



EMERITI AND RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Continuing Our Commitment

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

MAY 2025



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Welcome new Emeriti and Retirees Association Members



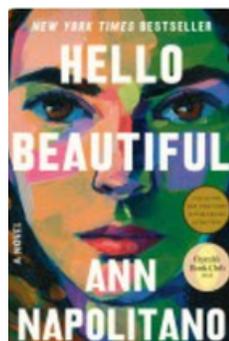
Meet New Officers

Meet the new faces behind the ERA board! Discover their passions, hobbies, and what drives them.



Wake Up Your Well-being

Stay strong, stay independent! Discover how physical well-being keeps us active and thriving.



Book Review

Learn about one of Oprah's Book Club picks for 2023! Oprah described it as a deeply moving story that will make readers see themselves and their relationships in a new way.

ENHANCING AND EXPANDING THE ERA!

BY PAM EDWARDS, ERA PRESIDENT

The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association (ERA) members contribute to students' academic success through their donations to the ERA Scholarship, which is awarded annually to UNL student(s). As graduation and end-of-the-year celebrations approach, ERA members acknowledge the importance of their contributions in supporting scholarship winners. Please check out the scholarship fund on the ERA website to learn more and join us in assisting students.

The ERA Scholarship is just one activity of the ERA. I am excited to provide an update about other ERA activities and to report we have climbed well over the 800-member mark – an all-time high!



ERA Mission Statement

The strategic plan branding committee developed the ERA mission statement, tagline, and graphics. These elements are essential for promoting the organization and are now included in the ERA Bylaws.

Mission Statement

The mission of UNL's Emeriti and Retirees Association is to advance the interests and engagement of members and to support UNL's excellence in teaching, research, and service.

We demonstrate our commitment by:

- participating in social and educational activities, and volunteer opportunities
- providing scholarships for students
- advocating for the University mission and supporting our community of members

Tagline: Continuing our commitment

Graphics: Coming soon!

New ERA Summer Program Schedule – The ERA program committee has planned five summer programs, a great chance for continued learning, fun and community (information on pages 10, 11)

Expand the ERA – OLLI Connection – ERA and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that includes program collaboration and discounted fees for ERA members. Recently leadership expanded the MOU to include co-sponsoring interest groups.

Many thanks to the ERA Board and committee members for their dedicated work on the following strategic goals,

- Goal 1 – The ERA will cultivate a culture of inclusivity through which all retired Emeriti faculty, faculty and staff feel a sense of belonging. Status - Committee is working with other ERA goals and committees on program development.
- Goal 2 – Implement an electronic dues and registration payment system. Completed!
- Goal 3 – By the Spring of 2027, increase the amount of money in the scholarship fund to \$90,000. Status - \$85,600.
- Goal 4 – Identify and validate a brand for the ERA to assist in the promotion of the organization. Status - Mission statement completed, now putting it into action.
- Goal 5 – Partner and connect with pre-retirees and early retirees. Status - The committee is now developing partnerships between board members and early retirees.
- Goal 6 (New 2025) – By December 2026, increase the visibility of the UNL ERA through advocacy for UNL students, the UNL mission, and the NU vision. Status - Currently defining levels of advocacy for the ERA.

ERA Board/Committee Handbook - Work has begun on the development of this resource tool.

Many THANKS to the ERA members and others who participate and share their enthusiasm for learning, community and fun! I encourage anyone interested in getting involved with the ERA to check in with ERA Board members and me. Pam

WELCOME NEW ERA MEMBERS!

BY DON WEEKS, ERA MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Welcome to the 50 new ERA members who joined from January 1, 2025- April 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.

