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Looking Back and Looking Forward

Greeting from Diane Lee, Director of the Wisdom Institute at UMBC


Looking back it has been a remarkable, albeit unusual, year and a half. 2020 started out easily enough. We began the new decade with a First Day Hike and no one was wearing a mask or social distancing. The villains to be removed from campus were invasive plants, and lunch at the Skylight was face-to-face. The world changed in March, however, as COVID-19 took hold and spread, wreaking havoc everywhere. We had to cancel plans made before COVID-19 hit our shores and forced our nation into lockdown. Like so many others, we adopted a new approach to gathering—we started meeting on Zoom.

Our first Institute Zoom endeavor was an adventure. Rather than a simple meeting, we hosted a fabulous concert. Dr. Timmie Topoleski led us on a toe-tapping musical tour of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. It went so well that Zoom became our platform for games of Boggle, recipe swaps, luncheons, panel discussions, wine tasting, and more. Dr. Sandy Parker introduced us to the Indigenous People of the Amazon with glorious photos and personal stories. Who knew so much fun could be had virtually? Even our last two signature events were interactive online sessions. Drs. Hrabowski, Rous, and Henderson talked about their book, *The Empowered University*. It was a book “about us” and the UMBC story we all knew and cherished as our lived experience. More recently, Dr. Philip Rous facilitated a talk by Dr. John Jeffries titled, “Putting the 2020 Election in Historical Perspective.” Dr. Jeffries’ insights underscored the worth of navigating the current political landscape with a learned guide and honored historian.

There were so many other wonderful programs offered throughout the year—indeed, too many to list here. Zoom allowed us to gather, and we did! Please join me in celebrating the WI Board and especially the Programming Committee led by Leslie Morgan. They worked diligently to provide a smorgasbord of opportunities, and their creativity and deep ethic of care was apparent even over the the airways. In addition, students were mentored, dona-

tions were collected for Retriever Essentials, and surveys were completed for doctoral students. We continued to work for and with our students virtually and can’t wait to be with them side-by-side. It shouldn’t be too long.

Looking forward things are beginning to open up now, albeit cautiously. Not only may you see the twinkle in someone’s eyes, but hopefully someday soon smiles will be visible once again as well. We are including some face-to-face programs in our offerings with the expectation that folks will be vaccinated, wear masks, and practice social distancing. We are also working to provide live streaming so neither distance nor discomfort with in-person events are a barrier to participation. If necessary, programs will only be offered virtually or outside. Safety will always be a priority. That being said, we’ve had several great summer activities and there are many wonderful programs for us to enjoy on the calendar already. You can see a list of upcoming events and register to attend on our website, wisdom.umbc.edu. Did you know one of the largest forest parks in an East Coast city is our own Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park? Discover more about this historic area with Jo and Ed Orser on September 27. Of course, spouses, partners, and significant others are welcome, too. Be sure to register early!

We want to hear from you. What else would you like us to offer? Are you interested in co-hosting an event or program? We’ll help. Contact us at wisdominstitute@umbc.edu, or contact any Board member and share your ideas. Why not contribute to future newsletters through UMBC Stories, Book Talks, Scholar’s Corner, Armchair Travel, and/or the Creative Corner. These are all great venues for you to share memories, introduce creative endeavors, conduct scholarly discussions, and talk about great books. This is your association and an ongoing connection to UMBC. Drop us a line at wisdominstitute@umbc.edu, and get involved! We hope to see you soon! 

Upcoming Wisdom Institute Events Fall 2021

October

Picnic & Wine Tasting
October 8, noon-2:30pm

Talking about Race: A Discussion of Labels and Strategies.
October 19, 1:00-2:00pm

November

UMBC Stories: OCA Mocha Cafe
November 8, 1-3pm

Their Own Voices: Stories of Migrant Women.
November 18, 2-3:30pm

December

BYOB Holiday Happy Hour
December 14, 4:30-7:00pm

UMBC Stories

By Dale Gough

It was the summer of 1966. I had graduated from Catonsville High and was planning on three months of sleep and nothingness. Mrs. Gough had other ideas.

She had seen an ad in the Arbutus Times that the school under construction at the end of my street (Poplar Ave) was hiring ground crew for the summer. It became clear that my summer plans were going to change.

So, one Saturday in early June I found myself outside of the 'old gray house' on the hill (then close to the current location of the Event Center) with several others, eager to meet with Mr. Chisholm, the Director of the Physical Plant, about working on the crew.

When we arrived at the appointed hour there was a man riding a tractor cutting grass around the gray house. Another man was in the house on the phone. We could hear him speaking through the screen.

Finally, as the phone call ended one of us opened the screen door and said, "Dr. Kuhn, we're here to meet with Mr. Chisholm about the ground crew jobs."

The reply? "I'm Guy Chisholm. Dr. Kuhn is on the tractor. I'll be with you in just a minute."

Whoa...the president is cutting grass on a tractor, while the guy in charge of getting the grass cut is sitting in the 'office' on the phone? What kind of alternative universe had I fallen into? I got the job and worked on the grounds for two summers. (I should point out that the grounds crew were paid \$1.35 an hour, while those working inside were paid \$1.25.)

That evening, at the dinner table, I announced I had decided to attend this new school (still under construction) rather than Towson State College (I had been admitted to both). Mrs. Gough cried, thinking that a school that had been around for almost 100 years was a better choice than one not even open.

Later that night as my Dad was heading to bed,



Aerial Photograph of UMBC Property Looking North from Arbutus, 1963. UARC 2007-02. University Archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore, MD)

he stuck his head in my bedroom. "You made the right choice, the better choice, today. Any man willing to do the least of jobs in their organization is a really good person and his example should be followed."

I've never regretted that decision. In the past year, I've wondered what my life would have been had UMBC not been built across from my street. Probably Towson, but getting there would have been a challenge.

My parents didn't have enough money for room and board, and not enough for a third car. That would have meant the bus with a transfer downtown and an hour and a half travel time each way. A friend on the next street went to Towson - but he was transferring to UMBC.

