



# THE ADVOCATE

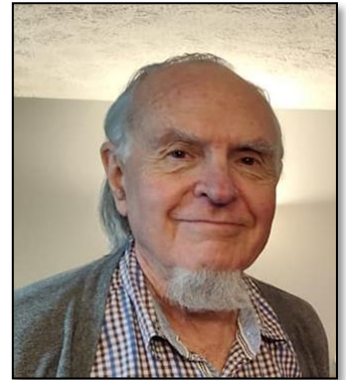
Newsletter of the Towson University Retired Faculty Association

Spring-Summer 2023

## President's Message

Welcome to the spring 2023 issue of *The Advocate*, TURFA's semi-annual newsletter. We have collected several articles of interest to TURFA members that I hope you will enjoy.

TURFA continues to serve Towson faculty retirees with activities and efforts to enrich retirement. Nearly a decade after its founding, TURFA continues to review its founding principles and structure, an initiative launched two years ago by the TURFA Long-Range Restructuring Task Force. The TURFA Executive Committee continues to seek ideas from members about the best ways we can improve our service. Do you have ideas for new kinds of activities? Do you have ideas about how we can better reach out to the community? We also began a program, working with the Human Resources office, to offer guidance and practical suggestions to current Towson faculty as they begin to plan their own retirement. In a different direction, we have met with some retired Towson University staff to consider how we can better incorporate them into TURFA activity—either through a joint organization or through collaborative operations with a proposed separate organization of retired staff. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please let us know.



A specific change in TURFA came when the President-Elect decided not to continue in that role nor become the next President. However, after being recruited, Annette Chappell, CLA Dean *Emerita* and a former President of TURFA, agreed to assume the responsibilities of President-Elect for the remainder of 2022-2023, and was formally appointed at the March meeting of the Executive Committee. With her long experience in TURFA and in University leadership roles, she is ready to become the TURFA President on July 1, 2023. Join me in welcoming her.

We have recently confirmed that the Provost's Brunch for retired faculty will be held on Monday, June 26, from 10 AM to 12:00 PM in the South Pavilion. This annual event is for all retired faculty. Newly retired faculty are especially welcome. The speaker will be Dr. Sidd Kaza, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies. We expect to learn about current TU efforts in research as we move toward R-2 research status. Please come to share brunch, hear the presentation, and welcome new retirees. If you know retired faculty who are not yet members of TURFA, encourage them to contact the Office of the Provost so that they can be invited. By the way, I am serving as Interim Editor for this issue of *The Advocate*, as we continue to seek a new Editor. If you are interested in the position, please let me know.

Larry Shirley, Professor Emeritus (Mathematics)

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## A greeting from the new President-Elect, Annette Chappell

Friends,

I am honored that TURFA President Larry Shirley has asked me to step in and take the vacated President-Elect position. I look forward to working with the Executive Committee to keep TURFA thriving.

Springtime best wishes to all of you –I hope to see you at the Provost’s Retiree Brunch in June.

Sincerely,

Annette Chappell

## PROVOST’S NOTE

*Cynthia Cooper*, Acting Provost for Academic Affairs



This semester has proven to be full of wonderful events, compelling student and faculty work, and exciting opportunities for engagement with all facets of university life. Early in the semester, Towson University was named a Fulbright Top Producing

Institution for U.S. Students—a recognition is given to the U.S. colleges and universities that received the highest number of applicants selected for the 2022–23 Fulbright U.S. Student Program. Eleven TU students and recent graduates applied during the 2022–23 application cycle, with five students selected as semifinalists and [four as winners](#). The Fulbright honor was then followed by the historic news that Briseyda Barrientos Ariza ’22 was named a [Gates Cambridge Scholar](#), the first TU student to receive this prestigious international scholarship.

In recent weeks, the campus community celebrated [four faculty members](#) who received the highest honor presented by the Board of Regents to

exemplary scholars, mentors, and researchers. That Towson University led the system in award with four of the 19 recipients speaks to the legacy and standard of excellence that TU faculty represent through their work. Each of these academic accomplishments underscores achievement as a core component of our institutional identity.

One of the activities I’ve most enjoyed this semester is cheering on first year [women’s basketball](#) coach Laura Harper and the talented student-athletes on the team as they clinched the top seed in the CAA Conference and went on to play Harvard in the WNIT tournament. Every time I watched the team play throughout the season, I recognized my responsibility to share the importance of equity in athletics and how much all TU teams deserve our support and enthusiasm. I value TURFA’s ongoing work to ensure that retired faculty remain an active part of the TU community—as mentors, participants at events, volunteers, and sports fans especially.

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

*Jane L. Wolfson*, TURFA Past President and Outreach Committee Chair

Last summer, TURFA created a new committee, the Outreach Committee that TURFA President, Larry Shirley, asked me to Chair. The committee was created to make sure TURFA remains visible to the broader community and to bring elements of the broader community, both on campus and off campus, to the attention of TURFA members. We are just getting started.

There are two new webpages on the TURFA website that reflect the Committee’s efforts, Volunteer Opportunities and Personal Enrichment. Let me suggest you look at them and give us some feedback!

While we can sometimes feel as if our skill sets have become outdated, there is a large community of people and organizations who need just what we have to offer as individuals. The Volunteer Opportunities page lists organizations, both on campus and off, that have asked for the assistance of TURFA members. Some organizations are

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looking for academic coaching, others for a big heart; some need specific skill sets and others are seeking generalists; some prefer in-person interactions while others are fine with virtual contact. They all understand the wealth of talents that reside in TURFA members.

