

**University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association
Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 2:00 P.M.
Western Development Museum**

Present: Ordinary Members: Merry Beazely (Chair), Jim Basinger, Hope Bilinski, Rick Bunt, Bob Card, Sandra Cey, Daryl Cherry, Susan Cook, Bruce Coulman, Mary Dykes, Fern Fitzharris, Jacqueline Huck (Recorder), Donald Johnson, David Mandeville, Douglas Milne, Garnet Packota, Bev Pain, Vera Pezer, Beryl Radcliffe, Nigel Rawson, Fred Rémillard, Murray Scharf, Ken Smith, Dorothy Thomson, Jim Thornhill (Co-President), Bob Tyler, Kathryn Wardcen, and Tom Wilson.

Associate Members: Marj Scharf, Karen Smith and Merne Wilson.

Guest: Alaisha Gaudet.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 P.M.

Merry Beazely thanked Jim Thornhill and the Education, Social and Recreation Committee for lunch and speaker, Jeff O'Brien, and Jacqueline Huck and the Communication Committee for facilitating preparation of the AGM materials. Also, she thanked former Board members Rick Bunt and Mary Dykes. Rick provided invaluable ICT advice and Mary informing USRA on SCOA initiatives.

Merry will serve as Chair and she reviewed the guidelines – motions require a mover and seconder (when moving or seconding a motion, please provide your name), with discussion, the vote call and all votes are recorded (e.g., in favor, against, abstained).

Ken Smith kindly agrees to serve as Parliamentarian for the meeting.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Donald Johnson and seconded by Ken Smith that the agenda be approved. Carried.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 16, 2024

Moved by Tom Wilson and seconded by Susan Cook that the minutes of October 16, 2024 be approved. Carried.

4. Co-President's Report

Jim and Merry presented the attached Co-President's Report and highlighted the following –

- very busy year with strong communication between USRA and USask
- reviewed ongoing and valuable associations with senior leaders – President's Reception for New Retirees (May 20); quarterly meetings with senior administrators; second three-year MOU; University Senate (USRA representative – David Mandeville); Faculty Retirement Information Session (June 20); Human Resources and Safety Resources, and Convocation Ceremony (both fall of 2024 and spring of 2025)

- additional ways the USRA links to USask and the community – Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA); Remembrance Day Ceremony; USRA Holiday Reception at the President's Residence (December 11); monthly lunches at the WDM; CURAC Annual Conference (May 21-23; Be What the World Needs finale (June 18); and Members and Awards Celebration (June 24)
- Provost Vince Bruni-Bossio arranged to update the Retirees Lounge (PMB132) to a hybrid model
- Peggy Proctor left the Board in December 2024 and welcomed new members Hope Bilinski and Nigel Rawson to the Board.

Moved by Merry Beazely and seconded by Jacqueline Huck that the Co-President's Report be accepted. Carried.

5. Treasurer's Report

Tom Wilson presented his 2024-2025 report noting the following –

- explored undertaking a financial review and engaged Tom Plishka, a semi-retired CPA, to advise the Board. He suggested two changes to our current practices - (1) change to a two-person signer for expenses paid by cheque and e-transfer and (2) task a Board member with reconciling bank statements; these changes will be implemented, effective July 1, 2025
- will consider adding to bylaws the appointment of two USRA members to review financial matters
- financial position continues to be stable; assets continue to grow during the fiscal year with no cash liabilities; total cash and assets of \$58,296.65
- reviewed revenue and expenses for fiscal years 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and projections for 2025-2026
- thanked Jacqueline Huck who volunteered to undertake the reconciliation and Alaisha Gaudet for her assistance at the lunches.

Moved by Tom Wilson and seconded by Rick Bunt that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Carried.

Moved by Tom Wilson and seconded by Ken Smith that no financial audit for the 2025-2026 fiscal year be conducted. Carried.

6. Standing Committee Reports

(a) Awards

Merry Beazely presented the attached committee report noting the following –

- nine awards were presented at the Members and Awards Celebration on June 24
 - ohpahatân | oohpaahotaan Let's Fly Up Together Awards to Elder Roland Duquette and Dr. Ernie Walker
 - Continuing Contribution Awards to Dr. Michael Atkinson and Ross Wilson
 - Honorary Life Awards to Mary Dykes, Dr. Bryan Harvey and Eileen Harvey
 - Prime of Life Achievement Award to Dr. Bruce Coulman
 - Duff Spafford Award for Exceptional Service to Dr. Ernie Olfert
- call for nominations for 2026 will be included in the November newsletter
- two USask retirees received awards from other organizations –
 - Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) Volunteer Award for Advocacy to Dr. Murray Scharf
 - USask Honorary Doctor of Laws degree to Dr. Vera Pezer.

(b) College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC)

Merry Beazely presented the attached report on CURAC activities –

- the 2025 CURAC Conference was held in Montreal in May 21-23
- the 2026 CURAC Conference will be hosted by Simon Fraser University and in 2027 hosted by McMaster University
- thanked the following representatives who serve on CURAC Committees –
 - Conference Committee – Merry Beazely
 - Health Policy Committee – Tom Wilson
 - Later Life Learning Committee – Beryl Radcliffe.

