In 1987 Congress declared March to be Women’s History Month in perpetuity. Since the first classes that met in 1873, women have been included in OSU – and the evolution of their access and influence is an interesting story.

Two women, Harriet and Alice Townshend, were among the very first 24 students enrolled at OSU. There was no women’s dormitory, so since their father was Professor Norton Townshend, they could live at home. Later, female students lived in nearby rooming houses but they did have places to go on campus between classes called a “Gab Rooms.” Oxley Hall was finally built in 1908.

James Canfield, an ardent supporter of women’s rights, became the fourth President in 1894 and by 1896 domestic science and pedagogy, designed to educate women for jobs upon graduation, were added to the curriculum.

The Armory and Gymnasium was built in 1898 for military and physical training. Christopher Linhart was hired as Director of Gymnasium and Stella Elliot, Associate Director. The curriculum looked nothing like contemporary offerings of various sports – but was calisthenics and Swedish Gymnastics for both men and women. There were 275 men and 100 women enrolled the first year.

During the first four decades the population of women grew from the two Townshend sisters to 911 by 1911-12. In June of 1875 Miss Alice Williams was made an assistant professor in the Department of English and Modern Languages. She was the first female faculty member.

In 1912, after lobbying from women students and alumnae, President Thompson created the Dean of Women position. Biblical Literature professor Carolyn Breyfogle was named the first dean of women.

In 1922 Mack Hall became the second women’s dormitory and Pomerene Hall opened in 1922 as a combination office, meeting place for women, and offices for the dean of women. It also had a beautiful gymnasium and was the home of the women’s Physical Education Department. At that time women comprised about 1/3 of the student body.

Before World War II women enrolled largely in education, home economics, or nursing – but the War brought changes. Courses were offered that would “help in the war effort.” Courses such as accounting, management, engineering, and statistics opened. When a course in mechanical drafting was offered, three times as many women showed up as expected!

Before 1972 – the dawn of Title IX, Dr. Kathryn Schoen was asked to report on the status of women. The study found that less that 20% of the faculty were women, there were no women deans and no women in top administration. in 1978 she became the first woman OSU Vice President. The next year Ann Reynolds was named Provost, and Joan Huber became the first woman dean in 1984. In 1995, Bernadine Healy became the first woman Dean of the College of Medicine.

Our first and only female President, Karen A. Holbrook, served 2002-2007 and the influence of women took a giant, if short-lived step forward. She named Barbara Snyder Provost and Tami Longaberger was chair of the Board of Trustees, making the three highest positions at the University held by women.

Since 2000 A Woman’s Place has been a leader in equity and advancement of all women in higher education. In 2008 they assembled “An Encyclopedia of Pathbreaking Women at Ohio State University.” It is available online and is a rich history of the advancement of women at OSU and most interesting, it contains bios of many women who, over the years, have helped make real differences at OSU and in higher education. It is humbling to find the biographies of 20 current OSURA members among the women who have contributed so much to the advancement of women in higher education. Congratulations – and thanks!
When I worked at The Ohio State University, I often had to call another office or department seeking information. Sometimes, it wasn’t readily available, but the person on the other end of the phone would very often say, “Please give me your number, I’ll find out, and call you back.” I can’t recall a time when I was just told “I can’t help you—sorry.”

The reason I mention this is because this same can-do attitude continues in our OSURA volunteers. True, we have great help from the Alumni Association, but it is our volunteers who make this organization run and provide so many different programs each month. Recently as you know, I was in India for a month and guess what, all the programs, talks, events, and other activities continued right along. The newsletter arrived on time, the Book Club read and discussed, the Dinner Series dined, and many other things happened—all because of our wonderful volunteers. I am constantly amazed at their willingness to step up and help out. One volunteer had a serious illness and later death in the family, yet this volunteer was always working hard on several committees. I never heard a word about family problems, the work got done with a smile. I hope I’ll have a chance this month, National Volunteer Month, to thank you each in person for all you do for OSURA!

Speaking of volunteers and all they do, in this newsletter you’ll find a call for nominations for our Outstanding Service Award. This is an opportunity for us to recognize an individual who has given above and beyond for our association; someone who goes that extra mile (or two) to be sure that things run smoothly and are covered; someone who steps up and makes sure that things happen as planned. Or someone who has developed a new program or event for OSURA. Service can be many things, so think about someone who is making a difference! Nominations are due by May 15.

Plans are underway for our Member Appreciation Luncheon and Annual Meeting on June 10, 2020. I am pleased to tell you that Dispatch columnist Joe Blundo will be our guest speaker. I hope you can join us for lunch and fellowship with other OSURA members. We’ll be presenting the Service Award at the event.

