

Social and educational activities bond MURA to community



Ruth Tofle

Dear MURA members,
After a year without in-person events, we are back! We successfully began the hybrid breakfast series in September. Precautions of masking and social distancing allowed for meeting in person, and the wonders of Zoom allowed for synchronous online participation.

This year's *MURA News* theme is Partnering/Working together. It is a good time to focus on MURA's social and educational efforts — MURA's fourth objective — as we complete the year. The social highlight will be a Holiday Luncheon to enjoy good fellowship, good food and good cheer with our Central Bank and Trust co-sponsorship.

On the educational partnering side, our breakfast series builds on our community connections to offer topics of interest to retirees as described by **Clyde and Cecile Bentley**, MURA educational co-chairs.

Additional articles illustrate how MURA and MURA leaders have concurrent and ongoing connections with the educational mission of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, University Libraries and the Henry S. Geyer Award recognition. The spotlight on **Mary Anne McCollum** highlights how her wealth

of experience in government benefits the Flagship Council and the MURA Government Affairs Committee.

MURA's education objective is also closely linked to our advocacy and communication objectives. In this spirit, this issue will provide a report by Cecil Moore, MURA administrative liaison, about the Fall UM Retiree Town Hall. It focused on health-care benefits reaching 500 households systemwide. This issue also includes a preliminary report of our member survey provided by **Art Jago**, member-at-large-faculty.

Finally, this newsletter reminds us of seasonal opportunities. United Way representative **Linda Lorenz** promotes the United Way campaign to help our community. **Mary Jo Herde**, Awards Committee chair, reminds us to consider nominations for the Chancellor's Retiree of the Year. **Dick Otto**, Membership co-chair, reminds us of MURA membership renewals and recruiting — particularly for lifetime memberships. As he explains, "MURA needs you as well as your friends, so we can continue to be a vital voice for retirees."

MURA has much to offer its members. Keep track of our upcoming events and stay in touch with us through the MURA Bi-weekly Update emails, our website and [Facebook](#).

It is a pleasure to serve you.

— Ruth Tofle, MURA President

MURA OBJECTIVES

Contribute to University Family

Communicate

Advocate

Educate & Socialize

Thank you for volunteering to benefit scholarship fund

DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF THE MU SEMESTER, MURA members volunteered their time to help during the rush at the Mizzou Bookstore. For the 24 hours of volunteered time, a contribution of \$360 was made to the MURA Kitty Dickerson Scholarship Fund. Thanks go to: **Ted Tarkow, Jeanette Brown, Jack and Darlene Miles, Clyde Bentley, Phil and Jan Harrison, Chris Weisbrook** and **Gary Smith**. Please keep this Mizzou Bookstore volunteering opportunity in mind for the beginning of the Spring semester in January. Building the scholarship fund is an ongoing goal of our organization. In addition, it's fun to be around the enthusiasm of our Mizzou students.

Please remember the Kitty Dickerson Scholarship Fund in your end of year giving. The Kitty Dickerson Scholarship provides funds to MU/UM students whose parents are MU/UM staff employees. A gift in support of the scholarship is an investment in our students while supporting MU/UM staff. You can now give direct at https://mizzougivedirect.missouri.edu/Item.aspx?item_id=415

The MURA website identifying past scholarship recipients is at <https://mura-missouri.com/news/kitty-dickerson-scholarship>. These scholarship recipients will be invited to the MURA Holiday Luncheon.

— Ruth Tofle

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Mary Anne McCollum's Geyer Award!

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Nominate retirees for Chancellor's Retiree of the Year Awards

By MARY JO HERDE, Awards Committee Chair



Mary Jo Herde

Do you know someone who has made a major contribution through their volunteer efforts since retiring from the staff or faculty of the University of Missouri? Now is the time to nominate them for the recognition they deserve – The Chancellor's Retiree of the Year Award.

Every spring, MURA recognizes two outstanding retirees – one staff member and one faculty member – who have made significant contributions to the university or community since their retirement. These individuals are recognized with a Chancellor's Retiree of the Year Award, which includes a \$1,000 check, their names on a plaque in Jessie Hall and presentation of the award by the chancellor.

To be eligible for this award, retirees must have made noteworthy contributions through community or professional voluntary service since their retirement. All candidates must have retired prior to Jan. 1, 2017. The nomination materials, consisting of an application form and three letters of support, must be submitted by March 1, 2022. A copy of the nomination form and letter requirements are found at the MURA Website (MURA-missouri.com). Simply go to the website, click the "About" category and find the Chancellor's Volunteer of the Year information at the bottom of the page. A list of previous recipients of this award's winners is also included on this site.

