

USRA Newsletter

November 2020

No. 111



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From Our President



Greetings USRA members,

My name is Brad Steeves and I am the new President of the USRA, elected at the annual general meeting held on September 21, 2020.

For those who don't know me, I spent the majority of my career in the College of Medicine in a variety of administrative roles. I was very fortunate in my last decade or so working under the Provost's office to help steer the scientific and educational requirements for the new and renovated Health Science Buildings. This was a truly rewarding experience. In my last two years I worked in the Vice-President Finance and Resources office assisting with space and facilities leadership. I had a truly rewarding 40-plus-year career at the University.

The other officers and members-at-large of the newly elected USRA Board are:

Vice President:	Jim Thornhill
Secretary:	Jacqueline Huck
Treasurer:	Tom Wilson
Past President:	Merry Beazely
Members-at-Large:	Bryan Harvey
	Judith Henderson
	Rick Bunt
	Mary Dykes
	Dean Jones
	Beryl Radcliffe
	Yannis Pahatouroglou

I would like to thank our outgoing Board members Hank Classen and Ken Smith.

I look forward to this next year working with our talented Board members.

Following the departure of Guy Larocque, Associate Vice-President (AVP) Alumni Relations, we have now re-established our connections to the University through Danielle Dunbar, AVP Advancement, and Christy Miller, Director, Development Programs, and Executive Director, Alumni Association. You will note the variety of ongoing work with the University in our committee reports.

The Board has several standing committees that oversee the multi-faceted work being done on behalf of USRA members. *Ad hoc* committees are also struck occasionally to undertake work on issues that require special attention. Former USRA Presidents, such as Asit Sarkar*, and other USRA members may be enlisted for committee work. Below are the Standing and Ad Hoc committees of the Board for 2020- 2021 and the membership of each.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	MEMBERS
Awards	Dean Jones	Bryan Harvey, Jim Thornhill
CURAC	Bryan Harvey	
Communication	Dean Jones	Mary Dykes, Judith Henderson, Jacqueline Huck
Education, Social and Recreation	Jim Thornhill	Merry Beazely, Rick Bunt, Beryl Radcliffe
Membership	TBA	Mary Dykes, Jacqueline Huck, Judith Henderson, Beryl Radcliffe
Engagement	Rick Bunt	Bryan Harvey, Yannis Pahatouroglou, Jim Thornhill
Ad Hoc Committee on Determining Future Priorities of USRA	Jim Thornhill	Merry Beazely, Rick Bunt, Mary Dykes
Ad Hoc Committee on Campus Heritage	Merry Beazely	Yannis Pahatouroglou
Honorary Degrees	Tom Wilson	Merry Beazely, Bryan Harvey, Judith Henderson, Asit Sarkar*
Nominations	Merry Beazely	Mary Dykes, Bryan Harvey, Judith Henderson

2020 has been a challenging year. Unfortunately, the in-person sessions and events that we had planned for our members all had to be cancelled, but our Board rapidly adapted to using Zoom technology to communicate with each other and then to restart our educational programming to our members.

We live in uncertain times. Some of the luxuries of our retirement days have been impinged upon by the pandemic. How we interact with friends, family, and former colleagues needs to be reimaged. Travel

is most likely out of our realm of possibilities for the near future. Our return to pre-Covid19 days may be some time away and there appears to be uncertainty what a post-Covid-19 world will look like. We all hope that very soon we can begin to return to and enjoy those activities that we took so much for granted, although they may need to be approached somewhat differently.

In closing I would like to thank Judith, Dean, and Jackie and all our newsletter contributors for bringing us this newsletter.

