

Windsor University Retirees' Association (WURA)

President's Message Annual General Meeting December 3, 2025

This, my third year as President, has been another busy year for our Association.

However, before I highlight any activities, I would ask that we take a moment to remember our friends and colleagues who have passed away during this last year. There have been far too many of them. All are recognized on the *In Memoriam* page on the University's website: <https://www.uwindsor.ca/humanresources/1124/memoriam>. Many of our friends and colleagues were loyal and active members of our Association and we will miss their ideas and their energy in the years ahead. I would ask you to stand, if able, for a moment of silence.

2025 was an interesting and for some of us, an exciting time in the history of WURA. We opened Sunset House as our new campus location and the University successfully applied to become a member of the Age Friendly University Global Network. We are the ninth Canadian University to be admitted. "The Age-Friendly University Global Network is an association of higher education institutions committed to promoting positive and healthy aging and enhancing the lives of older members of the global community through innovative educational programs, research agendas, curriculum development, online education, health and wellness activities, arts and culture programs and civic engagement opportunities." <https://www.afugn.org/> There are 10 principles that the University has undertaken to pursue, with Number 9 being very pertinent to WURA: To engage actively with the university's own retired community. Please take a few moments and check out the AFU website.

The University has formed the Age Friendly University Campus Committee. It met in May to develop the application and on October 31, to begin to develop action plans to address the principles, especially the four that we ranked as the ones we want to make the most progress on in the immediate future, numbers 9, 8, 6, and 10. The Co-chairs of the Committee are Dr. Shanthi Johnson, Vice-President – Research & Innovation and Dr. Clinton Beckford, Vice-President – People, Equity, and Inclusion. Veronika Mogyorody and I serve as representatives for WURA. If you would like to know more, please reach out to Veronika or me.

Thanks to many of our local members we have been slowly turning Sunset House into a warm welcoming home for WURA members to meet, and to interact with each other and the university community. We held a wonderful Open House on April 30, 2025. It was an opportunity to thank all of those who contributed to making this our new home. We are still in the process of determining how the building will operate for those who want to use our facility. We plan on having regular drop-in hours, social events for retirees and friends, lectures, and of course meetings of WURA Executive and WURA Committees. We hope this

will become a hub for retirees to interact with each other, socially and in research activities, but we also hope this will become a place for our membership to interact with current university colleagues, faculty, staff and students. I refer you to the June issue of our *e-Bulletin* for photos and a write up of this event.

During our move we worked with Leddy Archives to deposit more of our records, both paper and electronic. We see this as an important step in preserving WURA's history and achievements. At present, the Archives database shows two small accessions of material from WURA:

- Donated by WURA in 2016 (Acc. No. 2016-018): a “Tribute to Retirees” document edited by Datta Pillay for the 25th anniversary reception in 2015; and
- Donated by John Meyer in 2008 (Acc. No. 2008-010): one file of miscellaneous WURA material (annual reports, newsletter, meeting minutes) ca. 1991-2008.

Once they have been processed our records will be open to all.

Another event of note for many of us this spring, was the preparation needed to meet the new storage quotas for our Outlook email and our OneDrive documents. We held 4 onsite sessions with the participation of Jennifer MacIsaac and her team of co-op students from IT Services, and our own Richard Dumala. Their calm expertise, clear communication, and thoughtful organization transformed what could have remained a frustrating experience into one that was genuinely helpful and confidence-building. Their approachable manner and hands-on support were exactly what participants needed. The sessions—particularly those held on April 15, May 15, and May 22—were well attended, with a total of 27 retired faculty members participating. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and many retirees expressed deep appreciation for the guidance they received. WURA owes a sincere thank you, to all.

I attended, via Zoom, the AGM of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC/ARUCC) hosted by the McGill University Retiree Association held on May 21, 2025. Until this meeting, the Head Office has been at the home of the presiding President. Now CURAC has a permanent home at the University of British Columbia Emeritus College. Also of note is the recent renewal of the CURAC Newsletter and a new addition to the affinity partnerships. I encourage you to visit the CURAC website <https://curac.ca/en/home> to read more about the Association and the benefits it provides to WURA members.

Throughout the year, we have continued to make contributions to the **WURA Scholarship Fund**. We believe it is important to keep growing the capital in this Fund so that we can provide enhanced aid to more students in these economically challenging times. You will read in the **Scholarship** report that we have 8 awards to make in 2026. I would again like to acknowledge and thank Barbara and Donovan Thomas for their recent generous \$30,000 donation to our Scholarship Fund. Their gift will enable us to award a \$1,000 scholarship to a deserving student. This will be in addition to our six, \$2,000 scholarships and the \$1,600 Pryke Family Scholarship. Our scholarships are an important undertaking and I want to thank those

of you who have made donations this year. I would also like to thank the Dumala family for suggesting donations be made to WURA in the memory of Richard Dumala, our technical guru and very active Executive member. The letters of thanks that we receive from the recipients of our awards make it very clear how much they appreciate the assistance provided by our scholarships. We urge all members to consider the **WURA Scholarship Fund** as a destination for your funds when donating to the University.

Some more good news is that the Research Office is awarding us with \$3,000 for each of the next three years to support WURA age friendly activities. Unfortunately, in making budget cuts, the Research Office has eliminated the WURA Research Travel Grant program. It was established by a directive from the Board of Governors in May, 2008. There have been 8-10, \$1,000 awards per year since 2008 except for the Covid years. We hope this program will be reinstated when finances permit.

On September 9, 2025, a bus full of WURA members and friends left Windsor to attend a play at Stratford. This was the second such trip planned by Richard Dumala who loved live theater and wanted others to experience the joy of a good play. Richard died unexpectedly in July, but we elected to continue with the trip in his memory.

Thanks to Executive member, Lana Lee, on October 14, 2025, family and friends gathered to dedicate the bench in front of Sunset House to Richard Dumala. On breaks from working in Sunset House, Richard loved to have a coffee and watch the foot traffic flowing by our House, so this is a very appropriate way to remember him.

I will close by thanking the members of the Executive and all Committee Chairs and Committee Members for working so hard on behalf of the WURA Membership. The Committee Reports, attached below, detail the activities of our respective Committees -- I know you will recognize the efforts of these Committees on behalf of the Membership. I want to thank outgoing Executive members, Maureen Irish, Frank Lemire, and Jake Soderland. Jake has been a very active Executive and Research Chair for many years and we will miss his sage input.

It has been my privilege to serve with such a wonderful group of colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,
Gwendolyn Ebbett