(c) Communication

Jacqueline Huck presented the attached committee report and noted the following –

Newsletter

- three newsletters were distributed in November of 2024 and in April and September of 2025
- thanked the authors who contributed to the newsletter and Board members who helped review the articles
- a big thank you from myself to Bob, Kathryn and Joe for their expertise and assistance in publishing our issues
- thanked Mary Dykes and Alaisha Gaudet for supporting the committee.

Website

- USRA continues to use the USask Cascade system to maintain and update our website at <https://usra.usask.ca/>.
- thank you to Mary Dykes and Alaisha Gaudet for their assistance in maintaining our website.

University Communications

- members were reminded of the USask publications that they are eligible to receive (see report). If you do not have access to these publications and wish to receive them, please let us know.

Policy Update

- A Framework for USask Communications/USRA Promotion of Retirees' Books and Awards has been prepared by Kathryn Warden to promote how books, notable retiree achievements, and major recognitions could be further highlighted by the university, with support from USRA. If you have an award or book you would like promoted, please e-mail us at ss.usra@usask.ca.

(d) Education, Social and Recreation

Jim Thornhill provided the following report on committee activities –

- have seen an increase in numbers of attendees at our events
- upcoming educational programs/tours scheduled –
 - November 17, 2025 – Elizabeth Scott, Curator of the WDM (a short tour to follow presentation)
 - December 11 – President's Holiday Reception
 - January 21, 2026 – walking tour of Canadian Light Source (CLS)

- February 18 – Karen Churchill, Scientific Director, USask Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS)
- March 18 – Doral Johnson, USask Pension Manager
- October 14 – Jeff O’Brien, Saskatoon City Archivist.

Jim Basinger suggested having the new USask President, Vince Bruni-Bossio, present his vision for the university.

(e) Membership and Tribute to Members No Longer With Us

Beryl Radcliffe presented the attached committee report and noted the following –

- Beryl announced that she is stepping down from the Board following the AGM and thanked Jacqueline Huck and Alaisha Gaudet for their help during the year
- continue to keep up with obituaries of members published in newspapers and reports, and to remember them in our newsletters and at the AGM
- committee activities involved - an information table at the Employee Appreciation Picnic (June 24); and President’s Reception for USask Retirees (May 20)
- membership renewals were sent out in June by Alaisha Gaudet; a good response was received
- at the time of writing the report, our membership was 425 members, of which 380 are life members.

Beryl read out the 19 names of members who have passed away during the past year and a moment of silence was observed in remembrance.

(f) Engagement

Jim Thornhill noted the committee also included the MOU Coordinating Committee. The Engagement Committee has not been active since the second MOU was signed in March 2024 but continues to be active in improving communication between retirees and the university.

(g) Honorary Degrees

Tom Wilson presented the attached report and noted the following –

- on our recommendation, Dr. Vera Pezer received an Honorary Doctor of Laws on June 5, 2025
- a call for nominations was made by the chair
- thanked committee members for their help and suggestions.

(h) Ad Hoc Committee on Campus Heritage

Merry presented the attached committee report and noted the following –

- a *Proposal for Asset Management of USask Heritage Artifacts* was submitted to the Provost and Vice-President Academic Dr. Airini for consideration. The proposal recommends the university undertake a process to manage the valuable artifacts and memorabilia that exist across campus. Following Dr. Arini’s departure, the proposal was then forwarded to Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio who is awaiting the appointment of the new Dean of Libraries before undertaking further discussions

- thanks to Kathryn for instituting the regular feature **Spotlight on USask History** to our USRA newsletters; **Recent Books by USRA Authors:** History of Hemophilia Care in Canada was featured in the September newsletter by Bob Card; and Vera is USRA's representative on the Stone Barn Fundraising Group.

(i) Ad Hoc Committee on USRA Documents

Merry presented the attached committee report and noted the following –

- ICT changes are coming shortly with the deactivation of the usask.ca e-mail and collection of a nominal annual fee for members wishing to retain their e-mail services
- governance documents will be revised in the year ahead to reflect changes.

(j) USask Senate Representative

David presented the attached report and noted the following –

- first meeting attended was October 26, 2024 followed by a second meeting held on April 26, 2025
- the 2026 fall meeting has been scheduled for October 25, 2025
- for additional information, see article published in the September 2025 newsletter.

Moved by Donald Johnson and seconded by Fred Rémillard that the committee reports be accepted. Carried.

7. New Business

(a) USRA Involvement in USask Leaders and Activities

Jim Thornhill provided the following report -

- continue to engage with current members and promote future members
- see information included under 4.0 Co-President's Report.

(b) Benefits Update

Merry Beazely provided the following report –

- members were reminded of the benefits through the university and CURAC; additional information available in the September 2025 newsletter
- changes to usask.ca e-mail services (mentioned in 6i.)
 - reduced annual opt-in fee negotiated by USRA if we collect the fee
 - Professors Emeriti – their college may pay for basic package and additional benefits
 - details still need to be finalized.