The Personal Enrichment page offers just that—ways you can explore a range of local cultural events and venues. Check them out—you have little to lose other than perhaps a boring afternoon looking at an old magazine. If you know of other similar sites you frequently use and are comfortable sharing, please send that information to me ([jwofson@towson.edu](mailto:jwofson@towson.edu)).

In the future we hope to add additional initiatives. Suggestions are always welcome.

## TURFA PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

*Jane Wolfson*, Outreach Committee Chair

Tom Maronick, the Chair of the Program and Events Committee, along with the leaders of the individual groups, have kept TURFA members as busy or engaged as they might want to me. The range of activities stretches from the very relaxed Happy Hours on Thirsty Thursdays (usually the third Thursday of the month) to intellectually engaging discussions of remarkable films, non-fiction releases to the issues surrounding the current court case, *Fitch vs State of Maryland*, which could determine the future of prescription benefits for State of Maryland retirees.

Over the past few months, the Film Group, which meets virtually, has discussed films with a range of perspectives. The films have included *Hive* (Kosovo), *Men* (from the UK), *Monsieur Lazhar* (French-Canadian), *Tokyo Story* (Japan), and *Secrets and Lies* (England). The group benefits from the leadership of Peter Lev (contact Peter, [plev@towson.edu](mailto:plev@towson.edu) if you wish to become involved) who solicits suggestions from members of the regular members of the group. You can be as involved as you wish by making suggestions and

becoming a regular participant or by watching the occasional suggested film and logging into the WebEx to join the discussion.

Similarly, the Non-fiction Book Group, which meets virtually on the second Thursday of the month, has taken on a wide range of topics though its book selections and discussions. The topics range from technologies of various sorts, such as DNA analysis to track human migrations, the history of the U.S. intelligence community and digital espionage, and the relationship between of Federal policies and urban blight/social injustice. The group is led by Jo-Ann Pilardi. Contact her, if you wish to become involved ([jpilardi@towson.edu](mailto:jpilardi@towson.edu)). The group selects its future readings by voting on books suggested by members. The recent selections were Barbara Rush's *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* (2018), a report on how climate change is affecting American shorelines; *Who We Are and How We Got Here: Ancient DNA and the New Science of the Human Past* (2018) by David Reich; *Growing Up Human: The Evolution of Childhood* by Brenna Hassett; and *Spies, Lies, and Algorithms* (2022) by Amy B. Zegart.

Tracy Miller invited William Kahn (former attorney for Towson State College) and Peta Richkus (former Secretary of General Services) to discuss the history of legislation that has put prescription benefits for retired State employees on the *endangered* list. While there is still no resolution, as of this writing, those attending left the discussion much more informed about the process.

Several outings brought members together. The trip to the new MPT studios in Owings Mills was engaging. The “Thirsty Thursday” Happy Hours are enjoyable. The group of TURFA members with an ever changing (but also increasing) group of regulars, get together at local establishments to evaluate the offerings. We have yet to find the perfect place (good food and drink accompanied by a low decibels noise level and opportunity to mix and mingle). Should you come across a place that you think is worth testing for its TURFA appeal, let Tom Maronick know about it ([tmaronick@towson.edu](mailto:tmaronick@towson.edu)).

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In late fall, the TURFA Bike Club pedaled from Marley Station to the BWI Airport trail, viewing sculptures by nationally acclaimed artists that celebrated the planets.

On March 31, 2023, the Club members enjoyed a leisurely 13-mile round-trip ride through the woodlands and farmlands of Southern York County, PA, along the Heritage Rail Trail between Brillhart



Station and Hanover Junction. The bucolic stops included the site of first commercial ice creamery, now a winery, and Hanover Junction where President Lincoln stopped during his journey to Gettysburg. Contact Jim Paulsen at [jpaulsen@towson.edu](mailto:jpaulsen@towson.edu) if you would like to join the Bike Club for its next pedaling journey.

## TURFA Online Event Honors Towson University Women's Studies

*Jo-Ann Pilardi*, Professor Emerita, Philosophy and Women's Studies

In March, TURFA took time to celebrate. It honored the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Women's Studies at Towson University by presenting an eight-person webinar during Women's History Month. A *Sea Change: Retired Faculty Share Memories of Struggle, Innovation, and Community to Celebrate Towson University's 50 Years of Women's Studies* was held on March 13, 2023.

One of the nation's oldest, Towson University's Women's Studies program began in 1971 when President Jim Fisher, in consultation with Academic Dean Ken Shaw, created a new committee as a response to a request from faculty, staff, and students to broaden the curriculum to include women. (What a radical idea!) It was during a time when the country's activist women's movement was insisting that women's contributions and experiences become more visible and respected. Professors Elaine Hedges and Sara Coulter, both of English, were named committee co-chairs and invited members onto the Women's Studies Committee. Towson's first women's studies courses, taught by women and men, appeared almost immediately in 1971-72.

Over the years, Women's Studies became first a Program, then a Department; it's now Women's and Gender Studies and offers a major, minor, and a graduate program with three concentrations.

As Women's Studies continued to develop into the '80s, responding to students' interests, Professors Hedges and Coulter won several grants on curriculum development; one was to create mainstreaming workshops on campus involving 75 faculty, thereby integrating the vast new scholarship about women into the existing curriculum. Another grant allowed them to publicize their findings; a third grant helped them spread the word, by funding workshops for five community colleges in the region to replicate Towson's successes. It turned out to be exciting work for all involved.