Douglas L. Anderson, Nebraska Extension

Kevin J. Bowder, Landscape Architecture

Wanda K. Bowder, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Kimberly A. Brick, Athletics

Barbara L. Bullington, History

Kathy A. Burr, Nebraska Extension

Kirk J. Conger, Building Systems Maintenance

Melissa J. Darwin, Custodial Services

Lorna M. Dawes, University Libraries

Richard A. DeFusco, Finance

Carolyn K. Ducey, International Quilt Museum

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

Collins Erving, Custodial Services

Marty Everding, Athletics

Karen L. Francis, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Kathleen C. Gallagher, Buffett Early Childhood Institute

Patricia A. Gergen, Food Science and Technology

Belinda S. Gillam, Sponsored Programs

Randy R. Gobel, Athletics

Caren C. Hansen, Nebraska Business Information Systems

Bruce J. Hiller, Building Maintenance

Scott S. Holly, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Julie L. Hopp, Procurement Services

Chansy Keovichith, Custodial Services

Robert A. King, West Central Research and Extension Center

Gregg S. Lemke, Nebraska Forest Service

Huang Li, Center for Plant Science Innovation

Patricia M. Luck, Nebraska Extension

Jana L. Maaske, Campus Dining

Katherine J. Malone, Sponsored Programs

Paul Marxhausen, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Bradley E. Moser, Custodial Services

Ricky C. Nelson, Building Systems Services

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

Loretta L. Pence, Custodial Services

Jane Petersen, Information Technology Services

Donald J. Ray, Information Technology Services

Teresa D. Riggs, Custodial Services

Glen T. Roebke, School of Natural Resources

Bradley A. Roth, NUtech Ventures

Joseph R. Roy, Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Cary R. Savage, Psychology

Marilyn R. Schlake, Agricultural Economics

Elaine F. Steiner, Accounts Payable

Julie A. Stevens, Plant Pathology

Barbara J. Sturgis, Center on Children, Families and the Law

Jayne B. Sutton, Office of the President

Patricia A. Tetreault, Student Affairs

Julie A. Thomsen, University Television

Brenda E. West, College of Arts and Sciences

Sandra L. Wills, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture



MEET YOUR NEW ERA BOARD MEMBERS

PAM EDWARDS—PRESIDENT



In October 2022 I retired from my position as the Assistant Director – University Dining Services/University Housing. My retirement adventure kicked off with the challenge of training Lena, my lively five-month-old English Field Springer Spaniel. Now nearly three years old, Leaping Lena still keeps me on my toes and feeling young! In addition to her endless energy, I stay active with my love for pickleball and golf. Pickleball’s motto—‘Have Fun, Laugh, and just say Oops!’—perfectly captures my approach to staying engaged and enjoying life’s moments. And on Monday nights, the University Golf League offers the perfect opportunity to embrace nature, chase that little white ball, and enjoy the game with easygoing golfers—most of the time! Soon after I retired, I became a Children’s Zoo volunteer where I help prepare animal diets and learn from fantastic Zoo staff members. And I even got to help socialize the cheetah cubs.



Leaping Lena, my English Field Springer Spaniel who LOVES LIFE!

Retirement has unlocked the door to genealogy, allowing me to explore my family’s roots. While the journey has been overwhelming at times, I’m grateful for exceptional genealogical teachers and the enriching OLLI genealogy class that has guided me along the way. This chapter of discovery was made even more special by the September and November 2024 weddings of my two wonderful nieces, Jacqueline and Elizabeth. Jacqueline and Jackson celebrated their love with a magical fall wedding in Lincoln, while Elizabeth and Drew’s November mountain wedding in Denver turned into a breathtaking snowy wonderland—complete with a buck witnessing their vows. A season filled with unforgettable family memories!

Advice for a happy retirement - find your community(ies) and meet new friends, be active, learn, serve others, have fun, be positive and take time for yourself to soak in the wonders around you. For a start, join ERA!



‘The Buck’ made a memorable appearance during Elizabeth and Drew’s marriage vows, almost stealing the show.

VICKI HIGHSTREET—PRESIDENT ELECT



I enjoy reading, especially murder mysteries—a lifelong hobby. Now retired, I also focus on providing development opportunities for individuals and groups. This summer, I’ll relax at a lake in Minnesota and spend time with my daughter there.

I have two daughters, and my youngest has my only grandson who is actively involved in various sports. Consequently, I dedicate much of my spare time to attending his games and band concerts. Additionally, I spend the remainder of my time working with Sertoma, Inc., a hearing health organization, where I provide educational programming for the Regional and International Conventions. ERA has significantly contributed to my dedication to volunteerism. It is highly gratifying to offer engaging opportunities to our members through programs, tours, and social activities.



