UARA ANNOUNCES FOUR SCHOLARSHIPS

The UARA Scholarship Committee has selected four deserving UA students to receive this year’s scholarships. The Irving Yall Book Scholarship recipients are Lauren Holmes and Chidinma Ogbonnaya. The Van Ort UARA Undergraduate Scholarship recipient is Lourdes Ixtzai Castillo Silva. The T.R. Rehm Graduate Scholarship recipient is Emily Van Etten.

Introducing our recipients:

Lauren Holmes writes that she is studying biochemistry and expects to graduate in May 2023. After her graduation she aspires to attend graduate school and become a physician assistant. Outside of her studies, her interests are hiking, volunteering, and camping.

Chidinma Ogbonnaya is a sophomore majoring in pre-pharmaceutical sciences and minoring in Spanish. Her educational goal is to gain a doctorate in pharmacy. Her career goal is to become a pharmacist and use her platform to help those less fortunate. Chidinma writes that being a pharmacist also offers her an opportunity to break down barriers, not only in her life but also for others. She writes that attending the University represents freedom to her.

Lourdes Ixtzai Castillo Silva is pursuing a degree in Psychological Science. Her anticipated graduation date is May, 2021. Lourdes writes that after graduation she aspires to continue researching methods to combat prejudice. When she is not studying, she enjoys playing ukulele, painting, and volunteering.

Emily is a third-year student in the Clinical Psychology PhD program. Her career goal is to become a university professor and continue conducting research examining the effects of health on brain structure and function in healthy aging. Outside of academics, she writes that her interests include cooking and baking for her friends and family.
Heartfelt Condolences to the Families of Kenney Hegland, George Evanoff, and Christa Sitz

UARA Board Member Kenney Hegland passed away on May 30. Kenney was a much-loved contributor to UARA. He passionately pursued alternatives to pay-day loans that so often caused loan recipients to experience a lifetime of debts they could not repay. Recently Kenney, a retired UA law professor, contacted UA representatives on behalf of UARA to float the idea of the University’s setting up a new, substantive employee loan repayment program as an alternative to the external payday loan system. There was much interest and a commitment to pursue the concept. Kenney, your humor, creativity, commitment and many contributions will be sorely missed!

Former UARA Board President and long-time volunteer George Evanoff passed away in January. George contributed to UARA in many ways. He served three terms as Board President. He contributed to the preparation of the UARA Board operations manual, the UARA history document, and many other reports that conveyed useful information to our members. George was also an active member of the Arizona Governor’s Council on Aging and the Pima Council on Aging. Prior to his retirement he served on the UA Provost’s personnel management team where he developed the University’s original personnel and operations manuals.

Christa Sitz passed away on March 22. Prior to her retirement at the University of Arizona she worked in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry (formerly Biochemistry), College of Medicine. Before her illness Christa was a regular participant in UARA luncheons and activities.
MELINDA BURKE RETIRES

UARA extends our deepest appreciation to Melinda Burke for the commitment and support she extended to our organization over the past 2 years. Melinda exercised strong leadership on behalf of the UA President’s office by generating an affiliation agreement early in 2018 between UARA and the Alumni Association (UAAA), giving UARA access to multiple resources through UAAA not previously available.

Melinda, who retired on June 30, has been a creative force in our partnership. With her team, she organized a wonderful recruitment reception with President Robbins to which all UARA members and some 600 UA retirees were invited. She assigned staff members to assist us with UARA luncheon reservations, membership records, and fiscal accounts. She sponsored a new UARA recruitment brochure, and helped us move seamlessly into the age of electronic communications.

Thank you, Melinda, for everything you accomplished not just on behalf of our partnership with UAAA, but for the University as a whole. We wish you a productive and joyful retirement,

UA WONDER AT HOME EVENTS

It is not too late to register to participate in the UA’s Wonder At Home series. Click this link or type it into your browser to watch “Exploring Our Connections: The Human-Animal Bond during COVID-19.

https://giving.arizona.edu/wonder-home#watchseries2

The session involves a panel discussion with UA faculty members currently collaborating on the first interdisciplinary human-animal bond research study at our new College of Veterinary Medicine. The discussion explores research examining how the human-animal bond impacts social connections, consumer behaviors, and feelings of loneliness induced by COVID-19. For more information contact Marianne Hadden at mariannehadden@arizona.edu or visit vetmed.arizona.edu
Status of UARA Luncheons and Activities

New luncheons and activity planning are currently frozen due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Nonetheless, UARA leader Jim Barrett continues to pursue potential UARA member adventures. He is organizing a group tour of the Tucson Medical Center art exhibit to take place once the community gets back to normal. More information will follow once we know your safety is assured.