(c) Framework for USask/USRA Promotion of Retirees' Books and Awards

Kathryn Warden provided the following report –

- USRA formalizing the process for USRA to share information with USask regarding promotion of retirees' books and awards
- USask will determine what action to be taken.

(d) Need for USRA Strategic Plan

Jim Thornhill provided the following report –

- last member survey conducted in 2020
- time to conduct another survey before the end of the second term of the MOU in 2027 and a strategic planning session would be of value to undertake.

8. Report of the Nominations Committee

Jim Thornhill presented the attached Nomination Report.

Jim noted that Vera Pezer has agreed to take on the presidential duties this year and thanked Tom Wilson and Jacqueline Huck for continuation of their roles as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, for another year. He noted that Merry Beazely, Kathryn Warden, Joe Angel, Bob Card, and David Mandeville will be continuing to serve on the Board.

The new members nominated for the Board for 2025-2026 are Hope Bilinski and Nigel Rawson. Jim reviewed their backgrounds and expertise. Write-ups on Hope and Nigel can be found in the Nominations Report.

Jim reported that Bryan Harvey, Beryl Radcliffe and himself will be stepping away from the Board and thanked them for their time and efforts in growing the USRA mandate

Moved by Jim Thornhill and seconded by Bev Pain that the committee report be accepted. Carried.

9. Election of Officers and Executive Committee Members for 2025-2026

Co-Presidents	Vera Pezer
Vice-President	Hope Bilinski
Secretary	Jacqueline Huck
Treasurer	Tom Wilson
Immediate Past President	Merry Beazely
Members-at-Large	Joe Angel, Bob Card, David Mandeville, Nigel Rawson, and Kathryn Warden.

Moved by Murray Scharf and seconded by Rick Bunt that the slate of officers for 2025-2026 be elected. Carried.

Merry and Jim were thanked for their loyal service to USRA.

10. Other Business

10.1 Defined-Benefit Pension Plan

In 2000 and 2001 there was a change in the Defined-Benefit Pension Plan regarding COLA clause being removed and USRA will look into this.

11. Adjournment

Jacqueline moved adjournment at 3:07 P.M.

**University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association
Treasurer's Report for 2024-2025**

At the suggestion of members, the Board elected to explore a financial review. We engaged Tom Plishka, a semi-retired CPA and senior partner with MNP. He detailed the various types of reviews: audit, review and "NTR" (note to reader). CPA's must observe the standards of conduct of their governing body, so that these reviews would need to be done yearly and would cost 10 to 15 thousand dollars per year. After looking at our assets, revenues and expenditures, Tom suggested just two changes to our practice:

1. Change to a two-person signer for cheques and e-transfers written on our current account.
2. Task a Board member with reconciling bank statements with our reports.

We implemented these changes on July 1, 2025.

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
cash	\$ 3,605.75	\$ 8,534.67	\$ 2,664.78	\$ 1,930.30
Term Deposits	\$ 43,054.71	\$ 44,786.32	\$ 54,661.59	\$ 56,361.35
members equity	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
	\$ 46,665.46	\$ 53,325.99	\$ 57,331.37	\$ 58,296.65

The table above shows our assets as of June 30, 2025. We have no financial liabilities. We remain solvent. Our 11 TDs are 1 year at interest rates of 2.8-4.3%.

REVENUE	2023-2024 actual	Budget 2024-2025	2024-2025 actual	Budget 2025-2026
USask Grant	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Annual memberships	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 480.00	\$ 400.00
Lifetime memberships	\$ 1,940.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,730.00	\$ 1,400.00
Luncheon tickets	\$ 8,460.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 9,190.00	\$ 9,000.00
CURAC rebate	\$ 1,484.72	\$ 200.00	\$ 542.52	\$ 300.00
Interest	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.19	\$ 1.20
Award Banquet tickets	\$ 1,685.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,760.00	\$ 1,600.00
Miscellaneous revenue	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,198.49	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 19,870.95	\$ 14,501.50	\$ 19,902.20	\$ 16,701.20
EXPENSES				
Award banquet meals	\$ 2,042.88	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 2,941.05	\$ 3,000.00
Award costs	\$ 219.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 61.03	\$ 100.00
AGM Total	\$ 1,177.38	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,940.56	\$ 2,000.00
Luncheon costs	\$ 9,925.35	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 8,706.18	\$ 8,800.00
Promotion	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00
Printing	\$ 747.38	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,001.33	\$ 1,000.00
CURAC dues	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Speakers gifts	\$ 563.88	\$ 550.00	\$ 530.00	\$ 550.00
Swag	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Remembrance day	\$ 90.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 90.00
CURAC travel	\$ 2,218.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 2,500.00
CURAC 2023	\$ 1,360.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Postage	\$ 590.69	\$ 800.00	\$ 613.93	\$ 650.00
Misc. expenses computer,EAP,	\$ 689.43	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,340.80	\$ 400.00
TD purchase			\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
Bank fees	\$ 56.50	\$ 60.00	\$ 64.50	\$ 75.00
TOTAL	\$ 20,180.49	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 19,619.38	\$ 20,665.00
NET	\$ (309.54)	\$ (4,498.50)	\$ 282.82	\$ (3,963.80)

The table above depicts our revenues and expenses for this and previous years. My estimated budget for 2025-2026 is included. Our revenues were substantially more than I budgeted for. Our expenses were also higher so that we had a small surplus for the year.

