

UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association

"Your opportunity to explore new ideas, be engaged and stay connected to UNL"

This newsletter is archived at emeriti-retirees@unl.edu

FEBRUARY 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Welcome and Happy February 2025!
- Welcome new Emeriti and Retirees Association Members
- Your 2025 ERA Board
- Award-winning ERA Members
- Wake Up to Well-being
- Book Review
- Funding Opportunities for ERA Members
- Glow BIG RED
- A Look Ahead at Programming
- Recapping Past Programming
- Memory Moments
- Special Announcements

**Welcome new Emeriti
and Retirees
Association Members**



Congrats!

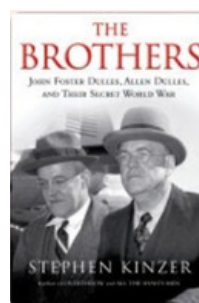
ERA Members Recognized!

Congratulations to Nancy Mitchell for winning the Doc Elliott Award and Bob Diffendal for winning the Wisherd Service Award.



Wake Up Well-being

Learn how enhancing social well-being can boost your sense of connection and longevity.



Book Review

Discover this insightful, intriguing, and thought-provoking book. Rita encourages you to read it to assess your recall of junior high and high school history lessons.

WELCOME TO THE UNL EMERITI AND RETIREES ASSOCIATION (ERA) AND HAPPY FEBRUARY 2025!

BY PAM EDWARDS, ERA PRESIDENT

My name is Pam Edwards, and I am honored to follow Larry Dlugosh as the new president of the UNL ERA. Let us extend our heartfelt gratitude to Larry for his visionary and action-packed leadership throughout 2024. Kudos also to the outstanding ERA board and committee members for their creative and dedicated contributions to our organization. Under Larry's guidance, the ERA developed and began implementing a strategic plan with five goals for 2024, and the board is already hard at work on plans for 2025. I look forward to sharing progress updates in future communications.

For my inaugural greeting in the 2025 ERA Newsletter, I pondered the best way to kick off the year. I chose to share a short story about why I joined the ERA, what it means to me, and my vision for the ERA in 2025.



After retiring from UNL in October 2022 after 26 fulfilling years with University Dining Services/University Housing, I faced the challenge of adjusting to life without the daily interactions with my wonderful colleagues. Fortunately, I discovered the ERA through pre-retirement programs sponsored by the UNL Benefits Department. The ERA presentation highlighted the exciting programs and activities available, prompting me to join immediately upon retirement. It was one of the best decisions I've made, as I was warmly welcomed into a vibrant community of friends.

To me, the ERA represents a community that maintains my connection to UNL in new and meaningful ways. I have met new friends and reconnected with former colleagues, participated in educational programs and tours on diverse topics such as nutrition, cognition, the 2024 elections, regenerative agriculture, and a tour of Kiewit Hall. I have enjoyed fun times at monthly general meetings, social events, committee meetings, and various activities. Additionally, I have volunteered at community engagement programs, including the Center for People, UNL voter registration, and the Domesti-Pups Dog Expo. These opportunities and more are available to all ERA members.

Looking ahead to 2025, my vision for the ERA includes building on the strong foundation established over the years and providing members with a variety of opportunities for involvement. Our focus will be on expanding membership, presenting timely educational programs and social activities, supporting students through scholarships and mentorship, identifying key issues for study, encouraging member involvement, exploring new partnerships, implementing organizational operations for a growing community, organizing volunteer activities, and most importantly, having fun.

The beauty of ERA involvement is that you can participate as much or as little as you like. The key is to take advantage of these new retirement adventures, stay active, and become part of this dynamic community. Connie Boehm, our ERA Newsletter chair, has crafted a newsletter filled with informative and enjoyable articles and ideas for involvement.

If you have any areas of interest, ideas, or questions, please reach out to an ERA board member or myself. For a comprehensive overview of our programs and activities, as well as a detailed list of ERA membership benefits, please visit our website at [URL].

An exciting 2025 awaits us, and I am grateful for each of you. I look forward to getting to know you all!

Warm regards,
Pam Edwards

WELCOME NEW ERA MEMBERS!

BY DON WEEKS, ERA MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Welcome to the 23 new ERA members who joined from October 1, 2024 to January 1, 2025. If you joined during that time period but do not see your name, please contact me at dweeks1@unl.edu so that we can include you in the next newsletter.

