

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, University of Guelph Retirees! We are in the midst of the winter semester - snow is falling, the wind is blowing, and temperatures are dropping. Now that's how winter is supposed to be!

To bring some warmth into our conversation, I'm excited to announce a new initiative led by Irene Thompson: "**Building Community Among Retirees.**" Your University of Guelph Retiree Association wants to hear your thoughts on how we can serve you better.

This initiative featured a series of conversations - both virtual and in-person - to explore how you, as a University of Guelph retiree, would like to engage with our association, fellow members, and the university. Focus groups were held in March to connect with members, gather ideas, and explore new engagement opportunities. Watch for upcoming notices on what we learned from your insights and experiences. We look forward to strengthening our community!

We're also excited to announce our Spring Forum on **April 17, 2025** that will take place both in person and virtually at the **University Arboretum from 2 to 4 p.m.** This is a fantastic opportunity to learn and connect with fellow retirees. The following speakers are confirmed:

- **Jane Kuepfer, RP, PhD, MDiv.** will speak on *Spirituality and Aging*. She is the Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging with the Schlegel-University of Waterloo



Research Institute for Aging and Conrad Grebel University College.

- **Dr. Laura Middleton, PhD.** will speak on *Strategies for the Prevention of Dementia*. She is an Associate Professor and the Schlegel Research Chair in Dementia and Active Living in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo and the Schlegel-University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging.

Stay tuned for more details!

We are saddened to learn of the recent passing of both Gary Frankie and David Swayne. Gary was president of UGRA for 2011-2012 and David was president for 2012-2013.

I encourage you to participate in our activities as we continue to build a strong and engaged University of Guelph retiree community

With Best Regards

Clarence Swanton
President

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UGRA Spring Forum

Thursday, April 17, 2025 from 2 to 4 pm
Arboretum Centre • Doors Open at 1:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting; Zoom opens at 1:30 pm



Topic: Various Aspects of Aging Well

We look forward to seeing you April 17. As noted in Clarence's message, our speakers are confirmed.

Aging and Spirituality - Jane Kuepfer, RP, PhD, MDiv, is the Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging with the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging and Conrad Grebel University College. She is a spiritual director, an ordained minister, and a registered psychotherapist, and serves as a spiritual care provider in a retirement home. In her role with the RIA, Jane coordinates an annual Spirituality and Aging Seminar, hosts a webinar series, conducts research, and teaches graduate courses in Spirituality and Aging at the University of Waterloo.

Strategies for the Prevention of Dementia- Laura Middleton is an Associate Professor and the Schlegel Research Chair in Dementia and Active Living in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo and the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging. Her research aims to identify strategies to promote health, wellbeing, and function of those living with, or at risk for, dementia. She focuses on the role of physical activity alone and in combination with healthy eating and social engagement, recognizing their broad impact on cognitive, physical, social, and mental wellbeing. Her research takes a participatory approach, integrating the expertise and perspectives of people living with dementia, care partners, health care professionals, community service providers, and other community members as partners to create accessible and effective programs and supports. She is the co-lead of the Canadian Dementia Learning and Resource Network.



Recent Retirees

At this time, Human Resources' new database is unable to give UGRA the department in which new retirees worked.

October 31, 2024

David Cook
Flora MacKay

November 30, 2024

Robert Cutting
Ed McBean
John Fryxell
Charles Endeman
Gino Giansante

December 31, 2024

Monica Tap
Richard Zytner
Franco Vaccarino
Vicki Shearer
Barbara Robbins
Robert Guthrie
John Lumsden

January 31, 2025

Brant Mutter
Mary-Ann Male
Tanis Comrie
Michael Wirth
Keith Mason
Mary Fowler
Danna-Lee Peters
Hugh Clark

Francis Tapon

February 28, 2025

Christopher Young
Darlene Findlay
Rina Pigozzo
Anli Gao



The fundraising for 2024 has ended. We had an extra month to raise funds this year due to the mail strike. It paid off for United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin (UWGWD). The University of Guelph Retirees raised the most funds they have ever raised, \$107,915! This is utterly amazing, and I know UWGWD really appreciate it. I had the pleasure of reaching out to many of you to thank you for your donation. I also heard that one gentleman walked to the office from across town, during a snowstorm to make sure his donation reached United Way! That is dedication to a worthwhile cause!