Nominees will be eligible for award consideration for three years. Those selected for receipt of the award will be notified in late March or early April. If you have questions or need more information, don't hesitate to contact Mary Jo Herde at Herdem@missouri.edu or call 573-446-5525.



2022 Chancellor's Retiree of the Year Awards

Awards will be presented by Dr. Mun Choi at a MURA event.

BEGUN IN 1990, the Chancellor's Retiree of the Year Awards focus on the accomplishments of former employees after their retirement. These accomplishments may involve volunteer service to the University, civic and welfare services, career and professional activities or other noteworthy achievements. Accomplishments prior to retirement are not considered in the selection process. Two awards will be given: one to a faculty member and one to a staff member. Each award includes a plaque and a \$1,000 check. Previous nominees not selected are kept in the pool for two more years.

CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION:

- Nominees must have retired from the University of Missouri before Jan. 1, 2017.
- Nominees must have contributed volunteer service to their communities, university or professional and civic organizations following their retirement.
- Retiree Advisory Committee members are not eligible

NOMINATION PROCESS:

1. Complete the nomination form below.
2. Prepare a letter with the following information:
 - a. Nominee's extraordinary accomplishments since retiring.
 - b. Personal and background information about the nominee.
 - c. Summary – most important reason(s) why you believe the candidate should receive one of these awards.
3. Attach three letters of support from others who know the nominee.

NOMINATION FORM

Candidate's name: _____

☐ Faculty ☐ Staff Year of retirement: _____ MU department/ position at time of retirement: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Nominator: _____ ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Alum ☐ Retiree ☐ Community

Mailing address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Nominator's signature: _____ Date: _____

QUESTIONS? Call 573-446-5525 • PLEASE RETURN NOMINATION MATERIALS BY MARCH 1, 2022, TO:

University of Missouri - MU Operations, Mary Maxwell – Retiree Awards, 305 Jesse Hall, Columbia, MO 65211, Email: MaxwellM@missouri.edu

**Previous
Chancellor's
Retiree of the
Year Award
Recipients**

YEAR	FACULTY	STAFF	YEAR	FACULTY	STAFF
1990	Ernest Funk	Albert Flischel	2006	Verna Rhodes	Darlene Schroeder
1991	Veralee Hardin	Jerome & Marie Mason	2007	Max Miller	Gary Smith
1992	Robert Daniel	George Brooks	2008	Rod Gelatt	Georgia Morehouse
1993	Charles Gerke	Allen Purdy	2009	James Creed	Ernest Hilderbrand
1994	Adolph Schroeder	Anthony Lampe	2010	Robert Marshall	Joyce Lake
1995	C. Melvin Bradley	Russell Dale Cook	2011	John Parker	Judith Cunningham
1996	Dale Sechler	Paul Rexroad	2012	Robert Blake Jr.	Judy Olson
1997	Betty Crim	W. E. (Bill) Moyes	2013	Bob Stewart	Jack Miles
1998	Robert Breitenbach	Betty Cook Rottmann	2014	Don Day	Phyllis Miller
1999	Nelson Trickey	Martha Sue Dailey	2015	George Kennedy	Susan Turner
2000	Walter Wilkening	Ray McClure	2016	Nan Erickson	Kee Groshong
2001	Ross Swofford	Ola Mae Taggart	2017	Richard Hessler	Marie Sloan
2002	Thomas Brown	Elizabeth Bailey	2018	Robert Churchill	Richard Otto
2003	Emma J. McKinin	Sue Tucker Troutner	2019	Jill Raitt	Sandra Taylor
2004	John Mowrer	Nina Hiler	2020	Brian Brooks	Ron Geren
2005	Jo Behymer	Darlene Miles	2021	Jeff Chinn	Jacqueline Kelly

MURA Holiday Luncheon

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Executive Center

\$25 per person

Reservations online with choice of entrée

(mura-missouri.com/event/mura-holiday-luncheon-on-december-1-2021)

before noon on November 22, 2021

10:30 a.m.

Social hour with holiday sing-along;
Tiger Pantry Raffle for gift baskets begins.

11:30 a.m.

Luncheon and program including Ray Schroeder Toast with Gary Smith,
introduction of scholarship awardees, trivia quiz with Dick Otto.

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Central Bank



**Central Trust
Company**



MURA Objective: Educate & Socialize

Partnering with University Libraries



Ruth Tofle

By Ruth Tofle, MURA President

The significant reciprocal nature MU University Libraries shares with MURA and its members deserves attention as there are frequent and varied interactions.

Supporting retirees:

Months before retiring after more than three decades as an MU department chair, I carted loads of books to the ground floor of

the library and shipped boxes of catalogued administrative papers to the University Archives. It was comforting to know that my personal collections could benefit others.