I hope I have followed the example of that man on a tractor cutting grass. 🌱

JOIN THE FUN!

The Wisdom Institute needs your ideas, your participation, and your input for programs, events, and service opportunities (and yes, your contact information)! We would love to have you attend an event, be a presenter, or help as a volunteer.

Contact us at wisdom@umbc.edu.

- Are you receiving our emails? If not, please send us your email address.
- Do you have friends who have retired from UMBC and are not receiving our emails? Please share this information on joining our email list.
- Have you moved or changed your email address? Update your information via our website and click the "contact us" tab.
- Do you want to know more about the Wisdom Institute? Check out our website.



Campsite on Kaiparowits Plateau in Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM) in southern Utah, April 2019. Photo credit Sandy Parker.

Armchair Travel

By Sandy Parker

In late winter 2019, after watching me moon-ing about the house, my daughter and wife announced at dinner one evening that I needed to get away (or, perhaps more accurately, they needed a break from my moping about). So, in early April, I headed off on a two-week camping trip to one of my favorite areas in the country, southern Utah, and to the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM).

Established in 1976, it covers roughly 3,000 square miles, a bit larger than the State of Delaware, and about the same size as Yellowstone National Park. Bordered on the west by Zion and Bryce National Parks, Capital Reef National Park to the northwest, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the east, and Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Areas (Arizona) to the south, GSENM is wonderfully remote, rugged, and wild, boasting the lowest recorded ambient sound in the lower 48, and is a Certified Dark Sky landscape. The monument is named for a series of sedimentary strata that rise like steps from the Grand Canyon north to Bryce; each step marked by sharp cliffs and broad plateaus, named (youngest to oldest, north to south) Pink, Grey, White, Vermillion, and Chocolate Cliffs.

If you want solitude, this is the place. There are a few roads that regular cars can travel, but when

it rains, these are impassable even for 4-wheel drive vehicles, due to the bentonite clay that turns the roadbed into a sticky, concrete like morass. Annual precipitation is low, but always pay attention to the weather.

There are many, many off-road trails that lead to wonderfully remote locations, often with spectacular vistas. You will need good topo maps, know how to read them, and if backpacking, be comfortable with route finding. Phone service is virtually non-existent in most of the monument.

In general, the landscape is composed of high plateaus, canyons, buttes, slot canyons and gorgeously colored rock formations, and is covered mostly in sagebrush, pinyon pine, and juniper. The best times to visit are early to mid-spring and fall; the summer is great, but can get quite hot.



My favorite experience happened 10 days into my trip. I was headed for No-Man's Mesa, a critical environmental area that has one of the last stretches of endemic vegetation in the southwest, having never been grazed due to the 800-foot cliffs on all sides. I had been on the trail for several hours and had not seen anyone that day, when I began to hear an odd, whining sound off in the distance. A few minutes later, a group of young cowboys on motorbikes emerged out of the sagebrush, a few nodding as they passed, and disappeared down the trail I had just traveled. A few minutes later, a three-wheel vehicle driven by an old cowboy, his face weathered and deeply tanned, wearing a faded blue linen shirt, pulled up next to me, turned off the engine, and with a twinkle in his eye, asked, "You called for an Uber, did ya?" 🤠

The Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument.
Photo credit Sandy Parker.

Creative Corner

Poems by Robert Deluty

Dr. Robert H. Deluty is Associate Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School. A psychology professor at UMBC from 1980 to 2016, he was named Presidential Teaching Professor in 2002. Robert's poems and essays have been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Pegasus Review*, *Modern Haiku*, *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*, *Psychiatric Times*, *the Journal of Poetry Therapy*, *Welcome Home*, *Muse of Fire*, *Maryland Family Magazine*, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, *The Faculty Voice*, and many other newspapers, journals, and anthologies. A few select poems are shared here for you to enjoy.

History Lesson

First, the elder explains
To his grandchildren
What a typewriter is.

Next, he describes
Sitting in a classroom
With twenty-nine other
Seventh graders learning
To peck at the keyboard of
A manual Smith Corona.

Finally, he relates how,
Because of his visual-motor
Ineptitude, he nearly failed
The class, eking out a low D
By turning in on the final day
Of the grading period
An extra-credit report on
The history of the typewriter
Which he wrote in longhand.

Senryu

pre-K musician
hoping to be the world's best
triangle player

Grandma wondering
if wearing pearls could help her
in traffic court

Lessons

He loved to tell the story of how,
On his first day of Yeshiva
In Poland's Jewish Ghetto,
Mothers brought honey cakes,
Shaped like the letters of the
Hebrew alphabet,
So that their children
Would come to associate
Learning with sweetness.

A brilliant man, deprived by war
Of even a high school education,
He set foot on a college campus
More than fifty years later to attend
His first son's Ph.D. conferral.
When introduced to the faculty,
With utmost respect and pleasure,
He bowed.

His second son, now a professor,
Remembers these stories
As he teaches his daughter
Her ABCs.



Robert Deluty with granddaughters Ava (9) left and Clare (7) right. Photo credit Robert Deluty.

Getting It

To be content, I must create.
A work of art, of literature, of science;
Something unique, something my own.
And to be happy, truly happy,
My creation must be recognized,
Acclaimed and enduring.

How sad, his wife replied,
That evoking a smile, teaching a lesson,
Watching a sunset, relieving a burden
Provide you with neither contentment
Nor happiness.

You don't get it, he shouted.
Thank goodness, she sighed.

Robert's 62nd book, *Paying Heed*, published in July by Otter Bay Books, is available now at the UMBC Bookstore and selected bookstores in the Baltimore-Washington area. Like his other publications, it has received rave reviews. As noted by one reviewer, "If you are not familiar with his work, you have much delightful catching up to do." 🌟

Book Talks

by Dr. Pamela Williams Morgan

Woodson, Jacqueline (2012). *Each Kindness*. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books. ISBN: 978-0-399-24652-4

Lois Wyse is credited with declaring, “If I had known how wonderful it would be to have grandchildren, I’d have had them first.”