Stay safe and healthy,

Brad

USRA President

From the Education, Social and Recreation Committee

By Jim Thornhill, USRA Vice-President

During the CoVID pandemic, we will continue to have regular monthly educational seminars with key-note speakers delivering their presentations via Zoom videoconferencing technology. Upcoming noon hour seminars include:

1. Dr. Alanna Baillod, Geriatric Psychiatrist, Saskatoon Health Region, speaking on **“Mental Wellness Facing Older Adults”**, Monday, November 23, 2020 at noon
2. President Peter Stoicheff, University of Saskatchewan, speaking on **“University Life During the CoVID pandemic”**, Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 2pm

3. Dr. Dean Chapman, Professor and Canada Research Chair, speaking on **“Overall impact of the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron at the University of Saskatchewan since its opening in 2004”**, Wednesday, January, 13, 2021 at noon

Invitation notices to each of these seminars will be emailed to you approximately one week prior to the date of presentation. We hope you will participate in these seminars via Zoom technology. If the date of presentation is inconvenient, you can also view each seminar presentation afterwards by connecting to the USRA website.

On Nov. 10, USask Remembrance and Convocation Go Virtual

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only closed the University of Saskatchewan campus to most employees and students, as well as to the public, through most of 2020 and forced almost all administration and instruction into cyberspace, but also has affected its communal celebrations, the traditional public face of academic life. The latest modifications to its traditions this November 10 affect both Remembrance Day and Fall Convocation. See the announcements below:

“The University of Saskatchewan has a long-standing tradition of hosting a Remembrance Day ceremony at the Memorial Gates to honour and reflect on the sacrifices made by veterans everywhere in defense of our freedom. In lieu of an in-person event this year, you are invited to visit a special webpage to view messages from our university community leaders and read stories about the many USask faculty, staff, students and alumni who have served

their country and the memorials that exist on campus to honour them.

“The Remembrance Day webpage will launch on November 10, 2020 at: [“https://executiveleadership.usask.ca/events/remembrance.php”](https://executiveleadership.usask.ca/events/remembrance.php)

“While we are not able to gather in person on Remembrance Day this year, we will maintain our 92-year-old campus tradition of laying wreaths at the Memorial Gates.”

Virtual Fall Convocation to Award Honorary D.Litt. to USRA Nominee

The University is moving its Fall Convocation to an online format: “On November 10, graduates and their families and friends, and the University community, are invited to visit the USask Class of 2020 graduation celebration website. The webpage will include the list of graduates, as well as pre-recorded congratulatory video messages. The grad list, and videos will be available on the webpage beginning November 10th, and you will be able to view them whenever is convenient for you.

The link to the celebration webpage will be posted on our website, the morning of November 10th. Our website is: <https://students.usask.ca/academics/graduation.php>

One reason for USRA members to view this website is to see our University award honorary degrees to three elderly “survivors” of state-sponsored injustices against ethnic minorities in World War II that traumatized them as children. As described by Vice-Chancellor and President Peter Stoicheff, all three, now in their 80s and 90s went on to witness to these

injustices and to make important contributions to their communities.

One of them, Japanese-Canadian author and social activist Joy Kogawa (born June 6, 1935) was nominated by the USRA's own Honorary Degrees Committee in partnership with the USask Department of English. Best known for her first novel *Obasan*, she launched her career as a Canadian poet in Saskatchewan in her early thirties as a mother of two children and, from 1965 to 1968, a part-time student at our University. She will be granted an honorary Doctor of Letters.



Left to right: Dr. Max Eisen, Joy Kogawa, Fred Sasakamoose

The other two recipients of the University's highest honour will be awarded Doctor of Laws degrees: Dr. Max Eisen (born 1929 in Slovakia) is a Holocaust survivor and historian of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. He immigrated to Canada after World War II and has traveled extensively throughout Canada to describe and thoughtfully assess his wartime experiences and survival. Fred Sasakamoose (born 1933), a Residential School survivor from Ahtakakoop Cree Nation, became the first

Indigenous player from Saskatchewan in the National Hockey League and went on to serve his Nation for 60 years as a Chief, elder, and teacher and counsellor of youth.

The University's recognition of these three remarkable human beings seems especially appropriate in 2020, the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at a Convocation that begins just before Remembrance Day memorializing the Armistice that ended the carnage of World War I. Those who have experienced and come through trauma successfully are well suited to inspire our graduands, who have been challenged in 2020 by unexpected

obstacles as they completed their studies in a pandemic and now enter a job market in recession. And in the necessity of holding a "virtual" ceremony this fall, the University has also found an unusual opportunity to avoid endangering by travel at this time the three elders that they have been waiting to honour.