United Way works to help so many in our community, through All That Kids Can Be/Equity, Diversity, Inclusion/Healthy People, Thriving Communities/From Poverty to Possibility/Rural Communities. All the funds stay local, and your donation can be allotted to one of the above programs if you choose.

A prize was given to one lucky retiree - Roz Stevenson, the 2018-2019 UGRA president! She won a Sweet Distractions: Elora's Candy Boutique gift certificate worth \$25, \$25 Grand Gourmet gift certificate, paired with a T-Shirt and hat from United Way. Congratulations Roz!

To everyone who donated, thank you so much for making Guelph and area a stronger community!

WE CAN BETTER.
#betterispossible

UGRA 2024 MOROCCO ADVENTURE

by Vikki Tremblay

The trip to Morocco was amazing with 27 members. Many friendships were forged or renewed. Our travelers were amazed and they can't wait to explore again. The mood was always upbeat as we were in awe of this amazing country.

Our guide, Mus, met us at the Casablanca airport. He and his team, Musa our driver and Hussan our driver's aide, were wonderful, taking care of our every need and ready to answer any questions. Mus offered us in-depth historical facts of his beloved country. Morocco has 3 languages - French, Arabic and Yiddish – and 2 capitals – Casablanca, the economic capital and Rabat, the administrative capital. They are ruled by their beloved King Hassan VI, a very progressive ruler who is modernizing life in Morocco and who is a staunch supporter of women's rights.

We toured Casablanca's Habous District, the Royal Palace (there is more than one), the Mohammed V Square, the Anfa residential area and the Mosque Hassan II. The mosque was stunning. We were allowed to tour it even though we are not Muslim. We had to remove our shoes and women must have long sleeves, cover their legs but not their heads. There is a call to prayer 5 times a day. The

mosque is so large it can accommodate thousands at one time.

We then traveled to Rabat, the cleanest city I have ever seen! We toured the Royal Palace (Mechouar) and Ouadayas Garden and Kasbah, Mohammed V Mausoleum and Hassan Tower Mosque. We had a yummy tagine lunch and then went through the Atlas Mountains towards Chefchaouen (the Blue City). Along the way, we saw some beautiful sights, olive groves and fruit trees, as well as olive oil and fruit stands. My favourite fruit was tangerines - they were the tastiest tangerines I've ever had. Did you know that one of Morocco's biggest exports is agriculture? We went to an olive oil processing plant to watch the extraction and sample the oil.

Chefchaouen, high up in the Rif Mountains, is a blue city and quite beautiful. The next morning, we walked through the narrow blue streets and medina, enjoying many unique shops and businesses.

We then departed Chefchaouen for Fes, passing by the Holy City of Moulay Driss. Fes is the spiritual capital with the medieval medina and souks, another royal palace, a Jewish quarter called Mellah of Fez and Bou Inania Madrassa. The medina was like a city within a

Continued on page 4

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UGRA

Winter 2025



city with narrow walkways taking you to a school, 5-star hotels, homes and everything one needs to live. It was magical! We then travelled through the middle Atlas Mountains going through the cedar forests. We fed the mountain monkeys and arrived at a small, charming ski resort, Ifrane with a Swiss look and feel.

Our next day took us to Erfoud Zagora. Did you know that the Sahara was once just a seabed but now it's a beautiful desert with buried fossils, many embedded in beautiful marble. Then, it was off to the Sahara Desert. We 4x4'd into the Erg Chigaga Dunes - it reminded me of the Mad Max movies on steroids and it was so much fun. We rode camels to watch the sunset, had a tagine dinner and slept in some pretty cool tents. It was an experience I will always cherish!

Next, we were off to the Draa Valley, then Ouarzazate to tour the Atlas Studios where films like Gladiator, Ben Hur, and Game of Thrones were filmed. We even made our own little film with Juen as

our queen. It was so much fun. Then it was on to Marrakech, a beautiful thriving city. Our hotel looked out on the old city and we watched the sun rise over the mountains making the city come alive.