Finally, the 2020 Census is off and counting. As someone who studies old census records for family history, I am delighted that my grandson will be counted this year for the first time. Remember that the census is important, too, in determining our representation in the U.S. Congress and how federal and state funds are distributed to our community. So please make it a point to complete the census form and respond promptly; remember, everyone counts!
Welcome New Retirees

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Kenneth Bartoo</td>
<td>Wexner Administration</td>
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<td>Karen Lee Brooks</td>
<td>Cancer Hosp &amp; Research Inst.</td>
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<td>Judy Lynn Bunting</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
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<td>Lisa Sibley Butler</td>
<td>Cancer Hosp &amp; Research Inst.</td>
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<td>Renessa A. Coleman</td>
<td>University Hospitals</td>
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<td>Susan Eileen Devlin</td>
<td>University Hospitals</td>
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<td>Merlyna D. Durusan</td>
<td>University Hospitals East</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Lynn Edwards</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences Administration</td>
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<td>John Mark Erbaugh</td>
<td>FAES Intl Programs</td>
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<td>Thomas Matthew Finkel</td>
<td>Cancer Hosp &amp; Research Inst.</td>
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<td>Robin S. Gates</td>
<td>FAES Finance</td>
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<td>Conrad Paul Gratz</td>
<td>OCIO Operations</td>
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<td>Maryann Hess</td>
<td>University Hospitals</td>
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<td>Cherie Lynn Kipp</td>
<td>University Development</td>
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<td>Anita Denise Kurz</td>
<td>University Hospitals</td>
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<td>Tracy Jane McDill</td>
<td>Ambulatory Services</td>
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<td>Leslie Kay Mihalov</td>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
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<td>Karen S. Miller</td>
<td>Operations Administration</td>
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<td>Jesus Noriega</td>
<td>University Hospitals East</td>
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<td>Donald Lee Payne</td>
<td>Facilities Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Lee Solomon</td>
<td>Office - Diversity &amp; Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benita Y. Taylor</td>
<td>Central Campus Security Srvcs</td>
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Marilyn Blackwell

By Shari Lorbach

It's little wonder that I went into a career that centered on literature; some of my fondest memories during childhood are Little Golden Books, being read to by my parents while sitting in their laps, and the thrill of being taken to get my very own library card. This interest continued unabated through high school and college (the University of Wisconsin) and was augmented there by a passion for film. My love of English and American literature expanded to world literature where I met Swedish authors like Strindberg, the father of modern experimental drama and C.J.L. Almqvist, the foremost literary practitioner of Romantic Irony. Not surprisingly, I decided to learn Swedish so I could read them in the original. The transition to an M.A. and a Ph.D. (University of Washington) in Scandinavian Studies was a logical consequence. While studying literature I learned the most valuable lessons of my life—empathy for others and empathy for other people and other cultures.

My first teaching position was at the University of British Columbia, following which I taught at the University of Virginia and finally in 1984 came to Ohio State. Life was good here. Twenty years of publishing and teaching led to ten years of activity in University governance where I functioned as a rigorous (some in Bricker Hall might have said “rabid”) advocate for faculty rights and quality undergraduate education. During this time I served as chair of Faculty Council twice, Chair of the University Steering Committee, Chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility, and Chair of the GEC Review Committee, and I served on more committees than I can count.

I joined OSURA as soon as I retired and enjoyed many of its activities. Shortly thereafter Rai Goerler and Gerry Newsom cornered me on a canal boat on an outing to Coshocton and convinced me that what I really wanted to do was to join the Cultural Arts Committee, which has been a real pleasure for me. The members are delightful and Rai’s leadership inspired. I’ve participated in dozens of Cultural Arts and Travel Committee jaunts—from the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford to the Cuyahoga Scenic Railway and the Freedom Center, from Ballet Met performances to events centering on history and theater, OSURA has offered a cornucopia of interesting and enjoyable events. And I’ve tried to do my part by arranging many visits to dramas at the Civic Theatre, as well as trips to the Center for Automotive Research, and very shortly to the Chihuly exhibition at the Franklin Park Conservatory. I have found OSURA and its many and varied activities a real lifeline for retirees and cannot recommend it too highly.

As I look back on my career and my involvement in OSURA, I consider myself very lucky. Along this journey there has been a consistent refrain—at least once a month for the last forty years, someone has asked me what I do, I have told them I’m a professor of, among other things, Swedish, and, after a somewhat panicked pause, they say, “Oh, yes, I’ve heard the Alps are beautiful!” As I say, my life in Columbus has been good to me!
Chronic Health Conditions and Married Couples

By Meg Teaford

As we age, chronic health conditions are more prevalent and there are gender differences. For example, 35% of men 65 and older report heart disease compared to 25% of older women. On the other hand, 54% of older women report arthritis and 43% of older men. The good news is that the reports of overall disabilities, especially in mobility, are dropping for both men and women.

A recent study at the University of Michigan by Courtney Plenick, published in the Journals of Gerontology Series B, looked at how married couples cope with chronic health conditions when they need different types of self-care. For example, one member of the couple needs a special diet or a complex set of medications for managing pain. What impact do these differences make on the emotional and mental health of the couple?