To have a happy retirement, find what excites you, avoid overcommitting, and stay in touch with friends and former colleagues regularly. I read 3-4 books at a time, and my preferences shift with each new genre.

And last, but definitely not least . . . Go Big Red Volleyball!



MEET YOUR NEW ERA BOARD MEMBERS



DEBBIE HENDRICKS-TREASURER

I am pleased to be serving as the Treasurer of the UNL Emeriti and Retiree’s Association. After almost 45 years of UNL employment, I retired as the executive secretary to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs in 2023. I was very fortunate to have worked at UNL for so long. I was given many opportunities, was able to participate in activities that I had only dreamed of and worked with the most wonderful people, many who are now very dear friends. I was able to take advantage of the employee tuition remission program and consider earning my Bachelor’s Degree one of my greatest joys (and accomplishments).

I love being retired! Although I still run out of time, I can choose my activities. I always make time for:

- Family
- Quilting
- Reading



This is a family photo from the Harry Potter/Hogwarts Brunch at Wilderness Ridge last fall, which we thoroughly enjoyed. Later that day, we hosted a "trunk" at a trick-or-treat event, a delightful experience.

Quilting (or “piecing” if you’re familiar with quilting terms) is where I find my “happy place.” This is what I do to find relaxation and contentment.



""50th Anniversary pic with Retirement Quilt." It was taken in front of the quilt made from squares written on at my retirement reception. Steve and I celebrated our 50th anniversary a few months after retirement, a milestone we are proud of.



LYDA SNODGRASS-DIRECTOR

I was born and raised in Brattleboro, Vermont. I came to UNL as a college freshman and moved into Sandoz Hall. During the spring of my freshman year, I met a sophomore boy from Papillion, Nebraska and we married several years later. I became a “Nebraskamonter” and have lived in Lincoln ever since. I worked for 10 years at a savings and loan and then returned to UNL as Bursar. I replaced a man who held the job for 35 years and I held the job for 33 years (retiring in 2019). During our combined 68 years the two of us shepherded many advancements and much growth in activity. I love the university and all the marvelous people I got to work with. This has therefore been a natural progression to the ERA - continuing my commitment!

I have two daughters who both live in Lincoln and I have four grandsons who are delightful to watch grow and learn and hear their thoughts and feelings. I love choosing how I spend my time and enjoy participating in OLLI classes, taking fitness classes, attending (or watching) sporting events and working in my yard. My travel plans usually involve traveling to see family who all live a flight away from Lincoln!



Go Big Red in the 70s

I look forward to the future of the ERA and the community we can create and support for all who cherish what our university does for us and all residents of Nebraska and, actually, beyond if we pool our energy!

MEET YOUR NEW ERA BOARD MEMBERS

JIM LEWIS-DIRECTOR

I earned my PhD in mathematics at LSU in 1971 a few weeks after Nebraska earned its first national championship in football by defeating LSU in the Orange Bowl. Later that year, I moved to Lincoln to start my career as a young assistant professor. Thus, began a 52-year career at UNL prior to my retirement in August 2023.



Although I had only one job after graduation, I was blessed with many interesting opportunities. These included president of the Faculty Senate, chair of the Department of Mathematics, director of the Center for Science, Mathematics and Computer Education and director of STEM Education Research Initiatives for Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED). I also had the opportunity to spend four years at the National Science Foundation, first as deputy assistant director and then as acting assistant director for the Directorate for Education and Human Resources.

Retirement has made it possible for my wife, Doris, and I to travel more often to visit our children and grandchildren. One son, Steve, is in Chicago, another, Mike, is in Maryland just outside DC. Our daughter, Tanya, lives in London. Between them, we have nine grandchildren that we love seeing. We just returned from a trip to England where we had the opportunity to watch our granddaughter, Estelle, perform with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Philharmonic Orchestra.



Aside from traveling, Doris and I love watching track, especially world class runners and Nebraska Volleyball.

While retirement has many benefits, I miss teaching, especially math courses for teachers.

**DON'T
MISS OUT!**



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

WAKE UP YOUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

BY CONNIE BOEHM, ERA PUBLICATIONS CHAIR

I decided to explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) for this Wake Up Your Well-being. The following is from ChatGPT.