Seeing the behind-the-scenes processes and becoming familiar with helpful librarians provided additional connections. Anselm Huelsbergen, librarian of Special Collections & Archives, retrieved MURA's historic papers from historian Gary Smith's office.

University Archives also shared photos of the Chancellor's Retirees of the Year for our 30th Anniversary MURA News articles.

Reaching out to retirees:

University Libraries continue to reach out to us. For example, the MU Libraries Head of Special Collections, Kelli Hansen, was the featured speaker last year in our breakfast series addressing "Discovering the Secrets of MU Special Collections."

Show Me Mizzou, another venue shared with retirees, featured a story on the Special Collections and Rare Books area. It covered the "Moving Memories" story chronicling the University Archives moving from its home in Lewis Hall to the fourth floor of Ellis Library to allow for easier collaboration with [Special Collections](#) and other research resources.

The University Libraries also reaches out with weekly email newsletters featuring resources, events, workshops, services, news and people who can assist with academic work. To subscribe to Library News, go to: <https://library.missouri.edu/news/subscribe>.

To increase library access, University Libraries began in-house digitization 10 years ago. The MU Digital Library further developed the MOspace Institutional Repository, an online repository for creative and scholarly works and other resources created by faculty, students and staff at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The MU libraries also joined the HathiTrust. It's millions of publications are now digitized and online and available for use by people at MU and around the world.

The University Libraries also offer some circulation privileges to retirees. See the website [Retirees page](#) for details.

Retirees supporting University Libraries:

In drafting this story about the reciprocal relationship with University Libraries, I remember my favorite library study spots and conversations I have had about the impact of our library. I also remember receiving a tribute letter when a colleague honored my mother's life with a library book. It feels good to "pay it forward" and support our University Libraries. (See <https://library.missouri.edu/giving>)

Here are some ways to show your support:

- Gifts-in-kind – Donations of books, documents or other materials that are in good repair and that support teaching and scholarship are welcomed. Rare and valuable materials are especially encouraged.
- Honor with Books – This is a special way to show appreciation or pay tribute to someone.
- Adopt-a-Book – Choose a specific book in need of repair or a subject area to support.
- Friends of the Library – This is an association of donors dedicated to developing private support for MU Libraries. Annual membership is \$50, and lifetime membership is \$750, which may be paid over three years.
- Library Society – Benefactors who choose to give annual gifts of \$1,000 or more in support of the collections and services offered by MU Libraries.



From left, Gary Smith, Ansel Huelsbergen and Ruth Tofle move MURA archives from Smith's office to the University Archives.

Osher@Mizzou goes hybrid

By Jack Wax, Advisory Council chair, [Osher@Mizzou](#) Lifelong Learning Institute

If the category were “Great Partnerships,” Alex Trebek’s clue would have been, “A natural pairing of organizations that benefits everyone involved.” And the “Jeopardy” answer would have been, “What is the relationship between MURA and [Osher@Mizzou](#)?”

Not only do the two organizations promote each other’s events, but long ago they cemented their partnership by establishing a “liaison” who sits on the Osher Advisory Council as the MURA representative and on the MURA Board as the [Osher@Mizzou](#) representative.

A good number of Osher members are also MURA members, which is to be expected, considering that both groups are grounded in higher education. And both groups produce educational programs so that their members can continue learning and leading a rewarding life throughout retirement.

Osher, if you aren’t familiar with it, is an MU Extension program for adults, 50 and older. In 2002, John Parker got the idea to have an adult learning program. He called that program MU Lifespan Learning, and he received support for his idea from Tom Henderson, then vice provost at MU. In 2004, Lucille Salerno became director of the program and John became director emeritus. In 2005, they received a \$1 million grant from the national Bernard Osher Foundation, and that’s when the organization became Osher@Mizzou.

Because of an emphasis on learning and taking a thoughtful approach to retirement, members of both groups are likely to respond effectively to changing circumstances that we all experience as we age – but then COVID-19 changed everyone’s plans. Osher’s model is based on in-person classroom experiences, where not only do its members learn together, but they socialize, become friends and are part of a community of learners. Like MURA, Osher shifted to online programming in March 2020.

This fall, as the vaccines became widely available, Osher cautiously re-opened its campus doors, located at the Waters-Moss Memorial Wildlife Area, and launched hybrid classes. Social distancing and masks are required for those who attend classes in person, and for those who prefer the convenience and added safety of attending via Zoom, that is still a possibility.

