \$40 per year of service and each full year of retirement. For example, a retiree who has 30 years of service credit and 10 years of retirement would receive  $(30+10) \times 40 = \$1,600$  before taxes. Unless the retiree has elected to not have taxes deducted from their monthly retirement check, STRS will withhold 22% for Federal Taxes (an IRS requirement). The payment (less taxes) will be made sometime before Christmas. The cost of this benefit will total \$309 million.

At the same time the STRS Board also approved benefit improvements for active educators by (1) reducing the required years of service for an unreduced retirement benefit from 34 years to 33 years and (2) reducing the eligibility for a reduced retirement benefit to 28 from 29 years service at any age.

*by Richard Williams*

## WSURA Board 2024–2025

### Executive Committee

President: Barbara Bullock

President Elect: David Garrison

Past President: Dick Williams

Secretary: Gail Whitaker

Treasurer: Carolyn Smith

Communications: Mary Kenton

Webmaster: Robin Suits

### Board Members at Large

Dan Abrahamowicz

Joyce Howes

Judi Engle

### Standing Committees

Activities: Mary Gromosiak

By-Laws/Elections: Joyce Howes

Communications: Mary Kenton

Historical Preservation: Kathy Morris

Membership Development: Judi Engle

Publications: Judi Engle

Remembrance: Peggy Bott

Scholarship: Dan Abrahamowicz,

David Garrison, Joyce Howes

Ohio Council of Higher Education

Retirees:

OPERS: Barbara Bullock

STRS: Dick Williams

### Liaisons

Alumni Affairs: Joyce Howes

Community Affairs: Donna Schlagheck

Friends of the Libraries: Peggy Bott

Raider Food Pantry: Kathy Morris

## Contact Us

E-mail: [wsura@wright.edu](mailto:wsura@wright.edu)

Website: [wright.edu/wsura](http://wright.edu/wsura)

Facebook.com/groups/WSURA

## Post Election Discussion

A large group of retired voters met with Paul Leonard and Lee Hannah Jr. to rehash the election of 2024. Paul served as the mayor of Dayton from 1982-1986 and as the 58th lieutenant governor of Ohio from 1987-1991. He currently teaches as an adjunct in Wright State's Department of Political Science. Paul was joined by Lee Hannah, Professor of Political Science at Wright State and frequently quoted political expert with news outlets. Lee quoted seemingly pertinent reasons why the election landed with a pro-Trump and Republican victory. Those quotes, though, were surprisingly from essays written after the 2004 election. The general consensus was that the Harris/Waltz campaign was run well, but did not have enough time to reach the many voters who were frustrated by their personal economic situation.



---

## The Board of the Wright State Retirees Association Needs Members

Shortly after I retired, I was asked to serve on the board of the Wright State Retirees Association. Having finished my career as a department chair, I was tired of meetings and declined the invitation. A few years later, though, I decided to give it a try. I have found it to be fun, interesting, and rewarding.

We meet once a month in our office in the Student Union. We get our work done, but we also talk and reminisce. It is good to be in touch with the university and with old friends.

We have several different committees. I am on the one that decides which students will be awarded our scholarships each year. I like reading the applications, and it is a thrill to give away the money. (*See committee list on Page 5*)

I also enjoy working on other events that we organize—the annual fall picnic, the spring luncheon, lectures, and trips. Last year for example, we organized a talk on Social Security benefits, a lecture on the Hopewell archaeological site at Fort Ancient, and a poetry/prose reading that were especially well received.

We need a couple of new members, so please think about joining us. You can contact our President, Barb Bullock at <barbara.bullock@wright.edu>.

*By David Lee Garrison*

## WSU Library Book Club Reads

### September 19, 2024: *Behind You Is the Sea*, by Susan Muaddi Darraj

Funny and touching, *Behind You is the Sea* brings us into the homes and lives of three main families—the Baladis, the Salamehs, and the Ammars—Palestinian immigrants who've all found a different welcome in America.

*Behind You is the Sea* faces stereotypes about Palestinian culture head-on, shifting perspectives to weave a complex social fabric replete with weddings, funerals, broken hearts, and devastating secrets. (Description from author's website).