Maintaining physical well-being is crucial as we age to stay active, independent, and healthy. Here are some practical and safe tips tailored for older adults:

1. Stay Active with Regular Exercise

- Types of exercise:
 - Walking: Low-impact and excellent for heart health.
 - Chair exercises or yoga: Good for balance and flexibility.
 - Strength training: Light weights or resistance bands help maintain muscle mass.
 - Tai Chi or balance exercises: Reduce fall risk.

🕒 Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week.

2. Eat a Balanced, Nutritious Diet

- Focus on:
 - Lean proteins (fish, eggs, legumes)
 - Whole grains (brown rice, oats)
 - Fruits and vegetables (rich in fiber and vitamins)
 - Calcium-rich foods (dairy or fortified alternatives)
- Stay hydrated – Older adults often don't feel thirsty even when they need water.

3. Regular Health Screenings & Medication Management

- Schedule routine check-ups (vision, hearing, blood pressure, etc.)
- Keep a list of medications and review it regularly with a doctor.
- Watch for side effects or interactions.

4. Mind-Body Connection

- Stay mentally active: puzzles, reading, learning new things.
- Engage in social activities to reduce loneliness and support mental health.
- Practice mindfulness or meditation to reduce stress.

5. Prioritize Sleep

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine (limit screen time, reduce noise).
- Avoid heavy meals or caffeine late in the day.

6. Fall Prevention

- Remove tripping hazards (loose rugs, clutter)
- Install grab bars in bathrooms
- Wear well-fitting, non-slip shoes
- Get vision checked regularly.

7. Get Sunlight and Fresh Air

- A little sunlight daily helps with Vitamin D and mood.

Gardening, short walks, or just sitting outside can lift spirits.

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>

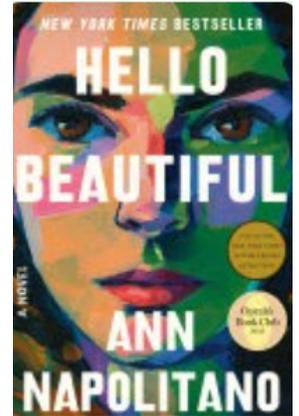
BOOK REVIEW—HELLO BEAUTIFUL

BY ANN NAPOLITANO

REVIEW WRITTEN BY SUE GILDERSLEEVE

I was beginning a trip and needed a book for the plane so I picked up Hello Beautiful because I had read Napolitano's Dear Edward several years ago and thoroughly enjoyed it. And it was one of Oprah's Book Club picks for 2023! Hello Beautiful is said to pay homage to Louisa May Alcott's Little Women, which I read sometime during my junior high years.

Napolitano's novel tells the story of the four Chicago Padavano sisters--Julia, Sylvie, Cecilia and Emeline-- beginning with their teen years in the 70s/80s through their middle-age years in the 2000's. Obviously...life for these young women in Chicago in the late 1900s would vary dramatically from that of the March sisters in Civil War-era Massachusetts.



I recall the March family as being quite “genteel” even though relatively poor, especially when the father was away serving as a chaplain during the Civil War. The mother, Marmee, seemed an ideal mother, instilling admirable qualities into her daughters despite their varied and spirited personalities.

In contrast, it is fair to say that the Padavano girls weren't nearly as constrained by parental and societal expectations. There was so much more opportunity for education as well as freedom to chart their own course into young adulthood and beyond. In the earlier years, the sisters were quite close and an admirable support system for each other. As often happens, however, when tragedy and difficult circumstances occur, some of the cohesive family structure fails and we see the impact not only on their lives, but the lives of the next generation.

There are other important characters in the book, of course, and Napolitano's story reflects on how these other characters' backgrounds and behaviors impact the four sisters.

Nationally, this book garnered highly favorable as well as quite negative reviews. I enjoyed it but felt the story could have been told just as effectively with about 150 fewer pages.

Slight spoiler alert: the title Hello Beautiful is based on what their charming, much-loved but flawed father would say whenever he saw one of his four daughters.