Many of us are enjoying the title and status of being a grandparent (whether biological or by other means), so much so that we can relate to Wyse’s declaration despite its absurdity. Grandparents seem to be spending more time with their grandchildren these days, often as trusted caregivers since most of us have been fully vaccinated. The challenge sometimes can be finding meaningful ways to engage young children while they are entrusted to our care. That’s where reading, especially read-aloud sessions, can be a Godsend!

Recently, I was introduced to a great book for a read-aloud adventure. A dear friend and colleague posted a picture on social media of herself surrounded by her two young granddaughters, Brooke Emily and Reece, as she read a book to them. Dr. Gloria Neubert, a distinguished Towson University Professor Emerita, included a status update that read:

“A book with a sober message to children about accepting others who may be different than they are! The girls listened intently as I read, and I cried! Highly recommend *Each Kindness* for elementary and middle schoolers!”

I was so intrigued by Gloria’s post, particularly her confession of having cried and the reactions to it, that it prompted me to purchase the book the very next day. The store representative who located this Jacqueline Woodson book for me was quite familiar with the author and her work. Woodson, a 2020 MacArthur fellow, is new to me but has been penning award-winning literature for children, adolescents and young adults for quite some time—long enough to have written 43 titles.



Dr. Gloria Neubert (center) reading *Each Kindness* aloud to her granddaughters, Brooke Emily (left) and Reece (right). Photo credit Gloria Neubert.

While *Each Kindness* was published in 2012 for a recommended audience of children ages 5-8, its message is rather timely given our current social climate. Initially, I was annoyed by Chloe’s mistreatment of Maya, but by the end of the story, I was feeling empathy and compassion for both characters. This book reminded me of Vivian Gussin Paley’s 1992 book, *You Can’t Say You Can’t Play*, but written to appeal to the interest of young children without being condescending.

Chartwell Books (2020). *My Grandmother’s Life: Grandma, I Want to Know Everything about You*. New York: Chartwell Booksellers. ISBN: 978-0-7858-3909-5

As we diligently fulfill our roles as grandparents, it is important for us to consider the legacy we will leave for posterity. Writing a book can be a daunting endeavor; however, Chartwell Books has published a “Creative Keepsakes Series” of journals that can provide the scaffolding we may seek as writers but may not have known we needed.

The chapters of *My Grandmother’s Life*... are organized by the life stages we experience—childhood, adolescence, adulthood, marriage & parenthood, middle age, and wisdom. The lined journal pages pose questions or offer prompts designed to jumpstart the writer’s thought process as she reflects on her lived experiences.

Sample questions/prompts include:

- “Using all five senses, describe the city/town you grew up in.”
- “Who were the new friends you added to your life and how did you meet?”
- “What is one thing people would be surprised to find out about your life?”

Most pages end with a quote such as:

- “I was not afraid; I was born to do this.” – Joan of Arc
- “Think for yourself, or others will think for you without thinking of you.” – Henry David Thoreau
- “Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.” – Confucius
- “Life is like a cup of tea. The sugar is all at the bottom.” – Julia Ward Howe

Best of all, this journal makes a great gift twice! Give it to yourself to document your life and/or to someone you want to encourage to do the same. Chartwell publishes journals for various writers—mothers, fathers, and grandfathers, too. Once the pages of the journal are filled, the writer can gift it to his/her intended audience (the author’s children and/or grandchildren). In essence, the writer will have drafted his/her memoir!

Tyson, Cicely with Michelle Burford (2021). *Just as I Am*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. ISBN I 3: 978-0-0629-3106-1

If you are interested in reading a great memoir, *Just as I Am* may pique your interest.

(Con't. from page 5)

Borrowing the title of one of her favorite hymns, world renowned actress, Cicely Tyson, recounts the trials and triumphs of her lifetime and epic career in this riveting masterpiece that has become a New York Times bestseller. She admitted to resisting the urge and request to write her memoir, saying she would write her memoir, "When I have something to say."

Four hundred and thirty-two (432) pages later, the reader is convinced that Cicely Tyson had a WHOLE lot to say! She not only gives an account of events in her life, but she also offers the lessons those events taught her. She marveled that she, the frailest of her parents' three children, lived to see the age of 95. In fact, her book was released on January 26, 2021, and two days later, on January 28th, Cicely Tyson passed away.

For me, reading the pages of my hard copy of her memoir while listening to the audio book was rather thrilling. Although Miss Tyson was assisted in narrating the audiobook, hearing her voice brought back memories of her movies and of the people she refers to by name. I think her age factored into her tendency to hold back nothing and to take a few liberties in the process.

Hostin, Sunny (2021). *Summer on the Bluffs: A Novel*. New York: William Morrow.
ISBN: 978-0-06-299417-2

McMillan, Terry (2020). *It's Not All Downhill from Here*. New York: Ballantine Books.
ISBN: 978-1-9848-2374-8

If you want to take the liberty of just reading for fun, Sunny Hostin, one of the co-hosts of ABC's "The View" and an accomplished attorney, has written a great read. Hostin keeps her readers in suspense with the drama of learning which of the main character's goddaughters will inherit her coveted beachfront home in Martha's Vineyard on Oak Bluffs. On the way to the big reveal, readers learn a multitude of secrets.

Then again, Terry McMillan's *It's Not All*

Downhill from Here is a fun read too, despite its twists, turns and roller coaster of emotions. Her characters are lifelong friends who are instrumental in helping McMillan fulfill her desire to write a book about aging. The author shared that desire during a webinar that I had the privilege of "attending." She confessed that she cannot write a depressing book, so she ended this book as she ends all of her books, hopeful. McMillan says she encourages her readers to "Dream out loud! Give it [life] everything you've got!"

Coming full circle, allow me to leave those of us who are grandparents—again, whether biological or by other means—with two reminders. Grandparents are such special people that we have our very own day, National Grandparents Day. It is always observed the first Sunday after Labor Day, which means Sunday, September 12, 2021 is National Grandparents Day this year.