The Career of Joy Kogawa

USRA's nominee for an honorary degree, Joy Kogawa, is a second generation Japanese-Canadian born in Vancouver. As a young child, she was interned with her family and other Japanese-Canadian citizens and landed immigrants in primitive camps and old mining towns in the mountainous interior of British Columbia. Their West Coast homes, businesses, and other property were seized and sold, ostensibly to support their internment. The men were forced into hard labour building roads and other infrastructure in the BC interior, and at war's end, the families in this once tight-knit immigrant community were barred

until 1949 from returning to the coast to rebuild their lives. Instead, they were either deported to war-torn Japan or dispersed across Canada to work in often harsh and impoverished conditions, without freedom or means to move. Joy's family laboured in the beet fields of Alberta near Coaldale, where she went to high school. Later, she picked up enough college education, at the University of Alberta in Calgary (1954), and the Anglican Women's Training College and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto (1956), to become an elementary school teacher.

Remarkably, her subsequent career as a creative writer (publishing 6 books of poetry, 4 novels, 2 children's books, an autobiography, and an augmented reality app for the National Film Board, among other works) has previously won her honorary degrees from eight Canadian Universities: LL.D. (Lethbridge 1991; Simon Fraser 1993; Queen's 2003; Windsor 2003), Doctor of Divinity (Knox College, UToronto, 1999), D.Litt. (Guelph 1992; UBC 2001; UVictoria 2017).

She has been frequently supported as a fellow, visiting scholar, or writer-in-residence, recognized for her lifetime achievement (most recently this fall by the BC Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence), or honoured with a medal, a plaque, a proclamation, or a special day (e.g. Joy Kogawa Day and Obasan Cherry Tree Day in Vancouver).

Historic Joy Kogawa House in Vancouver has been preserved as a venue for visiting writers-in-residence and public tours, literary readings and conferences, through the efforts of Joy and friends to save her early childhood home. It is an historic example of the comfortable family

dwellings that Japanese-Canadians were forced to leave behind in World War II.

Beyond many literary awards, other honours recognize Joy's services to the Japanese-Canadian community, or her social activism against racism and poverty in Canada. She has been invested as a Member of the Order of Canada (1986), Order of British Columbia (2006), and presented by Japan with its distinguished Order of the Rising Sun (2010).

Joy Kogawa's first novel *Obasan*, based loosely on her own childhood experiences of internment, helped to achieve Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's 1988 Acknowledgement in Parliament of the Canadian Government's injustices to Japanese-Canadians and their redress through a \$300 million reparation package. *Obasan* is now a classic textbook in Canadian high school and college English classes and has been adapted to children's books and a touring opera. Her second and third novels, *Itsuka* and *Emily Kato*, loosely trace the political processes by which redress was achieved and their effects on the Japanese-Canadian community, especially its elders and activists. Joy has also been an activist for all impoverished and disadvantaged Canadians, especially through her intensive volunteer work in Vancouver and Toronto, where she has mainly resided. She has been committed to supporting her diverse communities through love and her own hard work.

The D.Litt. to be awarded at our Fall Convocation at last proudly claims Joy Kogawa as an alumna of our own University. It comes soon after her recent suggestion in an interview that she is now ending her writing career.

USRA Announces Its Fall 2020 Award Winners

USRA's Annual Awards Banquet was a casualty in September 2020 of the closure of the University campus by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Annual General Meeting, usually held in September before the Awards Banquet at the University Club, was instead held virtually via Zoom and the Banquet was cancelled.

Nevertheless, the USRA Awards Committee has in 2020 reviewed and approved two nominations for USRA Continuing Contribution Awards to University of Saskatchewan retirees, which it is announcing now and hoping to award in person at a Banquet in 2021, if the safety of our members allows. Below are biographies of the two 2020 award winners: Professor Emerita of Psychiatry and retired Canadian Senator Dr. Lillian Dyck, and Dave Lepard, Audio-Visual Technician and Past President of the University of Saskatchewan Non Academic Retirees Association, who has been active in the labour movement before and after his retirement from the University.