Meanwhile, Towson University administrators agreed to fund ITROW, the Institute for Teaching and Research on Women. Another outside grant led to NCCTRW, the National Center for Curriculum Transformation Resources on Women, to preserve the curriculum integration work of Towson's program, and to publish resource texts by esteemed scholars. The program's national and international profile grew as this happened, and Towson faculty reported on their work at numerous conferences and other events. Women's Studies' professional organization, the National Women's Studies Association (founded in 1977) was growing as well. In 1989, Towson University hosted NWSA's annual

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conference, the largest held up to that time, with 2000 attendees.

The March webinar's eight panelists spoke on the institutional challenges as well as the energizing, fun times they had in doing work to "bring women into the curriculum." It was a struggle that also produced a strong campus-wide community, with a student organization, a Women's Center, more day care on campus, and a significant increase in Cook Library's collection on women.

*Sea Change* webinar panelists were mostly TURFA members, but not all. Annette Chappell, Professor Emerita of English, former president of TURFA and dean of Liberal Arts, became the University's first Affirmative Action officer. Sara Coulter, Professor Emerita of English, was co-chair of the original Women's Studies Committee and co-directed the program's many grants with Elaine Hedges; she was also Director of NCCTRW. Jo-Ann Pilardi, Professor Emerita of Philosophy and Women's Studies, was an original member of the Women's Studies Committee and a former chair of Women's Studies; she also held Towson's first position (a half tenure-track line) directly assigned to Women's Studies, as a joint appointment in Philosophy and Women's Studies. Jacqueline Wilkotsz, Professor Emerita of English, was an Affiliate to Women's Studies and became a member of the Women's Studies Committee; she taught English Department courses on women, and developed and taught the WMST second writing course, "Women's Words, Women's Lives." Martha Siegel, Professor Emerita of Mathematics and a former chair of that department, is a former president of TURFA; she was active on behalf of women in the Mathematics profession in various ways. Roderick Ryon, Professor Emeritus of History, participated in a curriculum integration workshop formed to rethink and adapt university courses, such as those in American history, to include the new scholarship on women. Guest panelist, Shirley Parry, is Professor Emerita of English and Women's Studies and the former chair of Women's Studies at Anne Arundel Community College. Dr. Parry added her memories of participation in Towson's community colleges grant that Hedges and Coulter directed. Finally, Ashley Todd-Diaz, Cook's Assistant

University Librarian for Special Collections and University Archives, spoke about her work in developing the new digital archive of materials produced by Towson's Women's Studies, work done in conjunction with the Women's and Gender Studies Department Chair, Kate Wilkinson, and with Sara Coulter.

The webinar was organized by TURFA member Jo-Ann Pilardi. CLA's Dean Chulos and Chair Wilkinson provided valuable assistance. The webinar's recording can be found [here](#) and is available on TURFA's website.

## TOWSON UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

*Brian DeFilippis*, Executive Vice President  
Towson University Foundation and Vice President  
University Advancement

Established in 1970, the Towson University Foundation (TUF) is the affiliated foundation for Towson University (TU). TUF is responsible for accepting, investing, and stewarding philanthropic gifts made in support of TU. As of December 31, 2022, TUF manages \$106 million in assets that benefit TU's educational, research, athletic, extracurricular, and cultural programs.

TUF is led by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of alumni, donors, and business leaders. Edna Primrose, a 1984 TU graduate, currently serves as president of TUF. In addition to having fiduciary and operational oversight of TUF, the Board of Directors provides guidance and counsel to TU's president and senior leaders.

The operations of TUF are managed by a talented and diligent four-person staff led by John Mease, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. TUF staff are responsible for managing, tracking, and investing gift funds. They also work seamlessly with University Advancement (UA) to receipt, recognize, and steward gifts. Additionally, they partner with staff across TU to expend donor gifts in support of the university's mission.

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Over the past several years, University Advancement and TUF have partnered to support TURFA. Together, UA and TUF provide support for the annual membership drive, preparing and maintaining the online membership page, managing membership payments, providing access to budget reports, and compiling and sharing member data. TUF also manages the three main funds that receive support from TURFA members—TURFA General Fund, the TURFA Oral History Project, and the TURFA Research & Scholarship.

Faculty members, both current and retired, are a critical part of the university community. TUF is pleased to work with and support the efforts of TURFA to keep retired faculty members engaged with the university.

## Evolving Pressures on Retired Faculty Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Survey Report

*Patricia Alt*, PhD, Professor Emerita, Health Science, Towson University

As the Baby Boomers reached full eligibility for Social Security, there were efforts at many levels to support their retirement. In Maryland, some public academic faculty were encouraged to take transitional terminal leave and retire at the end of a given academic year. This survey (begun in 2022) examined how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted retired faculty and their ongoing health issues, financial concerns, and social connections.

By surveying Towson University's hundreds of retired faculty members, this study aimed to clarify how retired persons have adapted, and whether they would have made different choices had they known the pandemic was coming. The potential benefits are providing insights into how to cope with unanticipated circumstances, on both a personal level and an organizational level, including the recruitment of retirees back into part-time positions, rather than losing their valuable skills and knowledge.

Key factors identified in deciding to retire were age, departmental changes, and transitional terminal leave. Major impacts of the COVID situation included isolation, lack of travel, opportunity to work from home, and health concerns. Sixty-three percent of respondents stated that the university hadn't sought access to their skills and knowledge and found that frustrating. Forty-eight percent saw the key area for the future being seeking the best approaches to stay safe and healthy.

The results were presented at the 2023 American Society of Public Administration conference, and a follow up survey is planned. Please respond if it comes to your inbox!