Our meal, room rent and AV costs for luncheons (including the AGM and Awards Banquet) were \$13,587.79. We collected \$11,950.00 in tickets, so our deficit for the year was \$1,637.79, an average of \$181.98 for our nine events. We were forced to cancel our November luncheon on the day of the event. We were charged \$1,237.21 for the food ordered and room rental fee.

Some expenses do not fit into a listed category. For example, the Board hosted a luncheon for Bryan and Eileen Harvey. We purchase named tags, business cards, fridge magnets, etc. I placed all these into the Miscellaneous expense row.

No USRA member attended the CURAC annual meeting in May 2025. Merry virtually attended the CURAC AGM for a fee of \$30.00.

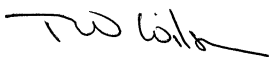
I look forward to our grant from the University of \$4,000.00. Last year it arrived in October.

I'd like to sincerely thank Jackie Huck who volunteered to be our reconciler. She painstakingly went through 12 months of bank statements and reconciled them with my spreadsheets. She found a few differences which were easily corrected.

Also, sincere thanks to our Administrative Assistant, Alaisha Gaudet. She helped collect the cash for the luncheons, Awards Banquet and AGM. She also counts the cash with me. This is important as WDM wants to be paid immediately after the event. We submit the cash and a cheque for any remainder.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Board members. Each month I submit a report which they scrutinize, ask questions and offer suggestions. Jim Thornhill kindly volunteered to pinch hit for me at our April luncheon. Beryl Radcliffe always helps with cash collection.

Respectfully submitted,



T.W. Wilson, MD
Treasurer

REPORT OF THE CO-PRESIDENTS 2024-2025

It was great to see so many of you at our October 16, 2024 luncheon, hear the always exciting Jeff O'Brien tell us about Prohibition in our fair city, present Dr. Jim Dosman with the USRA Continuing Contribution Award and hold the AGM. We were pleased to welcome Joe Angel and Peggy Proctor to the Board and thanked Rick Bunt and Mary Dykes for their ongoing support. We bid a fond farewell, with sincere appreciation, to Caroline Cottrell, Judith Henderson and Yannis Pahatouroglou, who have stepped away.

At our last AGM, Merry and Jim described the solid connections between the USRA and the university, in our shared goals to support USask retirees. We are pleased to highlight these ongoing and valuable associations with senior leaders.

- **President's Reception for New Retirees** – much appreciated return of an annual celebration for new retirees, hosted by President Peter Stoicheff and Kathryn Warden on May 20. Thanks to Marnie Wright and team in Human Resources for planning, and to Marnie and Provost Vince Bruni-Bossio for introducing each of retirees. Jim presented on the many activities and benefits of the USRA and answered questions on what USRA does for retirees.
- **Quarterly meetings** – of the USRA Co-Presidents with Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio (Interim Provost and Vice-President Academic) and Cheryl Hamelin (Vice-President University Relations) to discuss common issues, including for retirees.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – our second three-year MOU focuses on maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship characterized by collaboration and respect. Our previous excellent liaison was Marcy Hildebrand and now is Kris Brown, Associate Vice-President Alumni and Strategic Engagement. The MOU *Articles of Agreement* include access to University staff to support our operations. We thank Board member Vera Pezer, who represented USRA on the search for a Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator in University Relations and provide .40 FTE to USRA. We welcomed Alaisha Gaudet, who is providing valuable support.
- **University Senate** – starting last fall, the USRA has a representative on University Senate, and we thank David Mandeville for taking on this role.
- **Faculty Retirement Information Session** – Jim and Merry invited again this year by Vice-Provost Scott Walsworth, to present about the mandate and activities of the USRA, and we always learn more about retiree pension and benefit questions.
- **Human Resources and Safety Resources** – assistance communicating with prospective retirees from AVP Marnie Wright and her team in Human Resources and Safety Resources. Doral Johnson, Pension Manager, has been very helpful answering questions from our members, and we are also clarifying questions related to Professors Emerit benefits.
- **Convocation Ceremonies** – USRA Board members were honoured to be invited by Chancellor Grit McCreath to represent USRA on the Spring and Fall platform parties.

Below is an accounting of some of the additional ways the USRA links to USask and the community.