The USRA's Continuing Contribution Award, created in 2016, "recognizes and expresses appreciation to persons who have retired from work at the University, but have continued to make research, scholarly, artistic or service contributions, whether associated with their University work, their scholarly work, their artistic work or their service work, at an exceptional level. Such contributions may not have been recognized by international, national, provincial, or local bodies, but have substantially benefitted the university and society."

Lillian Eva Quan Dyck



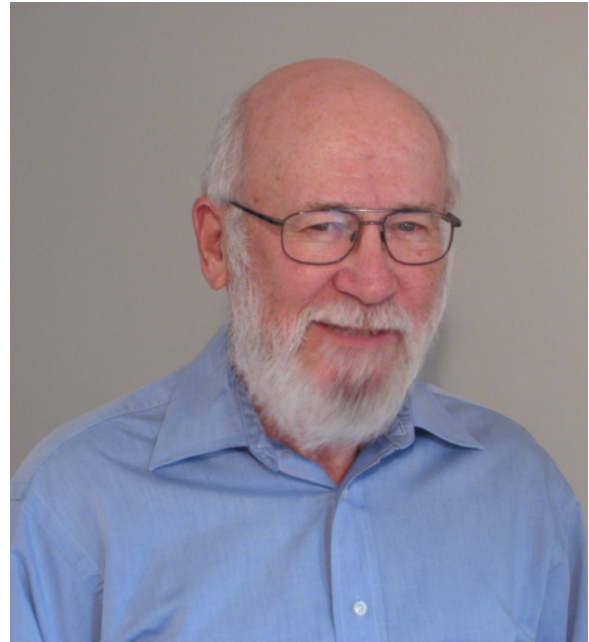
Professor Emerita and former Canadian Senator Lillian Dyck is a USask Alumna (Chemistry BA, Biochemistry Hons. and MSc, Biological Psychiatry PhD) who became a research scientist with Saskatchewan Health (1972-87) and joined USask's faculty as an Adjunct Professor (Psychiatry, 1984) and its Neuropsychiatry Research Unit (1987-95). Promoted to full Professor (1996), she became Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (2002-5).

Having proved herself as a research scientist and graduate student counsellor, teacher, and administrator, she was increasingly recognized from 1997 on by awards and invitations, from Governments in Canada and abroad and from both mainstream (e.g. YWCA) and Indigenous organizations, as a role model and advocate for girls and women in science. Daughter of a Chinese father and Cree mother, Lillian made her activism into a second career

when in 2005 she was called by Prime Minister Paul Martin to become both “the first First Nations woman and first Canadian-born person of Chinese descent” to be appointed to the Senate of Canada. She retired from USask in 2006 and from the Senate at age 75 on August 24, 2020.

During her 15 years in Ottawa, Senator Dyck served as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, worked on issues of Chinese Canadians, women in science and post-secondary education, and for the last 10 years, on MMIWG: the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. She introduced Bill S-3 to remove sexism from the Indian Act that stripped status from First Nations women who married non-First Nations men (it became law in 2019). Another, Bill S-215, that would “make the fact that the victim of a violent crime is an indigenous woman an aggravating circumstance in sentencing,” was passed in the House (2015) but defeated in the Senate (2016). Ultimately Senator Dyck successfully proposed amendments to Bill C-75 that addressed the issues of MMIWG that concerned her.

Dave Lepard



Trained at Saskatchewan Technical Institute, Moose Jaw, in Radio, Television, and Electronics, Dave Lepard worked at USask (1968-2003) as an Audio-Visual Technician, first in the Division of Audio-Visual Services, later in the College of Medicine. In the union for support workers, CLC Local 54 (later CUPE 1975), he served on the Bargaining Committee, the Bursary Committee, as Treasurer for two terms, and, ably assisted by his wife Connie, as co-editor with Tonya Kaye of the newsletter *The Skopein*. He was often elected delegate to local, provincial, and national labour conventions. His nominators Mary Dykes and Tonya Kaye have found him “a strong supporter of women in the trade union movement and ... of equality in the workplace.” They remark, “His community has been the labour movement” both before and after his career.