Unfortunately, our Mt. Hopkins trip was impacted by the virus and was forcibly cancelled. Jim is still working to negotiate a refund of the pre-paid Mt. Hopkins trip. Fingers crossed on this one!

We do not anticipate organizing another member luncheon until Spring 2021.

UARA MEMBERSHIP DUES

During its May 20 meeting, the UARA Leadership Team addressed the impact of COVID-19 on membership activities. It was agreed that membership dues will be forgiven through June 30, 2021, and that by April or May next year we will once again ask members to resume paying dues. Members who feel they can afford to donate and are willing to do so may send a tax-deductible donation check to be made out to University of Arizona Foundation-UARA. Mail check to: Rhonda Rugg, UA Alumni Association, 1111 N. Cherry Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85721.

Thank You!

Organizations like UARA could not survive without the work of committed volunteers. To that end, we are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the organization in many ways this past year. Special thanks to employees of the Alumni Association for your assistance this year. Names are listed alphabetically by first name.

Alison Hughes (Board; Scholarships)       Robert Casler (Website)
Bob Perrill (Board)                    Susan Anderson (Board)
David Earnest (President)            Trudy Jacobson (Newsletter)
Denise Shorbe (UAAA Admin.)       Rebecca Detterman (UAAA, Scholarships)
Gail Hanson (Board, Treasurer, Membership)   Rhonda Rugg (UAAA Admin.)
Jane Dugas (Newsletter, Website, Luncheon)    Ricky Hernandez (UAAA Admin.)
Jim Barrett (Board, Activities)       Betty Atwater (Chair, Scholarships)
Kenney Hegland (Board)                 Stardust Johnson (Scholarships)
Melinda Burke (UAAA Admin.)            Thomas Rehm (Scholarships)
Dear UARA Members,

Your Board of Directors sends greetings and sincere good wishes for your safety and comfort. We hope you are finding ways to combat feelings of isolation and loneliness which accompany the need to stay at home without in-person contact with family, friends and community. The consequences of social isolation have been studied for years and such can have significant adverse effects on our physical and mental health. In view of the persisting Covid-19 pandemic, your Board made the hard decision some months ago to cancel our scheduled luncheons and activity trips for the Spring. More recently, we agreed it is unlikely that we will be able to safely host similar events this fall. Our inability to provide programs for you led to our decision not to assess dues for the year ahead. This letter is to bring you up to date on our current activities and alert you about a retiree interest survey you will receive shortly.

Despite Covid-19 issues, the Board has continued to meet monthly by Zoom videoconference and is making progress in setting up new programs and more services for you in the near future. We have enjoyed strong support from the University of Arizona Alumni Association (UAAA) which is now the parent organization through which we relate to the University. Essentially all the programs of the Alumni Association are also now available to UARA members. Melinda Burke, retiring President of the UAAA, has been particularly supportive of UARA and has helped us progress meetings with President Robbins’ office that are defining more ways that we can interact with and support the University and more ways that the University can support its retirees. We plan to roll-out these new programs in the fall and hope you will be pleased.

As we increase the number of activities available to our members, we need the involvement of more member volunteers to help make the programs available. We are working with a Masters level graduate student in the Eller College of Business Administration to develop a questionnaire to send all UARA members. The results should help us better understand what programs and services best fit with your expressed needs/wants and for which you also might be willing to volunteer a bit of your retirement time. The questionnaire will be sent to you by e-mail in late July and can be answered also by e-mail. Please keep an eye out for this since we clearly want and need your input and help in designing programs that define UARA’s future direction, activities and interactions with the university.

We are eager to generate more interaction with you. Please view this new monthly Member Letter as an invitation to send us your comments and suggestions. The next few months will continue to be difficult owing to the pandemic, but we look forward to a bright future together in retirement. Very best wishes,

David L Earnest, MD for the UARA Board of Directors