Timothy Brown, University of Nebraska High School

Craig E. Chandler, Office of University Communications

Valerie J. Crook, Pixel Lab

Kwame Dawes, English

Mark L. Ells, Center on Children, Families and the Law

Teresa Eileen Fangman, Center of Biotechnology

Marilyn J. Fenton, Financial Systems

David C. Gosselin, School of Natural Resources

Scott A. Hawco, Print and Mail Services

Elizabeth A. Jensen, Dining Services

Li Heqing, Office of the University Registrar

Wendy L. Kahland, Center on Children, Families and the Law

Cheryl Kane, Mathematics

Caroline A. Kollmann, Human Resources

Mark N. Leonard, University Television

Paul T. Linder, Custodial Services

Brett T. Meyer, Custodial Services

Sarah Michaels, Political Science

Kathryn A. Olson, Center on Children, Families and the Law

Sue E. Ostrander, Student Accounts

Teresa A. Riggins, Athletics

Susan L. Sarver, Buffet Early Childhood Institute

Joyce A. Starke, Center on Children, Families and the Law



YOUR ERA BOARD FOR 2025



Sylvana Airan
Community Engagement



Connie Boehm
Publications



Larry Dlugosh
Past President



Pam Edwards
President



Jim Griesen
Bylaws and Policies



Kim Hachiya
Secretary



Earl Hawkey
Scholarships



Debbie Hendricks
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Gary Heusel
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Vicki Highstreet
Vice President



Julie Johnson
Bylaws and Policies



Rita Kean
Board Director



Marjorie Kostelnik
Awards



Jim Lewis
Board Director



Tom McFarland
Board Director



Nancy Mitchell
Board Director



Roshan Pajnigar
Benefits



Lyda Snodgrass
Board Director



Alfred Stark
Digital Communications



Don Weeks
Membership



Jane Zatechka
Social Activities

ERA HONORS ROBERT DIFFENDAL WITH 2024 WISHERD AWARD

BY MARJORIE KOSTELNIK, ERA AWARDS CHAIR

The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association (ERA) annually recognizes one of its members for outstanding service to University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) or to the larger community. The recipient must have been retired from the University for at least two years and only volunteer service to the University since retirement is considered.

Robert Diffendal easily met those criteria and was selected to receive the 2024 Wisherd Award for Service to UNL. For over two decades since his retirement as Professor Emeritus, Conservation and Survey Division, Bob has presented talks, led field trips, and provided professional services for more than twenty thousand people of all ages including: serving on graduate committees, presenting geological field trips and lectures, continuing to serve on many university committees, serving as unpaid curator of the invertebrate paleontology collections of the University of Nebraska State Museum, and teaching OLLI courses on mosaics of the fossils in the Nebraska capitol. In the past year alone Bob has given over 23 talks and workshops for more than 650 individuals! As one of his nominators wrote, "Bob has exemplified the epitome of outstanding service to the university." For these and a number of other service activities, UNL ERA is proud to recognize Dr. Robert Diffendal as recipient of the 2024 Wisherd Award for Outstanding Service to UNL.



Bob Diffendal accepts the 2024 Wisherd Award from Patricia Crews at the ERA Annual Luncheon held in December at Innovation Campus.

Each recipient is honored by a \$500 donation in their name to the ERA Scholarship Fund designated for a sophomore or junior UNL student with financial need.

Nominations For Next Year's Wisherd Service Awards are Due May 15

Potential Awards address:

- **Outstanding Community Service**
- **Outstanding Service to UNL**
- **National/International Humanitarian Service**

Visit the ERA website for more information about each award and the nomination process.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS DOC ELLIOTT AWARD

Nancy Mitchell received the Doc Elliott Award, which is conferred by the Alumni Association to a retired faculty member who made a deep impact on students.

Established in 1986, the Doc Elliott award is named in honor of Curt 'Doc' Elliott. Dr. Elliott, although nationally known for his reputation as an economist specializing in insurance, was known for the rapport he established with his students in UNL's College of Business Administration. Doc Elliott's classes were vastly popular, so much so that he taught by television and lectured across the state. This award honors a retired UNL faculty member who has exhibited a record of exemplary service, whose caring has made a difference in the lives of students and alumni and who has gone beyond traditional expectations. Recipients must be former faculty members of UNL who have been retired at least five years.



Shelley Zaborowski, Executive Director of the Nebraska Alumni Association, presented Nancy Mitchell with the Doc Elliott Award at the ERA Annual Luncheon in December.

Nancy Mitchell is a Professor Emerita of Advertising and Public Relations in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and also held the positions of department chair in the College as well as UNL Director of Undergraduate Education Programs for a number of years.

Mitchell established herself as a champion for institutionalizing and promoting high-impact practices, especially civic engagement and service learning, for students and faculty. She also successfully spearheaded innovative initiatives around curriculum, assessment, learning communities and student learning. She was an advocate for academic excellence, working to solve problems that achieved university priorities and inspire others. Her administrative leadership improved students' lives.