My final reminder comes from the late, great Andy Rooney. "Elephants and grandchildren never forget." 🐘



A Provostian Puzzle

By Art Pittenger



Growing older and wiser sometimes means discovering the truth of clichés, and one cliché is that you can't understand other people until you have walked in their shoes--or at least until you have gotten beyond the stereotypes we tend to assign based on a few interactions. As a case in point, I worked for several years in administration when Adam Yarmolinsky was Provost.

We had a good, albeit professional, relationship: I tried to do my job as best I could, and he gave me leeway to do just that. But in the beginning I really didn't know very much about him.

For example, I did know that he had had a career in the federal government, but not that he had been one of Robert MacNamara's "whiz kids" at the Defense Department in the Kennedy administration. In my interactions with Adam he tended to be understated and somewhat courtly, so it was a readjustment to learn that he had been described as abrasive, particularly in his efforts to integrate military facilities. I personally benefited from the older Yarmolinsky, who responded to my first memorandum on a problem by gently noting that it was a nice analysis but there was no recommendation for action, which was the whole point of the exercise!

And it was a revelation to learn that he had been heavily involved in the development of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, but startling to learn that he had been denied a promised senior position with that initiative because of the opposition of some southern politicians still smarting from his integration efforts. In retrospect, I think that his demeanor as Provost reflected that experience: academic politics was chicken feed compared to what he had been through.

Although I did get an exasperated call one afternoon, after he had met with one of our faculty colleagues. For once he was agitated, not because of the issue but rather because that particular faculty member reminded him of his father!

Adam died in 2000 and there is a nice obituary in the Washington Post that provides some additional context for his life and times. What I will close with here is another unseen facet of his personality: a vocabulary challenge that I will share with the reader as he shared it with me.

Not all of the communications from a Provost concern academic administration. Your intrepid editors have found a private communication from former Provost Adam Yarmolinsky that we feel we can now share with you. Here's the challenge from Adam:

Listed below are ten triples of three letters each. The challenge is to find for each of them one letter which, when used three times with the three letters in the triple, gives a six letter word. For example, if one takes the triple “nbk” and inserts three i’s one gets “bikini.” The three letter triples below are given in alphabetic order but may be used in any order in the six letter extension. The “single” letters used three times in the answers are also given in alphabetic order. (Adam noted that numbers 3, 5, 8, and maybe 10 are a bit esoteric.) The answers are given elsewhere in this issue. Triples: 1 aes. 2 bnn. 3 cno. 4 eer. 5 ehp. 6 elz. 7 eno. 8 gsz. 9 imo. 10 oxy. 🐶

Single Letters: 1 (t). 2 (a). 3 (e). 4 (p). 5 (o). 6 (a). 7 (d). 8 (y). 9 (tr). 10 (c).

A Provostian Puzzle Answers on page 9.

Homecoming 2021



We can’t wait to welcome you and yours back for some Retriever Fever! This year’s highlights will include traditional favorites like the carnival, bonfire and outdoor movie, fireworks, puppy parade, men’s and women’s soccer games, GRIT-X talks, reunions, alumni and friends welcome tent, a community gathering, campus tours, and more.

Make plans to join us in person or virtually October 8-10 to join in the festivities. If you have any questions, email us at homecoming@umbc.edu or contact Jessica Wyatt at jwy@umbc.edu or 410-455-1524.

If you have to ask...



Wear a mask!

Wisdom Institute Summer 2021 Adventures

We continued to have fun and informative events over the summer. Don’t forget, we are always looking for suggestions and ideas for additional programs. Please send us your ideas!



Avoiding Scams & Frauds

An online group of WI members gathered on July 12th to learn about techniques to avoid scams and frauds. This was the first of three talks available from AARP of Maryland. Our speaker shared a wide range of useful techniques to keep us from being victims of fraudsters and distributed a detailed handout of tips and resources. Stay tuned for possible additional sessions.

Retriever Essentials Food Drive Event a Success



A combination of Wisdom Institute members, current employees and friends of the campus collected 774 pounds of healthy food and toiletries for UMBC students who are food insecure. The morning drive-in event netted everything from baby diapers to healthy food, along with some hats, gloves and scarves for the coming winter. We look forward to repeating this event and increasing our support for this worthy organization.

If you would like to donate to Retriever Essentials, check out their website for information: <https://retrieveressentials.umbc.edu/>



Results from the Retriever Essential food drive. Photo courtesy of Retriever Essentials.

Scholar's Corner

“Words, Words, Words”

(Hamlet's reply to Polonius' question “What do you read, my lord?” in Act II, Scene 2)

By Jay Freyman

The present pandemic has given many people time to contemplate matters to which, under normal circumstances, they would have had scant time to devote. Having spent a considerable portion of my life dealing, both vocationally and avocationally, with words, I suppose that it was only natural to seek verbal amusement during the time in which I would otherwise be doing things now prevented by conditions imposed by the pandemic. People with this verbal interest might turn to doing crossword puzzles or acrostics. I prefer to get at the root of the matter and turn to etymology and word-play.

To those who would engage in such activity, a very helpful caveat is the old saw “Appearances can be deceiving.” Indeed, a prime example of this thought is Socrates, who made his living by going around and generously disabusing people of misconceptions arising from deceptive appearances. (Of course, since he spent his professional life doing this pro bono, it is not exactly what we would call “making a living.”) The irony of it all is the fact that Socrates himself perpetrated the ultimate deception, for the “shlumpy” (an Old High Greek word, or, maybe, a word spoken by an old high Greek?), unkempt, Columboesque appearance and persona which he presented to the world belied the intellect which boiled inside that head of his and gave his name to a whole pedagogical methodology. (Socrates' deceptively disreputable style of dress lent itself to the title of Maxwell Anderson's Barefoot in Athens which portrayed on Broadway in 1951 the last days of the philosopher's life, a subject with which Plato deals in his dialogue Phaedo.)