In retirement, while keeping in touch with CUPE 1975, he turned his energy to the Saskatoon and District Council of Union Retirees (SDCUR), serving as Recording

Secretary (from 2014) and delegate to the Retired Steelworkers Saskatoon District Council. He continued to attend the Steelworkers annual meetings after SDCUR was disbanded in 2017. Dave has also served on Boards of the Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society of Saskatchewan and of Biggar Community Health Services. As an active member of the (Saskatoon) Affinity Credit Union and of Saskatoon Co-op, he recruited people for their boards who were sympathetic to employee issues. And he has worked in election campaigns for MLA and MP candidates who supported the labour movement.

In the University of Saskatchewan Non-Academic Retirees Association (USNARA), Dave served on the Bursary Committee (2006-16) and as President (2015-17). His colleagues on the Board found “his friendly manner contagious and inspiring.” As USNARA faced dwindling membership and difficulty recruiting leaders, “he provided energy and leadership that kept the small group together”, and “was the voice to the NARA members that promoted the plan to merge” with USRA in 2017 to form one retiree association for all University of Saskatchewan employees. USRA is grateful for his role in bringing our associations together.

Should I Drive a Car?

By Tom Wilson

I’m sure almost all of us remember when we were first licensed to drive an automobile. This milestone signaled freedom and unlimited possibilities. We then went through a change: the family car became an unloved but necessary tool. Getting to work, ferrying kids to soccer, shopping for groceries, and even vacation trips all depended on having a reliable car.

Our family’s 1972 Chevelle station wagon lasted 15 years, in spite of its maltreatment. In addition to performing the above functions, it got us (including three school age kids) to and from our sabbatical in Charleston, South Carolina. That almost killed it. Charleston is about one meter above sea level, which means that streets are flooded with saltwater when storm surges and high tide coincide. These saline washes lead to rusting not only on the body but the floor panels. The kids loved to see the road passing underneath. Nevertheless, the odometer read 250,000 miles (not Km) when we traded it in 1987. Since then, we’ve bought several new cars; the most recent costing twice what we paid for our first house. The question now arising: how long should we keep driving? We think of ourselves as careful and considerate drivers; we’ve never had even a fender bender. But we’re not driving as much. Does it make more economic sense to take public transit, taxis or Uber? What we don’t want is to be involved in a serious accident. So what are the odds?

This graph (1) depicts crashes per age group in the United States. Note that young drivers suffer the most accidents, but seniors come in at a close second. Even if



we lump together All Crashes for the 70-79 and 80+ age groups the absolute risk seems small. Slightly more than 700 crashes per 100 million miles means you can drive 140,000 miles (224,000 Km) on average, without an accident. Nonetheless, we are more danger to ourselves and others.

Of course, not all seniors are the same. Is there any way to predict who will have a crash? Marottoli and colleagues followed 283 community living people over age 72, who were driving in 1990 (2). Thirteen percent reported a crash or moving violation in a year. They found three criteria (out of over 30 tested) that were predictive: inability to copy the design on the Mini-Mental Examination (3) (see Figure 2), walking an average of less than 1 city block per day, and 3 or more foot abnormalities (including ingrown toenails, calluses, bunions and hammer toes).

"Please copy this picture." (The examiner gives the patient a blank piece of paper and asks him/her to draw the symbol below. All 10 angles must be present and two must intersect.)



Figure 2

Of persons with none of these predictive criteria: 6% had an incident; with 1: 12%; with two: 26%; with three: 47%. So, in this cohort, even the least likely had a 1 in 16 chance of a crash or moving violation. More importantly, it's a simple way of estimating our own risk. Interestingly, classic criteria such as visual acuity, impaired hearing, and medication use weren't predictive, possibly because so many of us have these.

A more recent study by Sims found that use of sleeping pills, history of stroke, history of depression, a previous crash, and inability to perform housework or yard work, were

all predictive (4). Failing a visual field test barely reached predictive value.