If you have been curious about [Osher@Mizzou](#) but don’t live in Columbia, the Osher hybrid model of classes makes it possible for you to take Osher classes wherever you live. Here is what you need to know: Osher has four semesters of classes each year. Fall and spring are eight weeks long; summer and winter sessions are four weeks each. Classes meet once a week for 90 minutes. Of course,



Jack Wax at the Osher@Mizzou Founders Celebration.

because this is Osher, there are no grades, no credit, and the object is to learn for the pleasure of learning. Some classes (mostly those on literature) have required reading, but most do not.

And as for types of classes, there are no limits. Typically, each semester features at least one history class, a couple of literature classes, some science, some aging topics, a bit of economics, some art and an eclectic assortment of travel, current events and food topics. Osher relies on volunteer instructors who are experts in their field, many of whom are retired professors or are still teaching at MU and other local high schools, colleges and universities.

If lifelong learning with Osher sounds like something you’d like to explore, you might get a taste of the experience by registering for the Potpourri of the Arts or Brown Bag seminars, which are a compilation of classes on different topics throughout the semester. For instance, this fall, the series included titles such as “Renoir’s Three Sisters and Nazi Art Theft,” “Visual Thinking Strategy and Art,” “The Rediscovered Writings of Rose Wilder Lane” and “Estate Planning and Elder Law: Ninja Level.”

To find out about upcoming classes, you can check the Osher website periodically, www.osher.missouri.edu, or it’s easy to send an email to Osher@Missouri.edu and ask to be put onto the Osher mailing list. You’ll receive a weekly E-Newsletter about what’s happening at Osher, and you’ll be the first to hear about classes for the next semester and when you can register.

Mary Anne McCollum

2021 Geyer Award Recipient

By Ruth Tofle, MURA President

MARY ANNE McCOLLUM, 2021 Geyer awardee, has been a public service champion for decades and broken records along the way. She has utilized her leadership, problem-solving and relationship-building skills to forge a successful career.

The Mizzou Alumni Association annually presents Geyer Awards to one state-elected official and one citizen who exemplify the dedication and spirit of Henry S. Geyer. As a state representative, Geyer believed education was the key to progress and prosperity in Missouri and introduced a bill (the Geyer Act) to establish the University of Missouri in 1839.

Mary Anne served almost two terms on the Columbia City Council before running for mayor, the first female to ever run in Columbia. She won two elections as mayor – still holding the record as the only woman serving in this role. In addition, she was the only Columbia elected official to serve as president of the Missouri Municipal League, an organization fostering the cooperation of Missouri cities, towns and villages.

After leaving the mayor's office, McCollum went on to serve 20 years as an appointed commissioner on the Columbia Housing Authority Board as well as serving on several other nonprofit boards. She also worked briefly at the Central Missouri Humane Society.

McCollum grew up in Berwick, Penn., a small town in northeastern Pennsylvania. When she was entering the eighth-grade, her dad's employer, ACF Industries, transferred the family to St. Louis. Mary Anne completed eighth-grade at All Saints Grade School in St. Peters and then moved to St. Charles and went to Duchesne High School.

It was her American government class instructor at Duchesne High School, Ron Kjar, who had a major influence in her career choice as he was also involved in politics.

Columbia soon became her hometown and has been for more than 50 years. In between high school graduation and retirement in 2015, she followed a steady path of involvement in political and public service activities.



Mary Anne McCollum displays her Geyer Award in recognition of her years of public service.

The only temporary stumbling block was figuring out how to create a suitable wardrobe without spending a lot of money when she transitioned from 12 years of school uniforms to MU's wear-what-you-want atmosphere. As proof of her ingenuity, Mary Anne remembers teaming up with sorority sisters who faced the same situation to share clothes and make the best of the situation.

In the process of completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and a Bachelor of Science degree in education, she interned at the Missouri State Capitol during her senior year at MU. At that point she was even more convinced that she had made the right choice to pursue a career in political science – even if her parents questioned if she would ever find a job after graduation.

She would soon prove the value of her world-class education, and she is grateful for how MU had a major impact on her life. In addition to holding elected offices as

councilwoman and mayor, she joined the MU Division of University Affairs in the chancellor's office where she was an advocate for engagement of alumni, legislators and business leaders.

At one point, Mary Anne thought she would become a housemother at a Mizzou Greek house upon retirement – but that would not happen. In 2014, she became a MURA member and retired from MU the next year.

Soon thereafter she was selected as executive director of the Mizzou Flagship Council where she continues today while serving as MURA's chair of the Government Affairs Committee. She also has been a leader in orchestrating MURA Breakfast presentations with Boone County State Legislative Candidates.

Mary Anne's role model is "... my maternal grandmother, Mary, who came to this country at age 16. She was always a source of inspiration and one of my biggest cheerleaders, always encouraging me to be better. Also, I have had many mentors over the years who helped me in my career and political life, and I now try to pay it forward by working with other young people."