Now, everyone who has a scintilla of the curiosity which makes homo sapiens sapient enjoys making connections, heretofore unrecognized, that are believed to be original and perceived without any help from anything outside his/her own cranium. Etymologizing – discovering the

origins of words – is an activity that combines two things: the tendency, not to say “willingness,” to be led astray by similarity of sound and/or appearance and the satisfaction gained from the feeling of having made an unaided discovery, notwithstanding any misconception of that “discovery.” A perfect example of this mindset is Mr. Portokalos, the father in the film My Big Fat Greek Wedding.

With an abiding pride in his cultural heritage, that character maintains that all words, no matter how far-removed geographically their speakers may be from the seat of Hellenic civilization, descend from ancient Greek. (There is the famous bon mot “The Greeks had a word for it,” which was coined as the title of a 1930 Broadway play by the playwright Zoe Akins.) At the beginning of the film, Mr. Portokalos is given the word “kimono” to etymologize. Rallying every ounce of rationalization in himself, he proudly announces that “kimono” in Japanese comes from the Greek term χειμών (chee-MOWN, with the “ch” pronounced gutturally like the “ch” in German “ach”) meaning “Winter.” It figures, doesn't it. It's cold in Winter, so you put on a kimono to keep warm! (Or, you could kimono my house for a nice hot cup of tea!) Etymologically, “kimono” and χειμών are unrelated and represent, respectively, two totally different language families.

However, even Mr. Portokalos may happen, on occasion, upon a point of etymological significance and may come to a correct or partially correct conclusion. At the wedding celebration toward the end of the film, he rationalizes the marriage of his daughter to someone whom he has called a ξένο (KSEH-no, “foreigner,” “stranger”), i.e. someone not of Greek heritage. (Talk about xenophobia!) The vehicle he uses to arrive at his desired end is, of course, his own brand of fanciful etymology. He first etymologizes the groom's surname, Miller, which, he maintains, is derived from the Greek term μήλο (MEE-low) meaning “apple.” He then states that the bride's surname, Portokalos, comes from the word πορτοκάλι (por-tow-KAH-lee) meaning “orange.” His conclusion is, “In the end, we are all fruit.” As incorrect as his derivation of “Miller” may be, it satisfies Mr. Portokalos; and that is

enough for his present purpose, i.e. to justify his daughter's wedding a ξένο. Now, in trying, perhaps desperately, to find (or to create) an etymological/botanical connection between “Portokalos” and “Miller,” Mr. Portokalos has overlooked another derivation of “Miller” which is a surname derived from a profession, i.e. a miller is one who operates a mill, originally a facility for grinding, particularly for grinding grain. In Greek, the word for “mill” is μύλος (MEE-los) pronounced in the same way as μήλο except for the final consonant ζ (sigma). (Eta η and upsilon υ between two consonants are both pronounced the same, i. e. as “EE.” Modern Greek has relatively few vowel sounds.) Had Mr. Portokalos been more etymologically acute, he might have opted for μύλος instead of μήλο as the origin of his new son-in-law's surname. In fact, the Greek word μύλος and the English word “mill” are cognates, i.e. two words which have a common ancestor but do not necessarily derive, the one from the other. The μύλος/“mill” relationship is fairly obvious; but there are other cognates which bear little, if any, family resemblance in appearance and sound. A good place to look for cognates is among words which express thoughts/ideas common to a variety of cultures, such as enumeration. For example, who would think that English “five” and Greek πέντε are 52nd cousins? Had Mr. Portokalos chosen to work with μύλος instead of μήλο, he might have ended his speech with “In the end, we all make orange juice!”

How do we account for the fact that all cognates do not look and sound similar the way μύλος and “mill” do? (We are now in a realm where one can afford no mildew on the brain!) Sound changes in one language may not occur or may occur differently in another language, both of which are descended from a common ancestor language. Scholars of linguistics have identified and catalogued such changes. Indeed, scholars have been able to reconstruct such a common ancestor language which existed long before a written record could preserve it for successive generations. In the case of most of the languages of Europe as well as of certain areas to the east of Europe, that common ancestor language has been dubbed “Proto-Indo-European.”

An appropriate way to examine comparatively the vocabulary of cognate languages is to consider words which, in those languages, represent thoughts/ideas common to all human social groups. Now, every human social group will find it necessary to enumerate and to express verbally that enumeration. As populations descending from a common ancestor population separated from each other over time and in location, their languages changed; and words expressing enumeration experienced sound changes which developed differently among the different descendent populations. Eventually, these words might or might not present a similarity to each other of sound and, when transliterated in a familiar script, of appearance; however, they may be taken to be cognate if their differences are the result of recognizably consistent phonological changes which have taken place within each of the various offspring languages.

Let us consider as an example the concept represented by the English word “five” as it appears in languages descended, along with English, from the common ancestor Proto-Indo-European:

English “five”
 Old English “fif”
 Frisian “fiif”
 German “fünf”
 Norwegian “fem”
 Swedish “fem”
 Danish “fem”
 Icelandic “fimm”
 Dutch “vijf”
 Lithuanian “penki”
 Latvian “pieci”
 Polish “pięć”
 Albanian “pesë”
 Russian пять (pyaht)
 Greek πέντε (PEHN-teh)
 Sanskrit पञ्च (pancha)
 Hindi पञ्च (paanch)
 Farsi (Persian) پنج (panj)
 Welsh “pump”
 Cornish “pymp”
 French “cinq”
 Spanish “cinco”
 Portuguese “cinco”
 Italian “cinque”
 Romanian “cinci”

Scottish Gaelic “còig”
 Irish Gaelic “cúig”
 Romansh “tschun”
 Latin “quinque”
 Armenian հիւկ (hing)

Inspection of this list reveals that, among members of the same language family (e.g. Latin and the Romance languages of French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian, and Romansh) descended from the ancestor Proto-Indo-European, there is a certain consistency of sound change. The question, then, remains, “What was the common ancestral form from which the changes were made?” The answer is “*pénkʷe.” (The asterisk * identifies a form which has been reliably reconstructed but for which there is no written evidence. The changes from Proto-Indo-European were, doubtless, coincidental with the migrations southwestward and southeastward from the Caucasus Mountains beginning in the middle of the fourth millennium BCE.) Also, the list above is by no means a complete catalogue of Proto-Indo-European languages, whether extinct or living and still in use, of which we have knowledge. And, there are some languages spoken in Europe which have not derived from Proto-Indo-European; among them are Basque, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Maltese, and Turkish.