## TURFA BITS: Activities and Achievements of TURFA Members

Sheryl Cooper ([fingerworks1@gmail.com](mailto:fingerworks1@gmail.com))

I continue to work as a freelance American Sign Language interpreter and consultant in an exciting variety of settings in my re-wirement. I interpret in hospitals where I witness the births of babies, as well as in many other medical situations, courts, schools, workplaces, and political environments. Having a blast!



Miller, Tracy ([tmiller@towson.edu](mailto:tmiller@towson.edu))

For years while working full-time Towson, I heard about Fr. Bob Albright's trip to Israel. I was never able to consider it because I worked in January, when he ran the trip. When I retired, I knew my

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time would be a lot freer and hoped to take the trip then.

Well, the first year, Fr. Bob did not do the trip. The next year, he planned it and I paid for it, but COVID happened. The next year, Israel was not allowing tourists to come by land, meaning that we would not be able to go also to Jordan (part of the plan). The trip did not go.

Finally, this year we went. It was an exhausting two-week trip during which I rode a camel in Petra, saw where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found (and saw scrolls themselves), and saw sites sacred to Christian and Jews and Muslims. I was on the Golan Heights and the West Bank, which made news from Israel have more meaning. The trip was unforgettable.

**Lena Ampadu** ([lampadu@towson.edu](mailto:lampadu@towson.edu))

I was recently interviewed about my childhood memories of Lincoln Beach, an amusement park in New Orleans for African Americans during the 1960s. The interview is now a permanent part of the digitized Louisiana State Museum's Friends of the Cabildo Oral History Project, which has over 700 recorded stories of the social, political, cultural, and economic life of New Orleans.

**Barbara Laster** ([blaster@towson.edu](mailto:blaster@towson.edu))

I had the joy of visiting with the penguins in The Falklands, cruising the Beagle Channel, rounding Cape Hope, and being immersed in the cultures of Argentina and Chile in December-January. On the professional front, I joined colleagues in Phoenix in early December for several presentations at the Literacy Research Association conference. I also got two manuscripts into refereed research journals: **Laster, B.**, et al., (2022). Literacy Clinics during COVID-19: Voices that envision the future; *Literacy Research and Instruction*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19388071.2022.2134064> ; Deeney, T., Dozier, C., **Laster, B.**, et al., (in press). Family perspectives of university reading clinic/literacy lab experiences for their children: What matters. *Journal of Teacher Education*.

**Mark McTague** ([mmctague@towson.edu](mailto:mmctague@towson.edu))

In case any of our fellow retirees are curious, I thought I would include the plot synopsis of my novel. I expect it to go up on Amazon Kindle within the next few weeks. I'm just finalizing the cover art.

Haunted by the brutal murder of the woman he loved, Nate Carter thirsts for vengeance, but after years pursuing her killer alone across Asia, the trail has gone cold. In Seoul he finally gets information that the killer could be in Korea, yet this break comes with a pair of complications. He must deal with Madame Mho, a beauty trapped by the fate of her mixed race, and one other person who could lead him to the killer but won't – Liam Doyle, a Catholic priest whose faith will never let him sanction murder. As each one struggles to sift truth from lies, all three face the same fatal question: will their paths lead to redemption or destruction?

Set in Korea in 1980 on the eve of the Kwangju Rebellion, known today as 'Korea's Tiananmen', *A Cold Day in May* sets the price of revenge against the cost of true courage.

## TURFA Fall Forum: Breaking the News

*Florence Newman*, Emerita Professor, English

Larry Shirley, TURFA President, opened by welcoming audience members to the Fall Forum and, for those new to TURFA, to the Association itself. He explained that TURFA was “like AARP for Towson Faculty” and that it provided a great many activities and services to the community. He identified the Fall Forum as one of TURFA’s major events of the year, then turned the microphone over to Past-President Jane Wolfson to introduce the speaker.

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Dan Rodricks, Dr. Wolfson said, would be familiar to many as a long-time columnist for *The Baltimore Sun* and the winner of numerous awards from regional and national press organizations. His column in the *Sun* is one of the longest-running in the nation, consisting of over 6,400 articles. “A champion of the underdog,” as Wolfson described him, Rodricks authored a series directly appealing to drug dealers, many of them addicts themselves, to stop the violence on Baltimore streets and to set their lives on a more positive course, and he extended an invitation to them to contact him directly regarding drug treatment, jobs, or job-training. His offer resulted in almost 7,000 contacts, some of whom have gone on lead productive lives and have kept in touch with Rodricks over the years. Wolfson added that people might also know Rodricks from his radio show “Midday” on WYPR, his program “Rodricks for Breakfast” on WMAR-TV, or his “Roughly Speaking” podcast, one or the other of which aired from the 1990s through 2019. What the audience might not know, said Wolfson, is that Dan Rodricks also performs theater, including *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, and *Death of a Salesman*. In addition, he has written an original play called *Baltimore, You Have No Idea*, which was performed at the Meyerhoff in December 2022.

Mr. Rodricks had declined an honorarium, said Dr. Wolfson, so TURFA had made a donation in his name to Heart’s Place Services, whose Hope Village program provides displaced families an opportunity to own a low-cost home in Baltimore City.

Dan Rodricks began by thanking TURFA for its donation and introducing Chris and Pam Wilson, who have committed to building four modest homes

for people otherwise unable to afford them. He then launched into a brief history of the news business from a personal perspective, noting that next summer will mark 50 years since he first started newspaper work. His career began when his college, the University of Bridgeport, created a work-study program in journalism. He was “thrown into breaking news,” Roderick observed, chasing emergency vehicles and writing obituaries. It was at Bridgeport that he “got the bug,” working with interesting men and women who were well read and informed, who themselves read the news. That experience inculcated “a lifelong love of learning”: “I learn something new every day.”