As for who she would like to meet, she says, "For a living person, Pope Francis. Deceased, my maternal great-grandmother. I would want to thank her for having the courage to let her children, my grandmother, leave their home country of Czechoslovakia to come to the U.S. for a better life."

In a final note, she shared a recent learning experience. "After a tour of the Roy Blunt Next Gen Precision Medicine Building, I walked away with a renewed sense of appreciation for MU as a world-class university that is making a difference in people's lives in ways that we could not even imagine.

"The tour also provided me with the opportunity to reconnect with John Hequembourg, project construction manager, and reminisce about our time spent as interns in the same legislative office so many years ago at the State Capitol."

Past MURA recipients of the Geyer Award

THE PRESTIGIOUS GEYER AWARD recognizes politicians and citizens who have made outstanding contributions to benefit MU. The award is named for Rep. Henry S. Geyer, who authored the Geyer Act to establish the University of Missouri in 1839. Geyer believed education was the key to progress and prosperity in Missouri. This year **Mary Anne McCollum** joins the elite group. Below are the other eight MURA members who have been selected for the distinguished Geyer Award.



David Russell, 2019



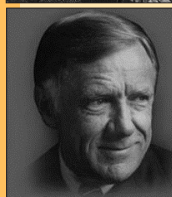
Gary Smith, 2017



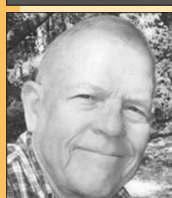
Brady Deaton, 2013



Christine Koukola, 2009



Hugh Stephenson, 2003 *



Al Hahn, 2001 *



Mel George, 2000 *

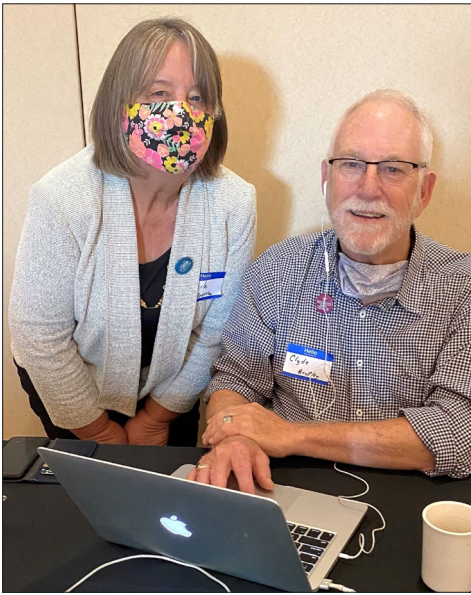


David Leuthold, 1997

***Deceased**



Bentleys combine strengths to organize speakers



Clyde and Cecile Bentley team up to organize MURA breakfast programs.

PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY AND ORGANIZATION are the keys to the success of Clyde and Cecile Bentley's MURA breakfast programs.

The Bentleys are education co-chairs, which means they select and coordinate the speakers who present a program to MURA members at the monthly first-Tuesday breakfasts.

The couple has an almost perfect combination of professional skills for the job — he spent decades as a working journalist and MU journalism professor, and she was an executive with the State of Oregon and with a specialty software company.

"Planning begins nearly a year

in advance in order to schedule a semester's worth of speakers," Cecile said.

After 49 years of marriage, discussing what they see and hear in the community is table talk at the Bentley house. Both are active in the community, which gives them plenty of opportunity to hear what people are talking about. In addition, the MURA member survey provides a wealth of ideas, and still other ideas come from tips directly from fellow MURA members. Having the incredible resources of Columbia to draw upon is a real asset.

"If it catches our ears, it is probably interesting to other people," Clyde said. The couple then discusses whether the topic is timely and of interest to the MURA audience.

Once a slate of potential topics are identified, the real work begins. Cecile's organizational skills and Clyde's contacts within the university help them find people who can speak on the topic they have chosen. Through a combination of phone calls, emails and the help of colleagues, they narrow down the list of speakers on the topic and then politely "twist arms" to get them to agree to address MURA.

Cecile is especially good at juggling which speaker can be scheduled into which months and working with them to refine the logistics of the presentation. Together, they help the speakers narrow their topics and come up with titles that pique members' curiosity.

For most of the pandemic, the breakfast presentations were made through Zoom. Clyde handled the technical details and arranged for an MU System webinar reservation. Using the Zoom webinar system rather than a normal online meeting ensured that the presentation is not "Zoom bombed" by malicious intruders.