Let us take one more instance of etymological deceptiveness. Consider the stem aur- as it appears in the Latin words “aura” (OW-rah), “auris” (OW-ris), and “aurum” (OW-rum). At first glance, the appearance of these words might suggest that the three are cognate, i.e. share a common ancestor; but the meanings of the words bring this suggestion into doubt: “aura” – air, breeze, exhalation; “auris” – ear; “aurum” – gold. While it has borrowed “aura” wholesale, English has been at some pains to bring the sense of the other two words into its stock of vocabulary. From “auris” comes the term “auricle” used, with reference to its shape, to designate one of the chambers of the heart. The first two letters of “aurum” have given science the chemical symbol for gold; otherwise, one finds relatively obscure terms like “aurose,” “aurous,” and “aurulent” as English

representatives of the stem of “aurum.” There has been some attempt to relate “aura” to “aurum” in the sense that an aura is often pictured as a golden glow, but there does not seem to be general agreement on the matter since the meaning of “aura” in Latin is, variously, “air,” “gentle breeze,” “bright light,” “exhalation.” Latin borrowed αὔρα wholesale from Greek; and in Greek, αὔρα means, variously, “movements,” “steam,” “changeable course of events.”

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) straddles the issue by recognizing two adjectives spelled a-u-r-i-c, one meaning “of or pertaining to an aura” and the other “of or pertaining to gold”. In Greek, gold is designated by the word χρυσός (chrū-SOS – Do not forget to clear your throat in pronouncing the “ch”; for ü, purse your lips as if you were going to say “OO,” but say “EE” instead. Anyone want to pull out of his/her linguistic trunk the reason why a chryselephantine statue is so dubbed?) To make a long story short (Too late!), aura, schmaura, abi gezunt. (Rough translation from the Yiddish, “Who cares about an aura? You should only be healthy!” By the way, aficionados of the James Bond stories will know that Goldfinger’s first name is, quite appropriately, Auric.) Probably, we have in “aura,” “auris” and “aurum” three different stems with the coincidentally same spelling.

In closing, let it be said that there is no need to expand a panegyric upon nor to pan the panoramic panoply of panaceas (Or, is that “panaceae”?) available to keep any panic inspired by the current pandemic from devolving into real pandemonium. 🍷

?

A Provostian Puzzle Answers:

1 attest. 2 banana. 3 eocene. 4 pepper. 5 hoopoe.
 6 azalea. 7 nodded. 8 syzygy. 9 mirror.
 10 coccyx.

McNair Wisdom Mentorship: A Synergistic Endeavor

by Dr. Pamela Williams Morgan

“Synergy,” as defined by Merriam-Webster, is the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. In other words, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Such is the nature of the relationship that is unfolding in the UMBC community between the McNair Scholars Program and the Wisdom Institute.

On Tuesday, August 11, 2020 during a Wisdom Institute Board meeting, an enthusiastic, astute, rather impressive young man, Michael Hunt, spoke to Board members about the UMBC McNair Scholars Program. More specifically, he articulated his interest in forging a partnership with Wisdom Institute members. He had read about the Wisdom Institute in a UMBC magazine and reached out to Dr. Diane Lee, Director of the Institute. After their conversation, he wanted to broaden the McNair mentoring network to include “Wisdom” mentors and was invited by Dr. Lee to speak with the Board.

Hunt, the director of the UMBC McNair Scholars Program since 2019, explained the Program’s focus: encouraging first generation college students from low income backgrounds and underrepresented populations to enter graduate programs. Ultimately, McNair scholars are expected to enter doctoral programs (Ph.D. or other research-based degree programs) and obtain doctoral degrees within ten years of earning their undergraduate degrees. The Program is organized around fifteen community core values, which include scholarship, community, empowerment, legacy, and vision.

The National McNair Scholars Program is named for the late Dr. Ronald McNair, an African-American laser physicist who was a first generation college graduate and earned his doctorate at the age of 26 from M.I.T. He also was one of the astronauts who met his demise during the U.S. Challenger Space Shuttle disaster on January 28, 1986. UMBC’s Program has been in



NASA Astronaut Dr. Ronald E. McNair (Ph.D.) was assigned as a mission specialist and was a crewmember on two Space Shuttle Missions. He first flew on STS 41-B in 1984 where he performed numerous science experiments. On his second flight, STS 51-L, Dr. McNair died on January 28, 1986 when the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded after launch from the Kennedy Space Center, Florida. NASA Photograph. S78-35300 (31 Jan 1978)

operation for thirty years, with twenty-nine years of federal funding.

Hunt’s goal was establishing McNair-Wisdom Institute mentors to help graduating seniors transition to graduate school. He informed the Board that he wanted to implement a holistic approach to mentoring and that twelve McNair scholars had expressed interest in being assigned a Wisdom mentor. This mentor would offer another layer of guidance aimed at complementing the support of scholars’ existing McNair mentors and faculty research mentors. The McNair mentor holds a graduate degree and is knowledgeable about the graduate school preparation process. The faculty research mentor is selected by the McNair scholar to serve as the disciplinary specialist, introducing the scholar to the culture of the discipline. The layer of guidance offered by the Wisdom mentor, a retired UMBC faculty or staff member, will focus on life after the undergraduate experience.