Rodricks admitted that it was hard to sum up the history of newspapers in the twentieth century, though he could be confident that this particular audience was “familiar with [a time] when people read newspapers,” and that, like he did, we grew up on a diet of newspapers—and Walter Cronkite. We remember the Watergate era of Woodward and Bernstein which was an exciting period for



reporters and their audiences, when “journalism went through a revolution.” Everyone was reading newspapers and “there was lots of advertising” to support them. In 1986, the *Sun*’s

owner, A.S. Abell, went out of business and its publications were sold to Times Mirror Co. of Los Angeles. At that time the *Morning Sun* had a readership of about 215,000, and the *Evening Sun* (“H.L. Menken’s paper”) a readership of about 310,000. The *Evening Sun* was “one of the world’s newspapers.” Rodricks displayed copies of the *Sun* with the headlines “Man Walks on the Moon” and “The Colts Are Gone” as examples of how important newspapers were in breaking news of the era. The 1980’s and 1990’s, however, saw the merger of competing papers. What’s more, said Rodricks, “Craig’s List came along and classified advertising disappeared almost overnight.” In 1995, the *Evening Sun* folded, with “Good Night, Hon” as its final headline.

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The internet also contributed to the decline of newspapers, Rodricks said, at least at first. Newspaper editors decided “Let’s publish content on the Internet!” “Editors, writers, photographers—no one thought about it until it was too late . . . Now everyone expected free news.” It took ten years before newspapers “realized we needed a pay wall.” Currently, Rodricks said, digital subscriptions to the *Sun* are up. “We’re holding our own, maybe even making some money.” The print edition, though, has been greatly reduced, “which is very distressing to me,” he said. “Even more distressing,” he went on, “is people who don’t read the news but only watch it.” Rodricks alluded to the “Trump bump,” when newspaper readership went up, even though—or perhaps because—President Trump called mainstream media “the enemy of the people.” The *Sun* continues to sell a print paper, said Mr. Rodricks, but the paper itself is printed in Delaware.

Rodricks was twenty-four years old when he was given his first column. His written journalism led to work for television and radio, such as the program “Rodricks for Breakfast.” (According to Rodricks, Dutch Rupersberger joked that the program was moved from Saturday to Sunday because the Orthodox community complained there was “too much ham” on the Sabbath.)

The *Sun* “doesn’t have the comprehensive coverage it used to,” Rodricks admits. But “the most important things in democracy go on at the local and state levels.” “You’ve got to have eyes on local politics and politicians,” which is one thing the *Sun* strives to do. When local coverage is lost, said Rodricks, you get less voter turnout, more allegations of corruption, and less attention to



influential court cases. When the Tribune Company bought the *Baltimore Sun* in 2000, everyone worried, since the hedge fund had a reputation for cutting content, and some newsrooms, like the *Capitol* in Annapolis, closed under corporate leadership. Those papers that survive “wind up with ‘elite’ readership—college-educated people, willing to pay for news.” He observed that it’s interesting to look at old newspapers with that shift in mind, particularly the placement of news stories and display advertising. And there were “lots of sports” in the past.

Rodricks ended his presentation on a positive note: “I don’t want to sound dreary.” He is “very encouraged by young people coming out of journalism schools,” from the University of Maryland and Towson. The quality of journalists themselves, generally speaking, has not declined.

Our speaker then invited questions from the audience, allowing him to elaborate on the current state of the *Baltimore Sun* and contemporary issues facing the news business. Is new ownership moving the *Sun* in a more conservative direction? No, answered Rodricks. When the *Sun* was up for sale, the employees were hoping for local ownership. Businessman Stewart Bainum had a deal that collapsed, then he tried to buy the entire Tribune Publishing Company. When that attempt failed, Bainum decided to create the online newspaper *The Baltimore Banner*. The *Banner* lured away some of the *Sun*’s writers, creating a rivalry between the two outlets, which may have held in check the new owners’ impulse to control content. Rodricks has “no sense that [the new owners are] influencing the opinion page or the editorials.” In fact, said Rodricks, “I’ve never had anyone on the corporate side tell me, ‘You ought to write . . .’” Likewise, there has traditionally been a wall between advertisers and journalists, though that sometimes weakens in TV and radio news broadcasting.

What advice would Rodricks give to a new reporter interested in local issues but with limited resources? Choose a newspaper like the *Sun* whose coverage is mostly local. “Only at large papers can you move up from local to national. . . . The danger is when a local newspaper goes out of business while right-

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wing organizations have started to produce faux newspapers filled with very ideological content. There's a lot of that going on around the country."

Would Rodricks advise people to go into the news business? "I worry about what the future is for them." Where do you get your ideas? From other people who ask him to investigate a case or situation and from "[his] own instinct about what is topical." Do editors go over your column? Rodricks only has one editor now, putting a greater burden on the writer to get facts right and to edit their own work. "Copy editors in Chicago save me a lot of time," though "it's hard to find a job as a copy editor—the craft is gone now."

Answering a series of questions about the importance of local news and the proliferation of misinformation, Rodricks observed that if more people cared about local news, "papers could survive on subscriptions." And while this might seem the perfect time to cast some light on the local, since the local (e.g., school boards) have become more political, "people are more hostile to reportage, calling a fact 'your opinion.'" "I'm not used to that," said Rodricks. "I've gotten plenty of hate mail in the past seven or eight years, mostly claims that we are lying about something." Casting light on local misinformation is virtually impossible when "you're trying to impress facts on people who have an agenda." Journalists like Rodricks do call lies what they are, but we "need to press for the truth," as do BBC interviewers who challenge untruths directly: "That's a complete fabrication, isn't it?"