When MURA restarted "live" breakfasts in September, the MURA board decided to also keep the Zoom option, creating "hybrid" presentations. Cecile coordinates the setup and introductions of speakers at the breakfast while Clyde sets up and monitors the Zoom contacts.

As you might expect, work has already begun on setting up the winter semester's roster of speakers. "It's a lot of work, but a lot of fun," Cecile said.

Retiree support needed for Read Across Columbia

By Linda Lorenz, MURA United Way liaison

Heart of Missouri United Way believes every child can learn to read.

In order to read at grade-level, children need at least 10 grade-level books in their home. We also know that children are most interested in reading when they can relate to the characters in books.

Due to household struggles such as food insecurity and poverty, reading proficiency can be difficult to achieve. In 2019, Columbia Public Schools' English/Language Arts MAP scores demonstrated the subsequent disparity in outcomes: 13.4% of Black third-grade students test proficient or advanced in comparison to 55.2% of white students.

Through Read Across Columbia, Heart of Missouri United Way removes this barrier to literacy by getting children their very own books. Read Across Columbia puts inclusive book titles into the hands of all first- and second-grade students at our five elementary schools with the lowest reading proficiency scores and highest free-and-reduced lunch rates. These same schools are also the most diverse in our district. Each fall and spring, United Way volunteers pack bookbags with 4 books plus one coupon for a free book from Daniel Boone Regional Library, for approximately 650 students.

This fall in partnership with Columbia Public Schools, GP M.A.D.E. Foundation, 3M, Daniel Boone Regional Library and Peace Nook, the literacy kits were provided to 650 students at Benton STEM, Blue Ridge, Derby Ridge, Alpha Hart and Parkade elementary schools.

By reaching children who most need support, United Way is advancing equity in education. Your generous support of United Way supports needed programs such as Read Across Columbia. Ninety-nine cents of every

(continued next page)



A sample literary kit provided through United Way's Read Across Columbia program.

2021 Fall Retirees Associations' Town Hall focused on health benefits

By Cecil Moore, MURA administrative liaison

UM SYSTEM RETIREES ASSOCIATIONS FALL TOWN HALL was held via webinar on Oct. 7 focusing on retiree health benefits. The timing of this webinar was planned to occur as retirees received their annual health benefits enrollment information for 2022 and just prior to the annual enrollment period.

The semi-annual Town Hall was moderated by Alison Copeland, Deputy Chief Engagement Officer, UM Office of Engagement. Following a brief welcome, panel participants included Marsha Fischer, UM Human Resources VP, Carol Wilson, director UM Benefits Program, and David Scinto, representing UnitedHealthcare® (UHC). In introductory comments, Fischer emphasized the importance of retiree advocacy and thanked Betsy Garrett of MURA and Robert Piepho of UMKC for their engagement in the critical Total Rewards Advisory Committee review process.

UHC remains the plan administrator for UM-sponsored Medicare Advantage Plans for 2022 and importantly will also begin providing Part D pharmacy services as of Jan. 1, 2022. Transition to UHC pharmacy coverage necessitates presentation of the new UHC card to pharmacies beginning Jan. 1, 2022. Enrollees were encouraged to go online to UHCRetiree.com/umsystem to access (or register) individual accounts.

The Town Hall was viewed by 500 households and approximately 100 questions were submitted. A video recording of the Fall Town Hall is available online and written answers to systemwide questions submitted before and during the event may be reviewed on the UM System Retirees Association webpage at: <https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/enagement-outreach/um-system-retirees-associations>. Links to the webinar are also posted in the UM Connection newsletter and on the UM retirees website.

Anticipated timing of the next Town Hall is mid-May 2022 and will focus on retirement funds and pensions. Organizers emphasized the importance of receiving questions ahead of the Town Hall.

Read Across Columbia *(continued from previous page)*

dollar donated stays in mid-Missouri to support health, financial stability, education and basic needs services that benefit our local community.

For 75 years, UM System and MU employees have partnered with Heart of Missouri United Way to improve lives in our community. Today, we request your continued support.

All retirees should have received a letter and pledge card by mail. You may also pledge online through a special online portal for retirees at <https://liveunited.uwheartmo.org/MURetirees>.

If you would prefer to make a gift from your investments or from your Individual Retirement Account, please contact David Holtgraewe, at 573-443-4523 or dholtgraewe@uwheartmo.org.

Our annual campaign to support the Heart of Missouri United Way is built on our belief that the university is stronger when the community is stronger. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

MURA survey draws in 266 responses

By Art Jago, Member-at-large-faculty

In the first week of August, a 30-item online opinion survey was sent to the MURA membership. The survey asked members how well MURA is fulfilling its goals and how its activities are serving members.