Director Michael Hunt was so passionate in his appeal that three Board members volunteered to serve as mentors before the end of his

presentation! In all, four UMBC retirees served as Wisdom mentors during the 2020-2021 academic year, agreeing to meet virtually each month with their assigned McNair-Scholar mentees. Those retirees were Drs. Diane Lee, Leslie Morgan, Jack Sinnigen, and Pamela Morgan.

Since interested McNair scholars outnumbered the number of Wisdom mentors, the plan for one-to-one mentoring assignments was modified to a triad model. This modification turned out to be a blessing in disguise. After one of my monthly virtual meetings with my two mentees, I submitted the required meeting report. McNair Program Coordinator, Antoinette Newsome, followed up on the report via email and thanked me for discussing the issue of burnout with my mentees. In my reply to Ms. Newsome, I shared the link to an article that one of my mentees had contributed to the discussion during our meeting. Because the topic was raised by one mentee and the article was offered by the other mentee, I shared an unsolicited afterthought, “The bonus of mentoring two mentees seems to be that we are learning from one another and thereby are creating our own learning community. I hope my mentees feel the same way.”

During my interview with Michael Hunt for this article, he informed me of a presentation that he and Antoinette Newsome had done in March of this year at a virtual conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). During the presentation, he shared my “learning community” quote since it illustrated his vision of the reciprocal nature of mentoring that he hoped to achieve in the McNair Scholars Program. To assess the effectiveness of the mentoring component of the Program, Hunt planned to administer an end-of-year survey to mentors and mentees. He wanted to add a survey item to tease out my curiosity about whether mentees had a similar assessment of their experience. The survey results confirmed that mentees and mentors are headed in the right direction of developing and sustaining the anticipated learning community. Mentees expressed interest in continuing to communicate with their Wisdom mentor. As evidence of this interest, Wisdom mentor, Dr. Diane Lee shared, “I am still in contact with my

mentees and remain inspired, enlightened, and hopeful for a future led by such bright and caring women.”

In an attempt to gain deeper insight into the UMBC McNair Scholars Program, I posed questions to Michael Hunt during our interview. Hunt, a former public charter school mathematics teacher, is a UMBC alumnus of both the Meyerhoff and the McNair Scholars Programs and was a first-generation college graduate. He served as interim director from 2017 until he became director. He also spent time working with the Upward Bound Program at UMBC before reconnecting with McNair.


Hunt’s vision for the McNair Scholars Program continues to be increasing the number of first generation Ph.D. candidates. He sees the means for realizing this vision as building relationships among McNair alumni to develop a network and a support system so that they are encouraged to give back. “To whom much is given much is required” is the rationale for his approach.

He also discussed building an intergenerational network within McNair that will continue to be broadened to include the wisdom offered by UMBC retirees while tapping into shared experiences. His impetus for doing so is that he is who he is because of his elders. He grew up around people much older than he, proudly announcing that he sang in the choir at his grandmother’s church at the age of six. Integrating Wisdom mentors into the emerging mentoring network could replicate that exposure for McNair scholars as long as mentees’ needs remained central in the holistic critical mentoring model. Hunt is elated about the potential community of co-learners and co-creators that is on the horizon.

When asked about the challenges he faces as Program Director, his thoughts immediately turned to the transition back to in-person learning from virtual learning. For the time being, McNair mentoring will remain virtual, but the pros and cons of a hybrid mentoring model will be explored. Hunt seeks to examine the question, “How do we get to the values that are foundational to the experience?”

While the synergy between the McNair Scholars Program and the Wisdom Institute continues to evolve, an awesome foundation is being laid for UMBC retirees to make a difference, one scholar at a time. Hopefully, you will consider seizing this opportunity to make a difference. Feel free to direct any questions to Michael Hunt (huntmi1@umbc.edu).



For more background information about the McNair Scholars Program, visit <https://mcnair-scholars.com/about/> 

College in the COVID Era: Students’ Views

by Leslie Morgan

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic early last year caused a rapid shift to online education for teachers and students of all ages. Before the campus closure, many UMBC students and instructors had experienced hybrid or fully-online classes. Others had only experienced in-person learning, enabling the familiar face-to-face interactions with instructors and classmates. But the pandemic abruptly required faculty to retool all courses to be fully online, and, for both enthusiastic and unwilling students, to learn in this way. By late 2020, it was clear that fully-online courses would extend more than a year, until vaccinations enabled campuses to return to normal. But what have been the consequences of this major, sudden change for student learning and satisfaction with their education?

As colleges, faculty, and students scrambled to make online learning work effectively for students and educators, concerns grew regarding student retention and learning success for students with varied computer skills and life challenges. Would students thrive in the new learning environment and successfully learn and progress toward a degree? Was online education working equally well for all students or leaving some behind? National news and recent, local research were clear that there were challenges, such as adequate internet connections, limited skills in navigating the web to reach class materials, and students’ difficulties keeping up with school work from home. These added pressures also caused some students to drop out of school.

Before COVID-19, researchers had already been studying students’ satisfaction and success with online learning. That research focused on students who, in some cases, had chosen online learning over in-person instruction. That research found that online learning was linked to lower student satisfaction and more students experiencing difficulty in completing assigned work. With COVID-19, however, this research has accelerated, as it includes more students who prefer or had only experienced in-person learning.

One UMBC McNair Scholar, Ms. Ting Huang, was exploring topics for her senior honors project when the pandemic hit. When she reviewed the research of her mentor, Dr. Diane Alonso, she became interested in distance/online learning and its influence on student success. “That was when a lot of students were not getting used to ‘zoom university,’” Ms. Huang told me, “I am in general psychology with an interest in social psych, which is what I am trying to include in my project...the interactions between fellow students and their lecturer. I’m still focusing on the social interaction part.” Acknowledging the differences during the COVID-19 crisis, she added, “A lot of the literature that I quote are from studies on online education in general rather than about a pandemic itself. I just incorporate what I believe the role of the pandemic would be in the online setting.” The pandemic provided a unique opportunity to examine how students fared



UMBC McNair Scholar, Ms. Ting Huang. Photo credit Ting Huang.

when distance learning became the only option available and to learn more about what works/does not work well in this learning format at the college level.