Jeff and Sue hiking in Estes Park last summer

Sue first joined UNL in 1982, working as Network (fiscal) Controller at University Television. During her 36 years with UNL she served in a variety of financial and administrative roles, retiring in June 2018 as Director of University Housing and Dining Services. Retirement activities have included chairing the ERA Benefits Committee and serving as a CASA volunteer. Sue and husband Jeff Woolard, whom she met and married during “Covid time” 2020, co-facilitate DivorceCare at their church, and travel as often as possible.

ERA HONORS OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY FACULTY/STAFF THROUGH THE WISHERD AWARDS

BY MARJORIE KOSTELNIK, ERA AWARDS CHAIR

The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association (ERA) annually recognizes one of its members for outstanding service to the 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.

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.

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

NOMINATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR'S WISHERD SERVICE AWARD ARE DUE MAY 15TH



Potential awards address:

- **Outstanding community service**
- **Outstanding service to UNL**
- **National/International Humanitarian Service**



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 Debbie Hendricks, 317 Orcutt East, Lincoln, NE 68504

A LOOK AHEAD AT SUMMER 2025 PROGRAMMING

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

The following is the remainder of the schedule for the 2025 year, which includes FIVE programs in the summer months. Contact Vicki Highstreet, Program Chair, vickihighstreet@gmail.com with questions and suggestions.

LUNCHEON MEETINGS

June 17-UNL Organizational Development Training

Speaker: Celeste Spier & Jerry Harner

Topic: Great time to learn more about how you can become a mentor for current employees, as well as the variety of training programs now being introduced to employees.

Location: Food Innovation Center, Room 220, Nebraska Innovation Campus

Time: 11:30 am-Program; 1:00 -1:30 pm Tour

Please bring your own lunch and drink.



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.



May 21, 2025

Lied Center Season Preview, Backstage Tour and coffee chat in collaboration with OLLI

Guide: Holden Franken, Events Coordinator

Location: Lied Center for Performing Arts

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

Please register by May 15th!



June 25, 2025

Aging Partners in collaboration with OLLI

Guide: David Norris, Editor of *Living Well*

Location: Aging Partners, 600 South 70th Street, Lincoln, NE

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

PLEASE BRING A FRIEND!

A LOOK AHEAD AT SUMMER 2025 PROGRAMMING

POP-UP SESSIONS

These spontaneous sessions will appear in the event schedule whenever a timely or relevant topic arises.

***May -Please watch your emails for details very soon!**

***July 22 – 10:30-11:45 am** – Dr. Kevin Ruser, Director of the Civil Immigration Center in the College of Law, will be sharing Immigration 101. Location-UNL Law College, room 109.

***August-Danielle Conrad** from the Nebraska Legislature. More details coming soon!

Check out the website for registration information. emeriti-retires.unl.edu

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.

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 for ways to get involved! Sylvana suggests exploring the opportunities at:

VOLUNTEERLNK.ORG

RECAPPING PAST PROGRAMMING

SPRING 2025

March 13, 2025

Michael Forsberg-Photography in the Wild



March 25, 2025

Members attended a Coffee Chat at Meadowlark Coffee and Espresso.



March 27, 2025

Tour of the Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior (CB3) at UNL



RECAPPING PAST PROGRAMMING

SPRING 2025

April 10, 2025

Jeff Steven, Canine Research and *The Many Dogs Project*



April 29, 2025

Members attended a Coffee Chat at Meadowlark Coffee and Espresso.





The UNL Emeriti and Retirees Association Board mindfully watches obituaries and posts information on the website regarding deceased members of the UNL community who are honored with a moment of silence at meetings. The following names were announced since February 1, 2025. According to board policy, a \$500 contribution will be made each year to the UNL Emeriti and Retirees Scholarship fund in honor of the UNL community members who have died that year.

Millard “Mill” Beatty – Mechanical and Materials Engineering
Allen Behne - Purchasing
Bev Benes-Nutrition and Health Sciences
Herman Knoche – Biochemistry
Jean Ann Fischer, Nebraska Extension
Veramae Lutz – widow of Dan Lutz, Agricultural Communication
Cathy Blythe-Oberg – widow of Wayne Oberg
Wayne Oberg – Nebraska Extension
Patricia Overton – University Theatre
Greg Sharpe, Athletics
Kaye Tidball - Barkley Center
Vern Williams, Jr. – Career Services