With 266 responses, it was above average for online surveys with a 37 percent response rate. The survey was completely anonymous.

A similar membership survey was conducted in the Fall of 2018. With some identical questions in each survey, comparisons over time and the identification of trends and directions can be discovered.

Of university retirees responding, 39 percent identified themselves as former faculty and 61 percent as former staff. Median retirement year was 2013; the earliest retirement date among respondents was 1986. As one might suspect, 82 percent lived in or within 25 miles of Columbia. Importantly, 14 percent lived more than 100 miles from Columbia.

A complete summary of results will be presented at MURA's spring annual meeting, on our website and in editions of MURA News.

MURA's Board of Directors will continue to analyze the data to identify areas of need and opportunities to better serve current and future retirees.

Questions regarding the survey can be sent to Art Jago at jago@missouri.edu.

RECAP: MURA Virtual Breakfast Programs – *hybrid-style!*

Mike Szydlowski explains place-based education

The 2021-22 MURA Breakfast series started out with an informative presentation by Mike Szydlowski, K-12 Science Coordinator for Columbia Public Schools on Sept. 14.

We briefly experienced a few technical difficulties getting the on-line folks access to the first-ever MURA hybrid presentation, but the message was loud and clear – Columbia and Boone County are extremely fortunate to have Szydlowski leading the far-reaching place-based education program that touches every student in Columbia Public Schools multiple times and now will extend to all students in Boone County.

This program incorporates ecology, economy and culture to connect classrooms and communities to increase engagement, learning and community impact. The list of activities and



Mike Szydlowski shares details of place-based education.

grades impacted in CPS is extensive. Every second-grader learns about bird adaptations and experiences bird banding. Every fourth-grader spends a day on and learning about the Missouri River.

There are science camps for all middle schools with sixth-grade overnight camps. This year 725 students participated in the Grand Tetons/Yellowstone experience.

For the third year, 250 fifth-grade students will

attend the Smoky Mountain field trip.

CPS partners with Missouri Department of Conservation for numerous nature field trips throughout the year. Students get out into nature for play (nature play areas) and community service (well over 2 million invasive bush honeysuckle plants removed).

Agriculture in our society courses teach students where their food comes from and encourages hands on learning. A wonderful addition to the place-based education program is the new Nature School. Based on 207 acres donated by Hank Waters and Vickie Russell, this will be available for the sole use of Boone County students.

The list of activities goes on! The Facebook page for the Nature School is CPS Science and the website is: <https://www.boone-countynatureschool.com>

– Betsy Garrett, MURA past president

Columbia officials work to reduce homelessness but face tough job



Steve Hollis talks to MURA members about homelessness in the city and county.

Steve Hollis, human services manager for Columbia and Boone County's Department of Public Health, painted the picture of homelessness in Columbia and the surrounding county during MURA's October breakfast meeting. His presentation was labeled "Addressing Homelessness in Columbia/Boone County: What is the Best Solution?"

Companionship and a hearty breakfast were shared by 30 MURA members, and another dozen members connected via webinar.

Hollis dispelled the picture of homelessness by describing how housing instability leads to families doubling up, living in hotels or fearing eviction.

Many populations such as veterans, people of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, people of color and youth aging out of the foster system are over-represented in homelessness communities. Contributing factors to homelessness are poverty, especially child poverty, lack of affordable housing and lack of access to health and mental illness care.

Columbia and Boone County take a multi-agency coordinated approach to homelessness to manage resources to improve the situation for the most vulnerable, Hollis said. Prevention measures include assistance for utility and rent, vouchers for housing, emergency transitional housing, harm reduction (warming centers) services and weekly outreach on the streets to connect with homeless people.

Hollis said Medicaid expansion in the state will expand the coordinated efforts of the city and county. Although the numbers of homeless has been stable for the past five years at about 250 individuals, more can be done, Hollis said. He challenged us to give of our time and treasure and to be advocates for our vulnerable neighbors.

– Ina Linville, MURA president-elect and program chair

NextGen goals explored at November breakfast



Dr. Thomas Spencer, NextGen scientific director and member, National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Thomas Spencer, scientific director for the Roy Blunt NextGen Precision Health Center, informed MURA members about the center and its research and collaboration at the Nov. 2 Breakfast meeting.

Spencer is also vice president for research and economic development at NextGen and a distinguished member of the National Academy of Sciences.