Ms. Huang's study, *Online Learning and Student Satisfaction during COVID-19*, was conducted in the Fall of 2020. The study focused on undergraduate students' online learning experiences during the pandemic. It gathered anonymous data via an online survey from 119 UMBC students. Her purpose was to examine how elements, such as opportunities to interact with instructors or classmates, how instruction is offered, prior experience with online classes, students' comfort with computer-based learning, other time demands, or anxieties about online classes influence their satisfaction and engagement. Students came from a variety of majors, with half from psychology or social sciences, and over half were juniors or seniors. Some items of interest were measured with well-established scales, using multiple questions to measure behaviors, attitudes, and reactions. Data were collected and analyzed in the Fall semester of 2020.

Students were almost evenly divided in saying they had more or less time available for academic work during the pandemic, compared to earlier semesters. One of Ms. Huang's findings showed a link between students' levels of anxiety and their satisfaction with their online courses. Higher levels of anxiety were linked to lower overall course satisfaction. Students' participation also made a difference in several ways. First, participation showed some consistency, in that students who had participated more in their earlier, face-to-face classes also participated more when classes were online. And students who participated more were more satisfied with their online courses. Among the various ways to deliver course material, students preferred a "live" class with the instructor and students online "together," rather than watching a recorded lecture or using other means of accessing online instruction.

When asked what the main message of the Phase 1 study was, Ms. Huang replied, "I think the major finding is that [students] who have more academic availability [more time they can dedicate to academics] are more likely to participate [in their courses].It's really telling....because people may have taken on more household chores or keeping up with their families or on more shifts as essential workers." She added that some students in the survey also got COVID-19 themselves, which presented a challenge to completing their coursework.

All of these could interfere with time for study or attending courses in a synchronous format. A second conclusion reflected on course design. Ms. Huang said, "I think that team members [instructors, teaching assistants, etc.], when designing their courses, should put [in] the opportunity for students to engage with one another or with their instructors."

Ms. Huang also said that doing this research "made me feel more clear that this is the path I want to be in." She added, "I would hope that my research has some sort impact [for designing better online courses in the future.]" 🍀

Help Maryland Retirees keep their Prescription Drug Coverage!

In 2011, State law was changed for retirees over age 65, requiring them to use the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan "D" instead of the State Prescription Drug Plan. The law was to become effective January 2019. In 2018, Ken Fitch sued the State and the judge granted an injunction allowing retirees to keep the State Prescription Drug Plan until the case was settled.

Ken Fitch is working hard to have a bill introduced at the Maryland General Assembly to reinstate our Prescription Drug Benefits. Delegates say they sponsor a bill, they propose legislation, but then pull it from consideration, so it is never up for a vote. A delegate added an amendment to a bill, but the opportunity to vote was also blocked by opponents, so it was withdrawn. Look for the United We Matter booth at the State Fair this year. Sign the petition! If you don't go to the fair, you may find the petition at the Unit-edwematter.com website. The petition is on the scrolling message on the website.

Sign the petition. Ask your friends and families to sign the petition, too.

To sign up for updates, contact Ken Fitch at:

Ken Fitch
RX Drug Coverage Group
P.O. Box 465
Cockeysville, MD 21030

MDRetireesRX@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook: RX Drug Coverage Group



Upcoming Wisdom Institute Events Fall 2021

October

Picnic with Friends

October 8, noon-2:30pm

After a long time where we could not get together physically, we are excited to host a bring-your-own picnic and beverage lunch and visit to enjoy the outdoors at the Hilton area of Patapsco State Park. Bring your preferred picnic beverages. An alcohol license has been purchased for the event. We'll gather in an expansive, roofed pavilion with picnic tables (#21) with nearby parking. We can gather rain or shine. Feel free to bring outdoor games. The cost to enter the park is \$2 per car [with MD license, \$4 otherwise]. The park is located at 1101 Hilton Avenue. Catonsville MD 21228. Please register by September 5.

Talking about Race: A Discussion of Labels and Strategies.

October 19, 1:00-2:00pm

In this era of heightened focus on race and ethnicity, we will review how we may communicate more constructively with and about others. Connect via Zoom for a discussion of how people speak of, label, and interact with those of groups of differing heritage. The discussion will be initiated by Fred Pincus.

November

UMBC Stories @ the OCA Mocha Cafe

November 8, 1-3pm

Join colleagues to share funny, poignant, surprising or silly stories of your memorable years at UMBC. Stories can be short or long, ancient or recent. Share your "When I first came to UMBC" story or a "best/worst day ever" tale. Sign up as soon as possible, as we are limited to 20 participants. Public parking is available on the street and in lots near OCA Mocha; some are time-limited or metered. Do not park in the Chesapeake Bank lot! Location: 5410 East Drive, Arbutus.

Their Own Voices: Stories of Migrant Women.

November 18, 2-3:30pm

Join an online session to listen to a new musical work by UMBC's Anna Rubin. This work drew from the stories of the struggles of two migrant women. The session will both talk about how the work was developed and include segments of a recorded performance.

December

BYOB Holiday Happy Hour

December 14, 4:30-7:00pm

The Wisdom Institute invites you to bring your preferred adult or holiday beverage to spend time visiting with other retirees in the holiday season. The Erickson School is conveniently located in the UMBC Research Park, and parking is available. The WI will provide snacks and cups, paper plates, etc. Location: 5523 Research Park Drive, Suite 230.



Submit an idea for an article for one of our columns:

UMBC Stories, Book Talks, Scholar's Corner, Armchair Travel, and Creative Corner, or send your comments, suggestions, ideas, or questions on our newsletter to wisdom@umbc.edu.



Scenes From Past Events.



Woodland Hike



Hike Along the Patapsco



UMBC vs. Towson Basketball Game



National Arboretum



2019 Signature Event



President Hrabowski and Senator Mikulski