Mitchell improved community support for transfer students, streamlining the credit-equivalency processes across colleges, implementing Transferology software and creating a learning community and peer mentor program for transfer students. She also worked to establish ACE transfer credit for military and veteran students.

WAKE UP YOUR SOCIAL WELL-BEING

BY CONNIE BOEHM, ERA PUBLICATIONS CHAIR



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln defines social well-being as the creation and maintenance of healthy, diverse relationships. The Emeriti and Retiree Association (ERA) provides numerous opportunities to enhance social well-being.

Just as we monitor our physical well-being, we should also track our social well-being. This can be done by noting who supports us, evaluating the strength and consistency of those connections, and considering ways to improve our social well-being.

There are three types of connections: personal relationships, community involvement, and other forms of engagement. Research has demonstrated that individuals who actively participate in groups such as the ERA that support both personal relationships and a community are healthier and live longer.

Ways to enhance your social well-being include:

- Practicing self-compassion which is essential for enhancing social well-being. Treat yourself with the same care and consideration you would extend to a close friend. It is important to be less critical and more forgiving towards yourself, especially when errors occur.
- Encourage others to accompany you on some of your preferred activities.
- Volunteer and give back to your community.
- Engage with friends by asking questions and listening attentively.
- Express vulnerability with others.
- The quality of social connections matters more than quantity.
- Be deliberate in forming connections with others, similar to how you strengthen muscles.

Remember that fostering social well-being is a gradual process that requires patience and persistence. Engage in activities that naturally connect you with others, such as joining clubs, taking classes, or participating in community events.

If you would like to explore social well-being further please check out the book, Killam, Kelsey. *The Art and Science of Connection*.

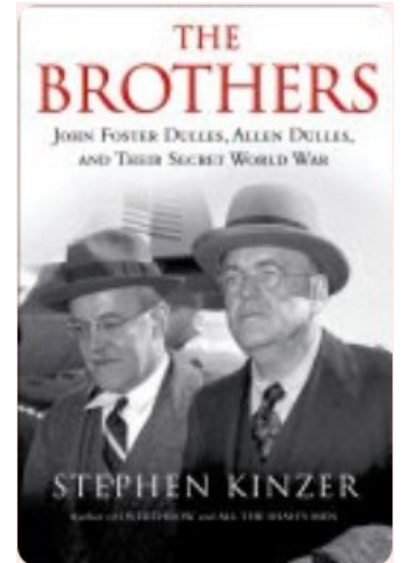
BOOK REVIEW—THE BROTHERS: JOHN FOSTER DULLES, ALLEN DULLES AND THEIR SECRET WORLD WAR
BY STEPHEN KINZER
 REVIEW WRITTEN BY RITA WEEKS

John Foster Dulles was US Secretary of State 1953-1959.
 Allen Dulles was long serving Director of CIA 1953-1969

The Cold War Era encompassed my days as a student in junior high and high school. Those years when I learned to read the newspaper because a “pop quiz” in history class might have a question about a country I had never visited or a world leader in the news. I was learning about government, politics and how to frame my votes in the future. The beginnings of my civic education.

The first chapters of this book convince me that I retained nothing from those years. This book is filled with narrative and scenarios that I had never learned. Complexities of international relations dot the chapters. Brief descriptions of how persons came to be in powerful roles in the US. The tangled webs and networks that link us people to people, government to industry, country to country and truth to perceptions. It is not the retelling of evening news stories.

I have a different mental image of our world after opening this book. Enlightening, frightening, understanding and mystifying. My horizons are broader after reading The Brothers.



Rita and her daughter, Emily, celebrating Rita's birthday

*Rita was one of the first neighbors I met when I moved to Lincoln, Nebraska over eight years ago. Her humor and welcoming behavior made me feel accepted in the area. I soon observed her dedication and contributions to the Lincoln community. She shared the dolls and clothes she made for children in need and helped me collect coats for college students.

*Rita did not want to provide a bio so I wrote one for her from my perspective. Connie Boehm

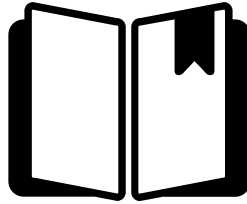
FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ERA MEMBERS

BY MARJORIE KOSTELNIK, ERA AWARDS CHAIR

Call for proposals to seek funding through the Maude E. Wisherd Grant for Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant



RESEARCH



SCHOLARLY WORK



CREATIVE ACTIVITY

- Are you a dues-paying member of the UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association?
- Are you engaged in research or other scholarly/creative work that could benefit from funding up to **\$2,000** to achieve the project's aims?