Marrakech has so many beautiful sights. The Majorelle Botanical Gardens were beautiful and included the Yves Saint Laurent Museum that presents the Andalusian art of the Moorish Dynasty over 1,000 years. We toured the medina, had a delicious lunch and enjoyed the open market. The sights and sounds were very stimulating. Yes, there were snake charmers. If you weren't careful, you could have a snake around your neck! In the evening, some of our group enjoyed carriage rides through the city. They were very lucky as the Marrakech International Film Festival was on and they rode through the festival area. It was very exciting. We also enjoyed Edna and Ritchie ballroom dancing for us. A great end to a great day.

We headed back to Casablanca for our last day to enjoy some free time and a long stroll along the Atlantic Ocean beachside ending with a final group picture around the Casablanca movie sign. Sadly, the movie wasn't filmed here, it was filmed on set in Hollywood.



**2024 UGRA
Scholarship Recipient**

The recipient of the 2024 UGRA Scholarship is Ella Holt. She is the granddaughter of John Holt (retired faculty) and her mother is Lisa Tersigni-Holt (current staff). She is a 4th year Arts and Sciences student, specializing in Neuroscience, and Family and Child Studies.

Ella shared this quote: "I am deeply honored to be the recipient of the University of Guelph Retirees Association Scholarship, and I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your generous support. As I prepare to transition to graduate school, I am excited to pursue my goal of becoming a speech-language pathologist. Supporting others has always been my passion, and I look forward to applying the skills and experiences I've gained at the University of Guelph to my future endeavors. Your generous support has been instrumental in helping me take this next step in my career. Thank you once again for your recognition and encouragement."

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Fall Forum Speaker Report



Sufura Syed: Personalizing Nutrition: A Holistic Approach Report by Chat GPT and Jan MacInnes

Note: As an experiment, Jan MacInnes used a transcript of the presentation to see what Chat GPT could generate for a 400-word report. With some editing by Jan, the result is below. Chat GPT is an AI chatbot developed by OpenAI that uses natural language processing to engage in human-like conversations and generate various written content.

Ms. Syed provided an in-depth look at the role of nutrition in promoting healthy aging. Her extensive background in nutrition and applied sciences underscores the critical need to understand how aging impacts dietary needs and how culturally inclusive approaches can improve nutrition in long-term care settings.

As people age, their nutritional needs evolve, and maintaining a balanced diet becomes crucial for healthy aging. Good nutrition is essential not only for maintaining cell and tissue repair, but also for supporting daily activities. Malnutrition is often caused by factors such as reduced appetite, difficulty swallowing, poor dental health, medication side effects, and limited social support. These factors can lead to insufficient intake of calories, protein, and other nutrients that can lead to various health issues, including reduced muscle mass, lower immunity, cognitive impairment, and worsening chronic conditions like diabetes and arthritis. Malnutrition can also significantly increase the risk of frailty, which is characterized by reduced strength, fatigue, weight loss, and slower walking speed. Though more common with aging, frailty is not inevitable and can be reversed with appropriate dietary interventions.

To combat malnutrition and dehydration, Ms. Syed emphasized the importance of providing older adults with sufficient energy and nutrients through foods that support muscle and bone health. Protein intake is critical for maintaining muscle mass that naturally declines with age and can impair balance and mobility. To ensure adequate intake, she recommended consuming a variety of protein sources, both animal-based and plant-based. Whole grains, rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals, should also be prioritized in the diet. These foods help alleviate constipation and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as stroke and heart disease. Unsaturated fats, found in foods like fatty fish, nuts, and avocados, are recommended over saturated fats that can contribute to heart disease. Calcium and Vitamin D were highlighted as key nutrients for maintaining strong bones and preventing osteoporosis. Since Vitamin D deficiency is prevalent, especially in colder climates, supplementation may be necessary, in addition to obtaining it from dietary sources like oily fish, eggs, and fortified milk.

Good oral health was another focal point of Ms. Syed's presentation. She stressed the impact of oral health on nutrition, noting that poor dental health can lead to difficulties with chewing and swallowing, which in turn affect food intake. Maintaining oral health through regular brushing, flossing, and dental visits is essential for preserving nutrition and overall health.