- **Saskatoon Council on Aging** – previous participation in Spotlight on Seniors and active participation in the annual Globe Walk Challenge to promote physical activity, with thanks to our USRA team leaders Mary Dykes and Lea Pennock.
- **Remembrance Day Ceremony** – at the Memorial Gates in honour of those who have served and continue to serve our country. For years, USRA members have attended this moving ceremony and laid a wreath on behalf of the Association.
- **USRA Holiday Reception at the President's Residence** – a wonderful event on December 11, with much appreciation to President Peter Stoicheff and Kathryn Warden and the President's Office.

- **Monthly luncheons at the WDM** – organized by our Education, Social and Recreation Committee. We welcome your ideas for future topics, speakers and as well, potential places to which we could arrange tours!
- **CURAC Annual Conference in May** – *The Well-Being of the Person, the Community and the Planet* hosted by the McGill University Retiree Association. Merry represented USRA at the CURAC AGM virtually.
- **Be What the World Needs Finale** – June 18 at Merlis Belcher Place to mark the conclusion of the largest campaign in Saskatchewan's history. With the support of thousands of donors, friends and alumni from around the world, \$570,739,155 was raised to support the people, projects and places at USask.
- **Members and Awards Celebration** – on June 24 at Louis', celebrated our members and recognized nine highly accomplished USask retirees.

Sincere thanks are extended to all Board members and their committees for work on our behalf: Bob Card, Bryan Harvey, Jacqueline Huck, David Mandeville, Vera Pezer, Beryl Radcliffe, Kathryn Warden and Tom Wilson. This past year we bid farewell to Peggy Proctor and welcomed Hope Bilinski and Nigel Rawson to the Board. Our thanks to former Board member Rick Bunt, who was instrumental in negotiating our MOU, and advising on ICT matters. Our thanks, as always, to university leaders and staff, many noted above, for their support of the Association.

We look forward to seeing you at our **Annual General Meeting** on Wednesday, October 15 at 2:00, following lunch and a presentation with the always engaging Jeff O'Brien, City Archivist. We send you all our best regards.

Respectfully submitted,

Merry Beazely and Jim Thornhill
Co-Presidents

REPORT OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Members: Merry Beazely (Chair), Bryan Harvey, David Mandeville, Vera Pezer, Kathryn Warden, and Jim Thornhill

The work of the Awards Committee culminated in an excellent **Members and Awards Celebration**, held on June 24, 2025 at Louis Loft. Jim Thornhill, USRA Co-President, presided and acknowledged the Indigenous land on which we are celebrating. It was wonderful to have Cheryl Hamlin, Vice President University Relations, bring greetings from the university. Jim thanked all of our USRA members and welcomed award nominators, who presented the following awards.

OHPAHOTÂN | OOHPAAHOTAAN LET US FLY UP TOGETHER AWARD

Recognizes meaningful and significant contributions of a USask individual retiree, or a pair or group that includes one or more USask retiree, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, towards achieving the commitments of the Indigenous strategy for the University. We were honoured to recognize two Individuals with this award:

- **Elder Roland Duquette** – Kathryn Warden nominated and was honored to present this award to highly respected and revered Eagle Staff Bearer Elder Duquette.
- **Dr. Ernie Walker** – nominated by the USRA Board, David Mandevill thanked Ernie for his outstanding role in establishing Waneskewin Heritage park.

CONTINUING CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Recognizes persons who have retired from the University, and have continued to make research, scholarly, artistic or service contributions, whether scholarly, artistic or service at an exceptional level, for the benefit of society. The USRA was pleased to recognize two deserving individuals.

- **Dr. Michael Atkinson** – nominators Dr. Haizhen Mou and Amber McCuaig presented, noting that Michael's dedication and impact to the community of USask is unmatched.
- **Ross Wilson** – nominated by Shannon Chinn and Nicole Orr, Coach Steve Kook presented Ross this award for his dedication to excellence, quality and integrity in university sports.

HONORARY LIFE AWARD

Recognizes USRA members who have made a significant contribution over a long period to the USRA and the University community. Three Honorary Life Award recipients were recognized this year, as nominated by the USRA Board.

- **Mary Dykes** – nominated by the USRA Board, presenter Jackie Huck thanked Mary for her many contributions to the USRA, noting her important role when the Non-Academic Retiree Association joined with USRA.
- **Dr. Bryan Harvey** – nominated by the USRA Board, presenter Jim Thornhill thanked Bryan, our *Éminence grise*, for his long-time service to both the USRA and CURAC.
- **Eileen Harvey** – nominated by the USRA Board, presenter Merry Beazely thanked Eileen for her many contributions on the USRA Board, notably planning of the USRA Awards process.

PRIME OF LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Honours and expresses appreciation of persons who have retired from work at the University and, after their retirement, have been recognized for outstanding scholarly, artistic or service contributions, recognized by international, national, provincial or local bodies.

- **Dr. Bruce E. Coulman** – nominated by Dr. Bryan Harvey, Dr. Tom Wilson congratulated Bruce on his recent induction into both the Saskatchewan and Canadian Agriculture Halls of Fame for his outstanding contributions to agriculture and food industry.