If you answered yes to both queries, then you are eligible to apply for potential funding (maximum of \$2,000) through the Maude E. Wisherd Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant program. This fund is intended to provide financial support to projects planned or in progress that need additional resources to reach a satisfactory outcome.

Examples of work that qualifies for this funding include, but are not limited to, publication costs associated with a book or journal article; documenting the history of a program, department, or college; or creative projects related to UNL or the community. Funds are limited and are awarded on a competitive basis. The number of awards varies from year to year and depends on the total dollars available annually.

The deadline for submissions is **March 15**. Submit applications and 3 letters of support by email to Patricia Crews by email (Pcrews1@unl.edu). All applications will be reviewed by the UNL ERA Awards Committee in April and notifications will follow soon thereafter.

For more specific details regarding eligibility and a description of the application process refer to the [ERA website](#).



**REMEMBER THE DEADLINE TO
APPLY IS MARCH 15!**



The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association is again participating in the University wide Glow Big Red day of giving. Glow Big Red runs from noon Feb. 12 to noon Feb. 13, although you can donate NOW.

Here are the critical information points:

1. Go to <https://glowbigred.unl.edu>
2. Either search for Emeriti and Retirees Association Scholarship Fund OR
3. Type in this fund identification number: 01157580

Note, we have two funds at the NU Foundation so if you want to give to the Scholarship Fund, be sure that you have specified that.

We are raising funds specifically for our Scholarship and we have several matching donors who will be match your giving totals. This is our biggest fund raiser event each year. We started this fund in 2021, and reached our first endowment level, \$30,000, by the end of that year. Our first scholarship was awarded in 2023. Since then, we have exceeded \$80,000 in the fund, allowing us to give two scholarships and we would like to reach \$90,000 to be able to fund three scholarships annually. The recipients (chosen by the UNL Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid) must have sophomore or higher standing and have demonstrated financial need.

The Foundation's goal for Glow Big Red is 5,500 individual gifts. We currently have \$1475 in gifts! If you give at least \$75 in total giving, you will get a thank you gift of a pair of red fleece mittens with an N on them.

There are hundreds of UNL-affiliated organizations participating in Glow Big Red, representing student groups, arts groups, libraries, museums, colleges and other entities. Each of us probably has several groups we support.

Remember, supporting our scholarship is entirely optional and anonymous if you wish. I encourage you to support our scholarship, or any of the many worthy organizations participating in Glow Big Red.

Thank you.

Kim Hachiya

ERA Recording Secretary
Glow Big Red Ambassador



**REMEMBER THE DEADLINE TO GIVE
IS FEBRUARY 13!**

THE ERA PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO CONNECT, ENGAGE AND SERVE. THE NEXT FEW PAGES HIGHLIGHT THESE OPPORTUNITIES.

A LOOK AHEAD AT SPRING 2025 PROGRAMMING

EDUCATIONAL LUNCHEONS

Members and a guest are invited to attend educational luncheon sessions starting at 11:30 am. Please look for program announcements in your email and register online. Contact Vicki Highstreet, Program Chair, vickihighstreet@gmail.com with questions and suggestions.

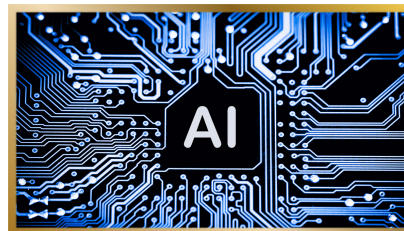
February 12, 2025

Speaker: Dr. Adrian Wisnicki, Professor, English Department, UNL

Topic: Artificial Intelligence Today and Tomorrow

Location: Nebraska East Union

Time: 11:30 am



March 13, 2025

Speaker: Michael Forsberg, Research Assistant Professor, School of Natural Resources, UNL

Topic: Photography in the Wild

Location: Nebraska East Union

Time: 11:30 am



April 10, 2025

Speaker: Dr. Jeffrey Stevens, Susan J. Rosowski Professor, Psychology, UNL

Topic: Canine Research and the ManyDogs Project

Location: Nebraska East Union

Time: 11:30 am



TOURS

Tours are also held at various times and locations on and off campus. Please look for tour announcements in your email and register online. Contact Nancy Mitchell, Educational Activities Chair, nancy.mitchell@unl.edu, with questions and suggestions.