The purpose of the center is to accelerate innovation in precision health that improves health outcomes for Missourians. Teams of researchers from across the UM campuses and Washington University are addressing three major health issues – cancer, cardiovas-

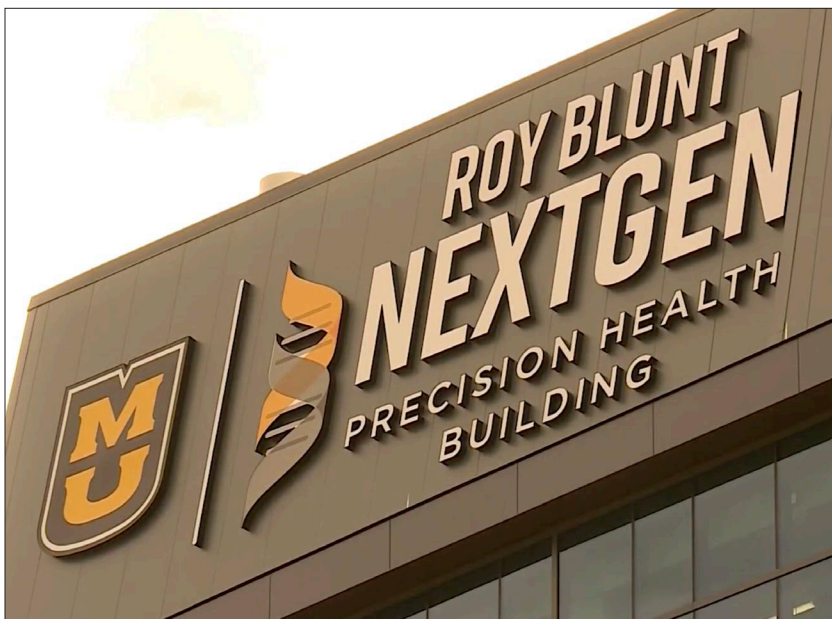
cular – and neuroscience.

Cancer research at this time is focused on attacking breast and prostate cancers.

Spencer also described how partnerships enhance the precision of the work through diagnostic equipment (ThermoFisher), drug development (Novartis) and bioengineering (Siemens Healthineers).

Spencer provided an overview of the physical facility that houses research, classrooms and clinical floors.

NextGen offers free tours to the public every Thursday at 3 p.m. To register, go to https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eM87J62iievYdcG.



Signage on the exterior of the new NextGen building named in honor of Missouri's U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt.

MURA works toward increase in membership

By Dick Otto,
MURA Membership Committee co-chair

For more than 30 years, the MU Retirees Association has represented, promoted and protected the interests of the UM and MU retirees and worked to promote the welfare of the University of Missouri.

We hope you'll share this information with a friend or colleague and encourage them to become a member of MURA!

What does MURA do? We are:

- Advocating for retirees and the University of Missouri;
- Providing education and service opportunities;
- Supporting and informing members; and
- Contributing to the university family.

What does it cost to join MURA? Membership is \$12.50 for an annual membership and \$100 for a life membership. An annual membership makes a very nice gift! (It also serves as a "gateway" to a life membership.)

How do your friends join MURA? Please share that MURA membership enrollment information is online at: <https://mura-missouri.com/membership/join-mura/>

MURA's impact upon UM/MU administration is a function of the number of retirees we represent. MURA needs you as well as your friends and colleagues so we can continue to be a vital voice for retirees.



MU Retirees Association

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DON'T MISS the informative bi-weekly MURA Update emails!

Please provide any
email address updates
to Barb Harris, MURA
Communications chair, at:
harrisb@umsystem.edu.

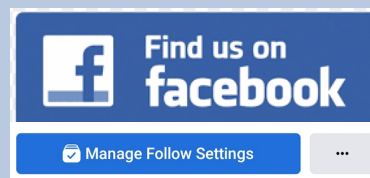


Happy holidays to all and best wishes
for a happy, healthy new year!

UPCOMING EVENTS

2021-22	EVENT	TIME*	LOCATION
Wednesday, Dec. 1	MURA Holiday Luncheon	10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Holiday Inn Executive Center
Tuesday, Dec. 7	Breakfast - Nina Mukerjee Furstenau , author, journalist, editor of FoodStory book series — <i>History on the Plate: Fulbright Research in West Bengal</i>	8:00/8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Country Club of Missouri and Zoom webinar
No events in January			
Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022	Breakfast speaker - to be determined	8:00/8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Country Club of Missouri and Zoom webinar

* Food service begins at 8:00 and program at 8:30 for Breakfast Series.



- Search for MURA; select "MU Retirees Association—MURA"
- Then give us a thumbs up!
- To make sure you see all MURA posts, look for the "Manage Follow Settings" icon or the three dots at the top or bottom of the MURA Facebook page.
- Set your "follow settings" to be Favorites. Then change notifications settings to Standard rather than Highlights for posts and videos. You may also "turn on notifications" for this post.

[MU Retirees Association - MURA | Facebook](#)

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