Asked about internships, Dan Rodricks said that the *Sun* accepts seven or eight interns between their junior and senior years of college from all over the country, paying them as they begin their trade. Following Rodrick's "Dear Drug Dealer" series, he received thousands of letters from inmates who wanted jobs. An intern helped with the letters and responding to requests. On a rather different note, an audience member said that the *Sun*'s customer service was so poor that she finally cancelled her subscription. "Contact Kelly in Customer Service," replied Rodricks, "Customer service should be

primo."

A question about the Baltimore City term limit referendum prompted Rodricks to remark how influential individuals can create news. He explained that the president of Sinclair Broadcasting, a conservative who lives in Hunt Valley, spent \$300,000 on a petition drive to put the referendum on the ballot. "Things like a term limit or a recall movement become a news story as if it were created by the community," when it was actually being driven by a Hunt Valley television executive. Fox 45, which is owned by Sinclair, also may generate controversy—over city schools or "squeegee kids"—in order to serve a political agenda.

The last "question" addressed to Rodricks was a statement of appreciation: "On behalf of Baltimore, thank you for your efforts." The Q & A period having ended, Rodricks queried, "Now what? Cookies and tea?"—which is exactly what followed.

## Health Benefits for Surviving Spouses

*Jane L. Wolfson*, Past President TURFA

In the spring of 2021, I wrote an article for *The Advocate* in which I relayed the difficulty that could be encountered (in fact it had been encountered) when a surviving spouse of a State retiree covered by the retirees' state health insurance attempted to get the *promised* retiree health benefits transferred into the name of the surviving spouse. It wasn't a pretty story. There was considerable paperwork, need for notaries, duplicate copies, insufficient information, lost time, and fear that illness could occur before coverage had been successfully transferred. There was only a limited open window to get everything done and the effort required took almost that entire time to complete.

After multiple attempts to get this problem in front someone who could actually do something, I can report partial success! Mr. George Samuel recently assumed the position of Director of Human

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Resources at the University System of Maryland. We have had several delightful conversations and emails. I can say with confidence that Mr. Samuel absolutely understands the problem that I presented to him and was very sympathetic. His discussions, on our behalf, with the Director of the Employee Benefits Division were productive. While there no major changes to the current cumbersome and time-consuming system that can be made (it is legally sound and is governed by the ERISA laws governing retirement account ownership), the Director of EBD agreed to improve the required forms and work to improve communication of the necessary steps for successful transfer of benefits.

I have been assured that the surviving spouse OR their representative can call the EBD call center, explain the situation and they will be walked through the necessary steps. The number to call is 1-800-307-8283.

While I sincerely hope that no one reading this note will find themselves in need of this phone number, it might be worth holding onto it.

## **FOCUS** On Martha Siegel

*Florence Newman*, Professor Emerita, English

If you Google the name “Martha Siegel,” one of the first results that will appear is a Wikipedia entry. Dr. Siegel attributes her biography there to members of the Association for Women in Mathematics who felt that female mathematicians were underrepresented in the online reference work—perhaps because women were for many years underrepresented in mathematics as an academic field. Dr. Siegel earned her place in that



field by viewing its challenges as solvable problems rather than insurmountable difficulties, an attitude of engagement rather than retreat reflected throughout her life.

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, Siegel bonded with her father over mathematical puzzles and baseball statistics. “Numbers never scared me,” she says. She skipped a grade in school and was thus younger than most of her classmates, but she found a nurturing environment in her honors geometry class in high school. “We had a fabulous male teacher who gave us hard problems” and required the solutions to be submitted at the end of the semester. “The girls would check in with each other” on the various problems: “It became more of a game for us [than for the boys].” She attended Russell Sage College, a small women’s school in Troy, New York, in part because her mother thought it would provide a sheltered environment, with its strict dress codes and curfews.



But Russell Sage did not offer a major in mathematics, so Siegel was obliged to take her mathematics courses at the nearby all-male Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (“So much for being sheltered,” remarks Siegel wryly). When Siegel walked the five blocks to RPI, she would sometimes overhear people saying, “There she is.” But she soon became friends with the men in her classes—became just another of the “math nerds,” as she puts it—and they would work on homework together at bars in the evening.

Siegel’s plan had always been to get a degree leading to gainful employment, so she earned a teacher’s certificate as an undergraduate. But the lure of doctoral mathematics proved too enticing to resist, and she entered the PhD program at the University of Rochester. Once again she met a mixed reception as a woman in a predominately man’s world. Dr. Siegel tells the story of one of the professors she met in the hall her first week who asked, “Can I help you?” Learning that she was a new grad student, he volunteered that “the last girl

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we had didn't last until January." On the other hand, Len Gillman, the department chair at the time, upon learning that Siegel had teaching certification, put her in the classroom right away, "teaching the TAs how to teach." What's more, he provided her with office space.