THE DUFF SPAFFORD AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Recognizes a USask retiree based on total contribution made to the university community over the period of the retiree's association with the University, including any contributions made during student years by a candidate who is an alumnus.

- **Dr. Ernie Olfert** – presented by Tom Wilson, the USRA was honoured to posthumously recognize Ernie with this award, for his passion and commitment to humane animal care at USask, Canada and beyond. We were pleased that Ernie's partner Diane could accept the award on his behalf and that Shirley Spafford could be with us.

The USRA also extends congratulations to USask retirees who have received awards this past year from other organizations. Murray Scharf received the **Volunteer Award for Advocacy** from the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) at the 2024 Celebrating Seniors event on September 29 in Regina. Congratulations, Murray. Dr. Vera Pezer received USask's highest honor, an **Honorary Doctor of Laws** degree (LL.D.), on June 5, recognizing both her scholarly achievements and her service to the University.

Thanks are extended to Awards Committee colleagues Kathryn Warden, Vera Pezer, David Mandeville, Bryan Harvey and Jim Thornhill. Special thanks to Jackie Huck, USRA Secretary, for preparing the award certificates

and maintaining the award displays in our Retirees Lounge on campus; and to Alisha Gaudet, .40 FTE Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator for the USRA, for her valuable assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Merry Beazely, Chair

REPORT OF THE CURAC REPRESENTATIVE 2024-2025

USRA members are all members of CURAC, a federation of retiree organizations at colleges and universities, representing more than 24,000 university retirees across Canada. USRA is represented on CURAC by:

- CURAC Representative – Bryan Harvey
- CURAC Conference Committee – Merry Beazely
- CURAC Health Policy Committee – Tom Wilson
- CURAC Later Life Learning Committee – Beryl Radcliffe.

CURAC Highlights

- *CURAC News!* recently relaunched to share stories with retiree colleagues and peers.
- Western University's [Western Retiree Chapter](#) welcomed to the CURAC family.
- McGill University hosted an excellent conference in May 2025 (see [Conference | McGill University Retiree Association - McGill University](#)) that included CURAC's AGM attended virtually by Merry. The CURAC Conference Committee chaired by Janet Kaufman, is working with colleagues hoping to plan the 2026 Conference in BC.
- Additional benefits for retiree association members recently negotiated with thanks to Ron Champion, CURAC Benefits Committee chair (see [Member Benefits — CURAC](#)).

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Harvey and Merry Beazely

REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Members: Jacqueline Huck (Chair), Joe Angel, Bob Card, and Kathryn Warden

Newsletters

Newsletters were distributed to members in November of 2024 and in April and September of 2025.

Thanks to Mary Dykes for supporting the committee by compiling the November 2024 newsletter during the recruitment process for the Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator position. Alaisha Gaudet was appointed in December 2024 to fill this position and we thank Alaisha for providing support in compiling the April and September 2025 issues.

The committee especially thanks the authors who have contributed interesting and informative articles and the Board members who have reviewed our newsletters before distribution. We would encourage members to submit ideas or provide articles for the newsletter.

I also wish to thank Bob, Kathryn and Joe for their expertise and assistance in publishing our issues.

Website

USRA continues to use the USask Cascade system to maintain and update our website at <https://usra.usask.ca/>.

The committee thanks Mary Dykes and Alaisha Gaudet for their assistance in maintaining our website.

University Communications

Members are reminded of the following USask publications that they are eligible to receive. If you do not have access to these publications and wish to receive them, please let us know.

- **Retirement Channel** (accessed through PAWS)
- **Discovery Digest** (a compilation of research and news stories; access publication by signing up or visiting the [Research website](#))
- **YOU | Sask Faculty and Staff Newsletter** (includes news and events)
- **News releases** (contact Daniel Hallen: daniel.hallen@usask.ca)
- **On Campus News** (available only to USRA members who use usask.ca e-mail addresses)
- **Green & White** Alumni monthly newsletter (sign up to receive this monthly newsletter by completing this short form: <https://greenandwhite.usask.ca/updates/subscribe-to-green-white-monthly.php>). Note: While the form asks for a USask degree, this is not a mandatory field.

Policy Update

A Framework for USask Communications/USRA Promotion of Retirees' Books and Awards has been prepared by Kathryn Warden to promote how books, notable retiree achievements, and major recognitions could be further highlighted by the university, with support from USRA. If you have an award or book you would like promoted, please e-mail us at ss.usra@usask.ca.

The Communication Committee's role in disseminating information to our members is posted on the website. See Policies and Procedures in our [Governance Documents](#).

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Huck, Chair, on behalf of the Communication Committee

REPORT OF THE EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND RECREATION COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Members: Jim Thornhill (Chair), Bob Card, David Mandeville, and Beryl Radcliffe

An oral report will be presented at the AGM on October 15th.