A study of seniors in Alabama added “arthritis” and a number of prescription drugs to the predictors. These included NSAIDS (e.g. ibuprofen), ACE inhibitors (e.g. enalapril), blood thinners (e.g. warfarin) and benzodiazepines (e.g. Valium, Halcyon). All in all, cardiovascular disease, cognitive and physical limitations, and medications working on the brain seem to be “red flags”. Acknowledging one or more of these should make us consider no longer driving.

One way that governments try to decrease accident risk is by testing older drivers. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, “older” is 65, whereas in Alberta, BC and Ontario it’s 80. All other provinces set no age threshold. Saskatchewan currently depends on a self or physician report to SGI, which will trigger an assessment.

Other than avoiding at-fault accidents, are there other effects of retiring from driving? Economically, it’s a no brainer for Saskatoon residents. According to the Canadian Automobile Association, driving 10,000 Km per year in Saskatchewan will cost us \$5200-9500 per year(5), whereas a yearly Saskatoon Transit Go-Pass for 2 seniors age 65+ is \$626.60. A weekly taxi or Uber to the grocery store would be \$1300 annually; to the doctor or dentist: another \$1000. We would have money left over for taxis to dine out, or to attend performing arts and other events (if those ever return). Admittedly, for those who live in the countryside or small towns, these numbers may not apply.

Are there other consequences of giving up the car? One possible concern is reduced social activity. The Yale group found that ceasing to drive was associated with a

decrease in social activities, such as shopping, going to a movie or sporting event, attending religious services, and performing volunteer or paid work, even when allowing for medical conditions, visual or hearing impairment. Like any other transition in our lives, we should have a plan when we cease driving.

Finally, think of your car as a luxury, if you live in the city. Know the risks of continuing to drive as well as the financial outlays. Remember the benefits of walking!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to our intrepid editor, Judith Henderson, for making the column easier to read and also suggesting the topic.

Further reading

(1) Tefft, B.C. (2017). Rates of Motor Vehicle Crashes, Injuries and Deaths in Relation to Driver Age, United States, 2014-2015. *AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety*. <https://aaafoundation.org/rates-motor-vehicle-crashes-injuries-deaths-relation-driver-age-united-states-2014-2015/>.

(2) Marottoli RA, Cooney LM, Jr., Wagner R, Doucette J, Tinetti ME. Predictors of automobile crashes and moving violations among elderly drivers. *Ann Intern Med* 1994; 121(11):842-846.

(3) <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/canada/clinical-update/allen-huang-cognitive-screening-toolkit.ashx?la=en&hash=631B35521724C28268D0C2130D07A401E33CDBB0>. (accessed 2020-09-18).

(4) Sims RV, McGwin G, Jr., Allman RM, Ball K, Owsley C. Exploratory study of incident vehicle crashes among older drivers. *J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci* 2000; 55(1):M22-M27.

(5) <https://carcosts.caa.ca/>. (accessed 2020-09-18)

Members No Longer with Us

Since the September 2020 Newsletter, we have learned of the death of the following USRA member:

Fae Frances Sheppard died October 11, 2020, in Saskatoon at age 82, surrounded by her family. A devoted homemaker, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and a skilled musician, she is survived by her husband of 60 years, Malcolm (Mac), who retired in 1995 as USask Associate Vice President of Finance and Controller. For almost 20 years thereafter, they wintered in Arizona.

In some cases, especially when members have moved away from Saskatoon, we do not hear of their deaths for some months or years, if at all. Please let us know if you learn of the death of a former employee of the University of Saskatchewan or its affiliated colleges and research institutes, or his/her partner's death, so that we can honour in this column those who have been an Ordinary or Associate Member of USRA.

For notices in memory of former employees of the University, as well as current students, employees, and others honoured when the flag on the Thorvaldson Building is flown at half mast, please see the *In Memoriam* website maintained by the University Secretary:
<https://secretariat.usask.ca/about/flag-at-half-mast.php#Flagathalfmast>

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