Ms. Syed also acknowledged the importance of social factors in promoting healthy eating. Meals are a social activity, and eating with others can

encourage better food choices and more balanced eating habits. Cultural food preferences and traditions should be respected in menu planning, especially in long-term care settings, to ensure that elderly individuals not only receive proper nutrition but also enjoy their meals. Ultimately, Ms. Syed emphasized that healthy eating is highly individual. There is no "one size fits all" approach. Understanding personal preferences, local resources, and gradual goal-setting can help individuals make sustainable dietary changes. Ms. Syed's research underscores the importance of combining scientific knowledge with cultural sensitivity and personal well-being to ensure optimal nutrition as we age. By prioritizing nutrition, older adults can maintain their health, vitality, and quality of life.



Dr. Tuuli Kukkonen: Sexual Healing - It's Good for Us! Report by Irene Thompson

Dr. Kukkonen examined the importance of sexual wellness in older adults and presented the results from several research studies. She engaged the audience in discussion.

Dr. Kukkonen noted the agism that exists in society, where many think that sexuality exists only within a small window of time in which people fornicate, a time to have children. The time before this is judged as individuals being too young to care. The time after this is judged as individuals being too old to care. This contributes to the pervasive myth that older adults are asexual.

Dr. Kukkonen outlined research that demonstrated the importance of sexuality to the aging adult. Sex is an enjoyable activity and provides pleasure, there is no need to worry about reproduction, increases the heart rate, keeps you young, and connects you to life and living. Dr. Kukkonen spoke of research on sexual expression, where sex is an expression of love, tenderness and care, altruism and gratitude, attractiveness, feeling alive, and contributing to good health and physical condition. Research subjects who spoke of having optimal sex identified the importance of strong communication, deep intimacy, connection, authenticity, vulnerability, connection, exploration and risk, and being fully present with their partners.

Dr. Kukkonen also spoke of the role of attractiveness as a part of sexual expression. Research showed tension related to attractiveness, where individuals may not feel attractive anymore due to their aging bodies but still wanting to feel attractive. She spoke about the recognition that aging is a natural process that happens to everyone. Bodies change and individuals need to be accepting of that. Those that have a stronger sense of self had a greater likelihood of feeling attractive in their own bodies.

Within the Canadian context, Dr. Kukkonen presented research that said the most common sexual activity among the older adult age group is penetrative sex, masturbation and oral sex. Self-sexual activity, masturbation, was most prevalent in old age groups. The most common complaint was low desire.

Dr. Kukkonen also noted that there has been an increase in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among some older adults. Research has shown that many are not aware of STIs, nor how to protect against them. Research subjects remarked that health care practitioners did not discuss their sexual health with them.

Passings

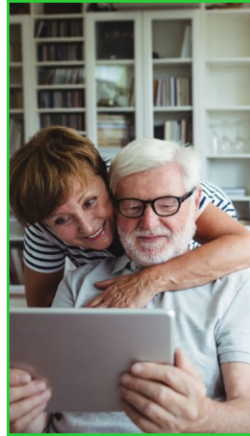
Philip Atkinson	July 17, 2024	Ethel Taggart	November 14, 2024	Richard Jordan	December 22, 2024
Heather Male	September 28, 2024	Sandra Brown	November 19, 2024	Carol Herriot	January 10, 2025
Georgina Voparil	October 2, 2024	John Ward	November 25, 2024	Guntis Obrascovs	January 18, 2025
Paul Voparil	October 2, 2024	Padraig O'Cleirigh	December 5, 2024	Gary Hutchison	January 24, 2025
Marjorie Leib	October 7, 2024	Ron Subden	December 6, 2024	Marilyn Langlois	February 1, 2025
George Barron	October 12, 2024	Maureen Harron	December 12, 2024	Elinor Bolger	February 3, 2025
David Swayne	October 13, 2024	Ernie McFarland	December 16, 2024	Ellen McGarr	February 4, 2025
Vincent Scroccaro	October 15, 2024	James France	December 22, 2024	Giuseppe Ranalli	February 6, 2025
Frederick Andrews	October 21, 2024	Debbie Bailey	December 22, 2024	Frances Niekamp	February 13, 2025



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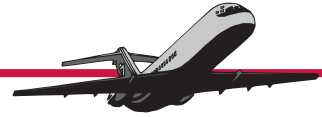
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Keep being you **Love your ears**



by Vikki Tremblay

I want to wish every one of you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! I can't believe how fast 2024 went but am ready to take 2025 on. I hope you enjoyed the article on our November tour of Morocco. It was an amazing trip!