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Members: Beryl Radcliffe (Chair) and Jacqueline Huck

Report on Committee Activities

The Membership Committee is responsible for contacting USRA retirees and keeping records of members in an ongoing effort to recruit and retain them. These tasks require timely correspondence about membership dues and updating contact information when necessary for members and for their spouses who inherit their Life Memberships, overseeing payment of annual dues for those who do not take out Life Memberships and, after appropriate reminders, deleting the names of those who continue not to pay or who express a wish to discontinue their memberships.

We also make an effort to keep up with obituaries published in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix and with other reports of the deaths of members and to remember them in our USRA Newsletter and at our Annual General Meeting.

We had an information table at the USask Employee Appreciation Picnic held on June 24 where the USRA members had recruitment information, pens and the ever-popular Timbits. The President's Reception for USask Retirees was held on May 20 where the USRA Co-Presidents presented the benefits of becoming a member of the USRA.

This year, USRA will not be participating in the 2025 Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) Spotlight on Seniors event at TCU Place. The theme for this year's event is *Creating Your Own Path*. We encourage members to attend the event scheduled for October 7 from 9:00 to 3:00. Admission is \$15 (cash only).

The university administration has agreed again this year to circulate our annual letter inviting recent retirees to join USRA.

Thank you to USRA administrative support, Alaisha Gaudet, for providing support to the Membership Committee. Alaisha assisted in sending out the renewal reminder letters and there was a good response. Early renewals are welcome and the membership will be extended accordingly. At present we have 425 members, of which 380 are Life members. Payment of fees can be paid either by cash, cheque or e-transfer to wilsontw1985@gmail.com.

USRA Annual Dues for 2025-2026

The USRA continues to offer retirees a free one-year membership in their first year of retirement. After that year, the membership fees are as follows:

Annual Membership: \$20

Life Membership:

<60 years \$200

60-64 \$180

65-69 \$160

70-74 \$130

75-79 \$100

80+ \$ 70

After answering any questions that the meeting raises about membership, I shall conclude this report by having the names read of those about whose deaths we have learned since the 2024 Annual General Meeting. Then we shall call for a moment of silence to remember them.

Respectfully submitted,

Beryl Radcliffe, Chair

MEMBERS NO LONGER WITH US

We have learned of the deaths of the following members since our report at the October 16, 2024 Annual General Meeting. For additional information about these deceased members, please consult our November 2024, April 2025 and September 2025 newsletters, which are accessible under Publications on our website: <https://usra.usask.ca>.

Anna Marie Andree (October 9, 1940-September 18, 2024)

Donald Gordon Bates (March 20, 1930-April 25, 2024)

James Edward Beamer (September 23, 1937-March 16, 2024)

Peter G. Bietenholz (January 7, 1933-December, 2023)

Elizabeth “Betty” Burwell (nee Collyer) (July 5, 1934-December 18, 2024)

William Yu-Fang Chen (May 11, 1927-July 23, 2025)

Vera Gorgchuck (January 31, 1929-February 26, 2025)

U. Theodore (Ted) Hammer (March 25, 1924-July 20, 2025)

Peter (Pete) John Curtis Harnestone (September 27, 1950-September 12, 2024)

Gordon Edward Johnson (September 21, 1934-March 11, 2025)

Jack Adam Cleveland Kernan (August 16, 1927-September 23, 2024)

Laurence Kitzan (September 18, 1936-February 4, 2025)

Sarv Krishna Lakhanpal (July 31, 1928-December 25, 2024)

Serge Nazarenko (January 26, 1930-December 20, 2024)

Ernest Daniel Olfert (August 7, 1943-March 19, 2025)

Dorothy Ostlund (February 15, 1930 - July 12, 2025)

Ruth Doreen Reiter (October 29, 1937-February 20, 2025)

Margaret Vilma Swan (November 22, 1930-April 3, 2025)

Marilyn Elizabeth Underhill (October 24, 1933-March 19, 2025)

REPORT OF THE ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2024-2025

An oral report will be presented at the AGM on October 15th.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HONORARY DEGREES 2024-2025

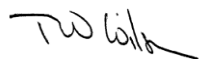
Members: Thomas Wilson (Chair), Merry Beazely, Bryan Harvey, Vera Pezer, Asit Sarkar, and Kathryn Warden

We were delighted that our nominee for USRA President, Vera Pezer, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws on June 5th, 2025. Once again, this nomination from our Association was welcomed by the Senate.

On a less happy note, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Father André on July 2, 2025. His legacy as founder of Str8Up will be forever remembered.

As always, I thank the committee members for their help and suggestions.

Respectfully submitted,



Tom Wilson, Chair

REPORT OF THE CAMPUS HERITAGE COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Members: Merry Beazely (Chair), Bob Card, Vera Pezer, and Kathryn Warden

A Proposal for Asset Management of USask Heritage Artifacts was submitted to the previous Provost and the Interim Dean of the Library. Our current Provost, Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio, is awaiting the appointment of the new Dean of Libraries before undertaking further discussions with USRA. Thanks to Yannis Papatourougrou, Patrick Hayes, Bob, Vera and Kathryn for crafting the proposal.