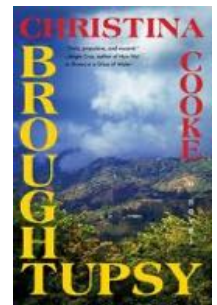
Special guest Dr. Vaughn Shannon, Professor, International and Comparative Studies, will provide background information on the history of Palestine.



### November 21, 2024: *Broughtupsy*, by Christina Cooke

Told through an intimate first-person account, *Broughtupsy* follows a 20-year-old Akúa as she attempts to reconstruct her fractured family by flying from Canada to her native Jamaica to reconnect with her estranged older sister Tamika, her younger brother Bryson's ashes in tow. As she tries to get closer to her sister and put her brother to rest, Akúa's confronted with the difficult realities of being gay in a deeply religious family, of feeling separate from her home culture after years of living abroad, and of battling the grief of losing her mother and then brother at pivotal moments in her young life.

As she spreads her brother's ashes while home in Kingston, Akúa meets Jayda, a bashful young woman who shows her a different side of the city and gives her a glimmer of hope of how to be at peace with her sister and herself. At its core, *Broughtupsy* asks us all: what are we willing to do for family? And what are we willing to do to savor the feeling of home? (Description from the author's website).



### January 16, 2025: *A Sign of Her Own*, by Sarah Marsh

A mesmerizing tale of historical fiction that follows a deaf former student of Alexander Graham Bell as she learns to reclaim her own authentic voice.

Ellen Lark is on the verge of marriage when she and her fiancé receive an unexpected visit from Alexander Graham Bell. Ellen is deaf and for a time she was Bell's student learning visible speech. During their lessons, Bell also confided in her about his dream of producing a device that would transmit the human voice along a wire: the telephone.

Now, on the cusp of wealth and renown, Bell wants Ellen to speak up in support of his claim to the patent of the telephone, which is being challenged by rival inventors. But Ellen has a different story to tell: that of how Bell betrayed her and other deaf pupils in pursuit of his own ambition. Ellen knows that this is her one opportunity to tell the true story—her story—but to do so will risk her engagement, her future prospects and her mother's last wish for her.

Inspired by Alexander Graham Bell's real deaf students, this stunning historical debut casts new light on the inventor and the invention that would forever change how we communicate. (Description from the publisher).



### March 20, 2025: The Dayton Literary Peace Prize Winner for Fiction

Book titles are available for borrowing from the WSU Libraries collection. Don't have a WSU library card? [Join our Friends of the Libraries](#) for borrowing privileges and help support the Libraries' collections and programs. WSURA is a proud sponsor of the Friends of the Libraries and the book club.



**Retirees Association**  
3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy.  
Dayton, Ohio 45435-0001

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO 551  
DAYTON OH 45401

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

*The Extension* is published by the Wright State University Retirees Association (WSURA).

All issues can be found on our website: [wright.edu/wsura](http://wright.edu/wsura).

Editor: Mary Kenton

Editor Emerita: Marlene Bireley

Copy Editor: Robin Suits

Design Layout: Judi Engle

Send articles/information to

Editor:

WSU Retirees Association

3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy

Wright State University

Dayton, OH 45435-0001

Or email to

[wsura@wright.edu](mailto:wsura@wright.edu)

## Have You Been Getting Email from WSURA?

Most WSU Retirees Association members who receive the printed Extension also receive the WSURA e-newsletter and our event invitations by email, which is sent using Constant Contact, an online email marketing platform. If you haven't been getting our emails, this message is for you.

*Constant Contact* recently changed the mailing address used to send our messages. This has caused some email providers to mark our messages as junk or spam, so you may not have seen them. If you still use your [wright.edu](http://wright.edu) email address, our mailings may be in your Junk E-Mail folder. Other providers may use another name for junk email. If you wish to continue receiving our emails, please add [wsura@wrightstate.ccsend.com](mailto:wsura@wrightstate.ccsend.com) to your address book or safe sender list.

If you have questions or no longer want to receive emails about our events and activities, just email us at [wsura@wright.edu](mailto:wsura@wright.edu), and we will remove you from the email list.