Now.... Where should we go for our next adventure in 2026? I'm going to let you, our members, decide. Will it be stomping grapes in Portugal or checking out beautiful Japan, Turkey, Iceland, Greenland, Thailand, Cambodia, or Vietnam. Perhaps going on an African Safari or sailing the Amazon or exploring Europe by train. The world is open to you. Please send your suggestions to me as soon as possible and once again, the majority will rule. It takes about a year to organize these adventures so I will need to hear from you ASAP. Keep your ideas coming! Send your suggestions to me at victoria.tremblay@transat.com.

College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC)

The McGill University Retiree Association (MURA) and CURAC are pleased to announce that registration for the CURAC annual conference taking place from May 21 to 23 in Montreal is now open. The theme of the conference is the Well-Being of the Person, the Community and the Planet. The conference venue has limited seating so early registration is encouraged. Conference details including information about speakers, registration, and accommodation can be found at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/mura-arum/conference>.

retiree associations can take advantage of including travel and insurance discounts. Details can be found on the CURAC website at: <https://curac.ca/en/member-benefits>.

CURAC is recruiting new board members to serve a two-year term beginning in May 2025. Monthly virtual meetings are about an hour and a half long and there will be some committee work. Anyone interested in learning more should email Sandi Hirst at shirst@ucalgary.ca or Carole-Lynne LeNavenec at cllenave@ucalgary.ca.

CURAC has several affinity partnerships that members of local

University of Guelph Retirees Association Contributing Membership (2025) Form

YES! I want to help promote the welfare of retirees and to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University by contributing to the UGRA's administrative costs.

My contribution is \$.....

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(Note that the email address will be used for UGRA communications only.)

Please make your cheque payable to the University of Guelph Retirees Association. Mail this form with your cheque to: University of Guelph Retirees Association • PO Box 48-4916 • University of Guelph • Guelph Ontario, N1G 2W1

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Instead of mailing in a cheque, you can now make a secure donation to UGRA electronically using PayPal and your credit card on our web page at: <https://ugra.ca/join-us>. You can also use e-transfer to pay using the email address ugraEtransfers@gmail.com. If you are new to e-transfers, we have provided a short primer <https://ugra.ca/join-us>

How to Contact Us

Don't hesitate to contact us with your questions, comments, and concerns. To advocate on your behalf, we truly want, and need, to hear from you. Here are the ways to contact us – don't forget to provide your name and contact information in your message so we can follow up promptly.

By Email:

ugra@uoguelph.ca

By using the UGRA website:

<https://ugra.ca>

By Letter:

University of Guelph
Retirees Association
P.O. Box 48-4916
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

Did you have questions?

If you have questions about your benefits, please contact Sun Life by checking your claim at <https://www.sunnet.sunlife.com/signin/mysunlife/home.wca> or calling 1-800-361-6212. If you have questions about your pension or to change your address or status, please check out this website: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/retire>. If you have other questions or concerns, please contact UGRA at ugra@uoguelph.ca and we will see if we can help.

Did you know?

The main objectives of the University of Guelph Retirees Association are to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between retirees and the University of Guelph and to advocate for our members in matters such as access to university facilities and resources on retiree benefits. The UGRA works hard to keep our members up to date on the University community through emails, newsletters and meetings and, from time to time, also shares information that is of more general interest to retirees.

All UGRA members are also members of CURAC which offers many benefits including discounts for insurance and travel, as well as access to educational events at other participating institutions. For details, check their website <https://curac.ca>.

The UGRA is run by a group of fellow retirees who freely volunteer their time and talents. The funds needed to run the UGRA come mostly from our members' contributions. With your support, we can maintain an electronic presence, produce the newsletters, as well as hold the AGM, Spring and Fall Forums, and other events and activities to keep you connected to the university and fellow retirees. You can send feedback by email or physical mail.

Be a Contributing Member of the UGRA in 2025

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, our informative website (<https://ugra.ca/>), and our various on-campus functions throughout the year. An annual contribution of \$30 from you goes a long way in sustaining the UGRA so we can continue to work on your behalf.

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