Thanks also to Kathryn for instituting the regular feature ***Spotlight on USask History*** to our USRA newsletters. ***Recent Books by USRA Authors***: History of Hemophilia Care in Canada was featured in the September newsletter by Bob Card. Vera is USRA's representative on the Stone Barn Fundraising Group; nothing new to report at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Merry Beazely, Chair

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO REVIEW USRA DOCUMENTS 2024-2025

Members: Merry Beazely (Chair), Bryan Harvey, David Mandeville, and Jim Thornhill

The committee has been awaiting changes to some of our operating procedures, notably instituting additional internal financial controls and collecting of the nominal annual fee for members to retain the

USask ICT services, including email. Our governance documents will be revised in the year ahead to reflect these.

Respectfully submitted,

Merry Beazely, Chair

REPORT FROM THE USASK SENATE REPRESENTATIVE 2024-2025

The *Senate* is the university's window on the province and the province's window on the university.

The involvement of the USRA came about after a casual conversation with a senator at Spring convocation 2022. After discussions among the members of the Board of Directors of USRA a nomination form was submitted on November 11, 2023.

The senate approved our application at the April 20, 2024 meeting. I was asked to take on the role of senator representing the USRA and attended my first meeting on October 26, 2024. This was followed by the spring meeting on April 26, 2025 with the next meeting scheduled for October 25, 2025.

The senate's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- appointing the Chancellor
- confirming decisions of Council related to admission requirements and quotas.
- recommending to the Board or Council any matters of things that the senate considers necessary to promote the interests of the university.
- the granting of honorary degrees.
- non-academic student discipline.

The mornings of the Saturday sessions are taken up with reports from the various university personalities, appointment of the Chancellor in the spring of 2025, granting of honorary degrees, and other such matters that fall under the senate's responsibility.

After lunch, the group usually breaks off into table discussions to brainstorm issues around the university's involvement with the general community of the province, how we can meet the needs of the province, and how we can possibly involve the non-academic population, businesses and organizations that surround us.

Although being associated with the university for over 50 years, being a member of Senate has given me quite a different view of the university and its workings.

Full details of the governance structure of the university can be found on the USask website under "[Governance](#)."

Respectfully submitted,

David Mandeville

REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Members: Jim Thornhill (Chair), Merry Beazely, Kathryn Warden, and Tom Wilson

The Nominations Committee is pleased to present to the membership the following list of officers for executive positions and the directors for the 2025–2026 year, all for one-year terms.

Election Slate:

President: Vera Pezer

Vice-President: Hope Bilinski

Secretary: Jacqueline Huck

Treasurer: Tom Wilson

Immediate Past President: Merry Beazely

Directors: Joe Angel, Bob Card, David Mandeville, Nigel Rawson, and Kathryn Warden

We are most appreciative that Vera Pezer has agreed to take on the presidential duties this year. We are also very appreciative that Tom Wilson and Jacqueline Huck have again agreed to continue in their very important roles as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively. Merry Beazely, Kathryn Warden, Bob Card, and David Mandeville are continuing on the board to share their time and talents with us in the upcoming year.

Jim Thornhill, Bryan Harvey and Beryl Radcliffe are stepping away from the USRA board and we thank them for their time and efforts in growing the USRA mandate.

We are delighted to relate to the membership that two new board members will be joining us for the upcoming year.

The first new board member is Hope Bilinski, who is a registered nurse with over 40 years of combined experience in rural clinical practice, education, research, and leadership. Hope has had vast experience and interest in advancing nursing education, program accreditation, interprofessional health education, and rural health. She is also a strong advocate for patient/family-centred care. She has played a leadership role in the College of Nursing as Associate Dean Academic in advancing the nursing curriculum and provincial access to nursing education. We are delighted that Hope has agreed to take on the position of Vice-President for the year ahead.

Our second new board member is Dr. Nigel Rawson, independent researcher, who is a pharmacoepidemiologist and pharmaceutical policy researcher and currently a senior fellow with both the McDonald – Laurier and Fraser Institutes in Canada. Dr. Rawson was educated in the UK and has an MSc in statistics and a PhD in pharmacoepidemiology. Dr. Rawson has performed epidemiologic studies concerning prescription drug safety and other pharmaceutical policy issues for over 40 years. He has published over 150 peer reviewed articles, book chapters and media opinion articles on pharmaceutical policy issues in this country and beyond. He has held academic positions in both the UK and Canada (Memorial University, and from 1990-1998 at the University of Saskatchewan with cross appointments in the Colleges of Medicine, and Pharmacy and Nutrition). Since 2012 he has continued as an independent researcher with a mission to create data-driven results to pharmaceutical policy issues.

Note that the election of new board members at the AGM will be by acclamation unless further nominations, each signed by three members of the association, are received by the secretary at least 15 days prior to the meeting on October 15. Please see USRA's By-Laws (Section 10) on the USRA website.

If you have any questions or are interested in serving with us on the board in the future, please contact Jim Thornhill at jim.thornhill@usask.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Thornhill, Chair, on behalf of the Nominations Committee

DRAFT