It suggests something about the mixed messages women in academia received at the time that one of Dr. Siegel's relatives advised her, "No one will marry you with a mathematics PhD," then, when she did marry during her doctoral program, one of the female faculty members was unhappy because she thought it reinforced the notion that women were not serious enough about their studies. Not only did Siegel marry, but she had two young children when she began her teaching career at Goucher College, a position she accepted in part because the Baltimore area offered more professional opportunities for her husband, Chuck. (Chuck went on to become Vice President of USF&G and Citibank; her son, Norman, is now the principal attorney at a law firm in Kansas City; and her daughter, Rachel, following in her mother's footsteps, became a math major and holds a Master's in Math Education.) Dr. Siegel's dissertation, *Birth and Death Processes*, reflected her focus on statistics and probability: "I wanted to do something useful, something I could see as useful." She became convinced, though, that there was an error in the dissertation and, characteristically, refused to be satisfied until she found and fixed it, taking off a month to return to Rochester, where her former chair supplied funding, an apartment, and a babysitter to allow her to complete her work. Says Siegel, "I was treated really well at the University of Rochester."

When Dr. Siegel came to Towson State as a visiting professor in 1971, she was still among a relatively few faculty members with a PhD. She arrived at a time of change both for the institution and for the Mathematics Department. The Women's Studies Program started in 1971, acknowledging and consolidating the importance of women's contributions and perspectives throughout the disciplines. Meanwhile, the Mathematics Department was hiring more faculty with backgrounds in Computer Science, which

eventually became its own department. Dr. Siegel helped found the Applied Mathematics Lab, in which student teams did consulting work for businesses.

According to Siegel, the Lab (supported by NSF) gave undergraduates a chance to pursue research in applied mathematics. It provided an outlet for their interests and oriented their faculty supervisors more toward the applied, as opposed to theoretical, side of mathematics. Among the Lab's earliest projects was analyzing demographic data to figure out whether Towson State needed more dorm space (it did). The Lab also worked with the State of Maryland developing an algorithm to help the state determine if taxes from retail companies were being correctly collected. Other projects addressed staffing for the Baltimore City Fire Department and scheduling and quality control for plated media used in disease diagnosis. Tackling another sort of problem, Dr. Siegel helped create the CoSMiC Scholars Program, a joint endeavor with the Computer and Information Science and the Biological Sciences Departments, intended to attract and keep students in the major who needed a bit of financial assistance and career guidance. The program not only provided scholarships to such students but gave them practical support by showing them how to apply for jobs, write a resume, and interview. Dr. Siegel reports that most CoSMiC Scholars remained in the program and many went on to graduate school: "I'm still in touch with some of them."

Dr. Siegel is probably best known on campus because of her service. She chaired the Mathematics Department from 2000-2003 and served on the Faculty Senate for over 30 years. She represented TU on the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) of the University System of Maryland, chairing the Council twice.

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She received the President's Award for Outstanding Service to the University in 1990 and numerous awards from the TU College of Mathematics and Sciences/ College of Natural and

Mathematical Sciences, including its Outstanding Faculty Award, Award for Distinguished Service as Chairperson, and its University and Professional Service Award.

Outside of the University, Siegel is known for her contributions to collegiate curriculum development and for her co-authorship of the textbook *Finite Mathematics and Its Application 12th Edition* (2017) and her part in authoring the precalculus text *Functioning in the Real World*. She's a founding member of the Maryland Mathematics and Science Coalition and a member of the American Mathematical Society, the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, the Association of Women in Mathematics, and Pi Mu Epsilon, a national mathematics honor society. But it is primarily her work for the Mathematical Association of America that has made hers a recognizable name at national levels. Her original involvement with the MAA consisted of committee work on "math across the curriculum.... I met a lot of people and learned a lot" in that capacity. As with her other endeavors, though, one practical challenge led to another. Her skill in reviewing and editing an undergraduate paper for publication seems to have been a factor in her appointment as editor of the MAA journal, *Mathematics Magazine*. "It was the scariest thing I ever did," she says in retrospect. Once again, challenge turned into an opportunity. "I met people everywhere" and "read so much mathematics" in areas outside of her own specialization. Before she knew it, she was asked to become Secretary of the MAA, filling out the remaining four years of the previous Secretary, who had become President, and then being elected to two five-year terms of her own term. Siegel says, "TU gave me release time both as Editor and Secretary." The arrangement made those

professional roles possible, but it also proved "symbiotic, in that [she] was able to bring speakers" to campus and to attract grants for faculty through her University.

In 2017, Dr. Siegel received the MAA's Award for Distinguished Service to the organization, based in part (as the presenter explained) on "her remarkable leadership in guiding the national conversation on undergraduate curriculum." Dr. Siegel's legacies to TU and the field of mathematics are manifold, but one activity in which she takes particular satisfaction is her administrative role in creating "a mechanism to automatically translate mathematics into Braille." "I recruited several very bright and talented people to make this a reality," she explains, with support from the American Institute for Mathematics, the National Science Foundation, and the National Federation of the Blind. Having set the system in motion, Dr. Siegel says that she has "now matured into a grateful spectator."

If TURFA had not already existed when Dr. Siegel retired in 2015 after 44 years of teaching, she would have helped create it: "I had heard stories from faculty about their negative experiences" during their transition from active to retired, experiences that left them feeling unsupported, disconnected, and angry at the University. Fortunately, TURFA was already in place, strengthening the bonds of retirees to the University and to each other. Before long, Dr. Siegel was serving a year as TURFA President, and she continues to serve as TURFA representative to the Academic Senate. She participates in the TURFA Non-fiction Book Group, the TURFA Film Club, as well as a neighborhood book club. On Wednesdays, she attends an ongoing discussion at her synagogue, led by a former nun with a PhD and by a rabbi, who comment on biblical topics and texts. Dr. Siegel tells me she enjoys watching how they teach and appreciates their non-didactic, open-ended approach to material.