Again, national data tells us that the rates of clinical depression among women 65 and older have dropped (to 15%) although for older men they have remained the same (10%). But this hides the fact that among those 75-79 and those 80-84, the rate of depression has increased. For example, among women 80-84, the rate is 19% and among men in the same age category it is 16%.

The Michigan study sought to determine whether there was a delayed effect on mental health as couples coped with the self-care needed for their chronic conditions. And the study found indeed that the first depressive symptoms did not appear until several years into handling the chronic conditions. Although depression rates were low for both men and women, they did increase over time. Women did cope better than men. The authors therefore suggest that there is a window of opportunity to intervene early before depression appears or worsens to help couples. The toll of caregiving and the need to care for oneself are often issues that are hidden and need to be discussed with health care professionals on an on-going basis.

FROM: The Benefits Committee

STRS Report

By Jerry Newsom

Calendar year 2019 was very good financially; the STRS total fund return was +18.39%. When one adds in the negative returns for 2018, however, the last two years were just a bit above the assumed rate of return of 7.45%, so together the two years didn’t change the needle much. STRS does seem to have good investment managers, generally beating the benchmark of comparable retirement systems. The portfolio is diversified, which means it lags the stock market when it goes up sharply but beats the stock market in down years. In the first half of FY 2020 (through 31 December), investments returned +6.55%, but this gain was more than wiped out in the last week of February.

An interesting item was presented at the February Board meeting, answering the question how our pensions would be different now if the COLAs since retirement had been just the increase in cost of living instead of the fixed percentage. Most years the percentage increase was greater than the increase in the Consumer Price Index, although obviously since COLAs were suspended three years ago the rise in the CPI has been greater. It turns out that someone who retired 20 years ago currently has a pension 1.0097 times what it would have been had their COLA been exactly the CPI increase.

An Urban Institute study found that, over the last decade (i.e., starting with the Great Recession), 43 states have raised teachers’ contributions to their retirement plan or cut retirement benefits. Nearly one half of the state teacher plans raised the ages for collecting pensions. Among plans that made these changes in that decade, the average retirement age increased almost 5 years. Sometimes terms used by actuaries are confusing. Take “risk,” for example. To help clarify things, Actuarial Standard of Practice (ASOP) No. 51 defines risk as “The potential of actual future measurements deviating from expected future measurements resulting from actual future experience deviating from actuarially assumed experience.” It’s good they’ve cleared that up.
In Memoriam

Julia Mae Allison-Wall  
February 25 | OSUMC, 95
Sheldon Atkinson  
March 3 | Locksmith, 91
John (Jack) W. Creighton  
January 29 | Foundation Board, 87
David Griffiths  
February 10 | WOSU, 78
Bonnie Morris  
February 29 | Housekeeper, 75
Lucile Osborn  
February 20 | Lantern, 103
Patricia Marie Powell  
February 13 | OSUMC, 91
Marilyn Gibson Ratcliff  
February 14 | Circulation Technology, 79
Frank Rhodes  
February 3 | Geology, 93
LeeAnn Richter  
March 1 | OSU Extension, 67
Thomas C. Sawyer  
February 18 | Student Affairs, 74
George R. St Pierre Jr.  
March 4 | Materials Science and Engineering, 89
Carol Ann Stull  
March 4 | Legal Secretary, 83
Bobby VanStavern  
February 21 | OSU Extension and OSURA, 90

Save the Date!

September 23, 2020

OSURA Fall Conference XXIII
Wednesday, September 23
Fawcett Center

Another great program is coming together, thanks to your thoughtful input. We are looking forward to having as our keynote speaker:

Bernadette Melnyk  
Associate Vice President for Health Promotion  
University Chief Wellness Officer  
Professor and Dean of the College of Nursing  
Professor College of Medicine

See you there!

With the leadership of President Meg Teaford, our Board thoughtfully discussed the OSURA response to COVID 19
Congratulations Rhonda Wallace!

The ColumbusCEO recently announced that Rhonda has been chosen a 2020 Healthcare Achievement Award Volunteer of the Year!

Rhonda, an OSURA member, is a longtime volunteer at Life Care Alliance. Once called “Meals on Wheels,” Life Care Alliance still delivers meals to clients who are elderly and housebound and unable to prepare meals for themselves — and when Rhonda isn’t delivering meals, she helps out in the wellness department and cancer clinic doing important office work or registering clients.

We are so proud and grateful of the many OSURA members whose volunteering makes ours such a great community — and we congratulate Rhonda Wallace for the recognition — and thank her for her good work!

F rie ndship at Home is a long-term care plan specifically designed for seniors who wish to age in place, their place! This unique program provides concierge care services under one monthly fee, which remains steady over time, regardless of care needed later, up to full nursing home care.

Not only do the services provided by Friendship at Home address the growing demand for long-term care, but the program’s Care Coordinators’ remove the burden from loved ones.

Seniors can enjoy retirement without worrying how they will receive necessary care — all in the comfort and familiarity of their own home!

Call 614-734-2167 for information.