March 27, 2025

Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior (CB3)

Location: Memorial Stadium

Time: Two tours with one starting at **10 am** and another at **10:30 am**



May 21, 2025

Lied Center Season Preview, Backstage Tour and coffee chat

Guide: Holden Franken, Events Coordinator

Location: Lied Center for Performing Arts

Time: **2:00 - 3:30 pm**

A LOOK AHEAD AT SPRING 2025 PROGRAMMING (CONTINUED)

Coffee Chats

These events are Informal gatherings without presentations. Please look for coffee chat announcements in your email and register online. Contact Social Activities Co-Chairs, Jane Zatechka janezatechka@gmail.com or James Griesen jgriesen1@unl.edu, with questions and suggestions.

February 20, 2025

Location: Meadowlark Coffee & Espresso
1624 South Street
Time: 9:30- 11:00 am



March 25, 2025

Location: Meadowlark Coffee & Espresso
1624 South Street
Time: 9:30- 11:00 am



April 29, 2025

Location: Meadowlark Coffee & Espresso
1624 South Street
Time: 9:30- 11:00 am



May 13, 2025

Location: Wilderness Ridge
1800 Wilderness Woods Place
Time: 9:30- 11:00 am



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The benefits of involvement in the community are many especially when we are retired. Staying connected to others is vital to our well-being. Involvement in activities that require thinking, planning and problem solving help keep our minds sharp. Contact Community Engagement Chair, Sylvana Airan, sylvanaairan@gmail.com.



As a member of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE), ERA is offering you the chance to participate in the **Virtual Learning Series 2025 on Reimagining Retirement**. The series will cover two main topics: **Holistic Cognitive Health** and **Cyber Fraud and Personal Security Insights**.

Sessions include:

- **Feb 25:** Healthy Cognition: The science of memory and forgetting
- **March 11:** Navigating Change: Strategies for Transitional Times
- **March 25:** Personal Stories: Tips from Retirees on Managing Cognitive Health
- Bonus session: **April 8:** Cyber Fraud and Personal Security Insights

For details and to register, please visit:
[Reimagining Retirement 2025 Register](#)

RECAPPING PAST PROGRAMMING

DECEMBER 2024

December 5, 2024-Holiday Social at Cornhusker Bank

ERA members enjoyed conversation, holiday treats and challenging holiday trivia to kick off the holiday season!



December 12, 2024-ERA Annual Luncheon

Chancellor Bennett highlighted accomplishments at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Shelley Zaborowski awarded the 'Doc' Elliot Award from the Nebraska Alumni Association to Nancy Mitchell. Patricia Crews presented the Wished Award for Outstanding Service to UNL to Bob Diffendal.

The Chancellor's Office, UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association, the UNL Alumni Association, and NU Foundation co-sponsored this annual luncheon at Innovation Campus to a record number of ERA members.



SPRING 2025

January 14, 2025

Members attended a Coffee Chat at Meadowlark Coffee and Espresso.



January 21, 2025

Dr. Karen Kassebaum, Global Inclusion Lead at Hudl, led discussions on inclusivity, providing worksheets for further reflection and action.





The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association Board mindfully watches obituaries and posts information on the website regarding deceased emeriti and retirees who are honored with a moment of silence at meetings. The following names were announced since November 1, 2024. According to board policy, a \$500 contribution will be made each year to the UNL Emeriti and Retirees Scholarship fund in honor of the ERA members who have died that year.

Lynn Erbe, Mathematics

Gerald Finnegan, Finance

Jane Lane, Wife of Les Lane, Plant Pathology

Brian Larkins, Life Sciences

Leo Lucas, Nebraska Extension

Roger Mandigo, Animal Science

Clarice Martin, University Dining Services

John Owens, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Rogene Silletto, Wife of Tom Silletto, Biological Systems Engineering

Deborah Wood, National Drought Mitigation Center



MEMBERSHIP IS FREE THE FIRST YEAR FOR ALL NEW ERA MEMBERS

If you have not already paid your dues as an existing ERA member, please pay your 2025 dues as soon as possible!

You can now pay them online by clicking this [link](#)

OR

Send a \$25.00 check made out to the
Emeriti and Retirees Association and mail to
Earl Hawkey, 5910 Berkeley Drive, Lincoln, NE 68512



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



The **benefits page** on the ERA website has been UPDATED! Visit to see the many benefits available to you as an ERA member.



New lunch protocol for ERA Educational Luncheons starting with March 2025 meeting.



What you need to know...

Please register to attend. Food orders are not required at registration.

Arrive at the dining hall by 11:00 am to avoid lunch lines. If you buy lunch, please bring it in the provided to-go packaging to the meeting room.

Two lunch options:

- Deli meal: Order at the kiosk outside the dining room.
- Dining room: Choose from the menu posted outside or ask for assistance.
- Both options cost **\$10.39** (cash or card).