That same unabashed curiosity and eagerness to learn new things are reflected in her dedication to Osher classes: "I miss them when they are not in session." Currently, she is studying "Minimalism in Art" and exploring "Unquestioned Answers and

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Unanswered Questions” and more. Dr. Siegel claims that she is “just a dilettante at heart,” which is perhaps another way of saying that she is a lifelong learner: “You don’t have to know everything about a subject” to remain intellectually engaged. With her willing mind and have-at-it attitude, Dr. Siegel may yet be adding pages to her Wikipedia profile.

## Life after TU – a Reflection on Retirement

On March 3, 2023 several retired faculty reflected on what life could be after retirement. Participants completed a “Dream Sheet” so they could get a sense of how their life at TU could be useful in many ways in their retirement. Larry Shirley, President of TURFA, explained the many avenues that TURFA members can enjoy with other TU retired faculty. We reviewed the rich academic and personal skills of professional identity that transfer to new opportunities. They included

- Analytical thinking
- Introvert vs Extrovert personalities
- Succession Planning
- Curriculum
- Planning
- Coaching
- Research
- Organizing
- Leadership
- Team Work
- Start up Projects
- Teaching

Fran Bond, Elementary Education, was able to use these skills when she worked for the US Department of Education Stevenson University, and did charitable volunteer work. She talked about the spiritual need to find groups and events that excite you, foster lifelong learning, and self-nurture.

Martha Siegel, Mathematics, worked with many professional associations and continues to be the voice of the retired faculty via the University Senate. She also mentors current students at TU,

works with the prisons to guide them to college degrees, and pursues research using TU resources. She emphasized using lifelong learning, even by continuing to teach at the Osher Institute, Baltimore County’s OPAL, and Renaissance Institute.

Joan McMahon, Honors College and HRD, was a volunteer Park Ranger at a Florida State Park working on Educational Outreach for the local school system. She also had her own business helping other campuses put their courses online according to the Quality Matters national standards.

Doug Ross, Business, continued his work in research but also aggressively pursues his painting passion. He emphasized doing your passions, including spending more time with family.

Faculty were encouraged to speak to HR representatives at least three- five years prior to retirement to learn more about the financial, social, spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual aspects of retirement. TURFA provides mentoring opportunities for those curious about how to navigate these issues. Faculty were also encouraged to attend the CCBC Pre-retirement seminars offered by our previous (now retired) HR guru, Dave Curtis. There you can learn about how to buy back time, how your health insurance works after retirement if you move out of state, and how to deal with your spouse who you now see more often.

Resources to pursue: Amy Radcliffe: Lead Benefits Specialist: Phone: 410-704-6325:

[aradcliffe@towson.edu](mailto:aradcliffe@towson.edu) reference Zoom video recording #1215721524

CCBC Pre-retirement Seminars: The Maryland State Retirement Program:

<https://www.ccbcmd.edu/Programs-and-Courses/Schools-and-Academic-Departments/School-of-Continuing-Education/MD-Pre-Retirement-Planning.aspx>

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## In Memoriam

**John (Jay) Milton Morgan III**, PhD, (Department of Geography and Environmental Planning), January 14, 2023. Jay retired from TU in December 2021 and was a member of TURFA. He came to TU in 1984 as an assistant professor. Jay was born and grew up in Baltimore and attended the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. He had earned his BA and MA from TU and the PhD from the University of Maryland College Park. Prior to coming to TU, Jay served as an officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Europe, was the Head of Information Systems at the Baltimore County Office of Planning and was a Planner III at the Maryland Department of Planning.



*Jay Morgan and his wife, Bobby Fleury, in Alaska 2008*

Jay had many accomplishments at TU. He is best remembered for creating CGIS, the Center for Geographic Information Systems, in 1995. Under his leadership, CGIS brought in over \$13 million in contracts to TU. He is remembered by the many TU Geography majors who learned GIS under his guidance and many of whom hold professional geography positions throughout the region and nation. Jay was recognized as a prominent leader in GIS in Maryland. He organized and directed many annual TU GIS conferences, bringing significant prestige and national attention to TU. After stepping down as the Director of CGIS in 2005, Jay became the Director of the Geospatial Research and Education Laboratory housed in the Department of Geography and Environmental Planning.

**Mark Whitman** (History), January 17, 2023. He joined fulltime Towson faculty in 1967. A native of Baltimore (graduate of Forest Park High School) he received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and graduate degrees from Harvard University. In his early years at Towson University he completed a distinguished Harvard dissertation in late nineteenth century American intellectual



history. In the 1970s, he introduced courses in U.S. Constitutional history. They formed a mainstay of the college's new pre-law program as well as an integral part of the history and social science majors. He edited with commentary a popular documentary book on Brown v. the Board of Educational Supreme Court case. Among the Liberal Arts faculty, he was known as a "walking encyclopedia" on subjects of great fascination to him—the Supreme Court, the U.S. Senate, and mid-20th Century baseball. He served a brief tenure as chair of History, was parliamentarian of the University Senate, and received the President's Award for Distinguished service in 2006.

His colleague, Ronn Pineo, remembers Dr. Mark Whitman with great friendship. "I was striving to secure tenure and promotion. There were many challenges, and at several points I feared that I would not be able to stay at Towson. Dr. Whitman had just stepped in as Chair of the History Department but worked effectively to provide essential help to me throughout the entire process. After it was over and my Towson future had been secured, Mark quipped, 'On my tombstone they will write: "Mark Whitman: The man who saved Ronn Pineo's career."' That is true. He did. I will forever be grateful to Mark."

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