



The Wisdom Institute

UMBC's Association for Retirees

Fall 2024

Vol. 6 Issue 2



UMBC



Members of the Wisdom Institute talk with Denise Koch during the WI Signature Event.
Photo courtesy of Marlayna Demond

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Upcoming Events

Howard County

Conservancy

Wednesday, October 9

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Retriever Essentials Coat

Drive

Friday, October 25

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

UMBC Homecoming Grit

X talks

Thursday, October 24

4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

UMBC Homecoming.

Reconnect

October 25-27

Happy Hour Zoom Micro- talks with Kathy O'Dell

Monday, November

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

More on the back page!

A Message from the Director

By Diane Lee

Everyone who was in attendance at our Signature Event on April 12, 2024, enjoyed an exceptional performance by UMBC's Gospel Choir and Jubilee Singers who were led by Professor Janice Jackson. Our students' inspiring music opened our program and after they sang, we were treated to Denise Koch's reflections on her 40 years as a journalist. Ms. Koch's authenticity, humility, energy, and delightful sense of humor made the time together memorable and downright fun. The insights she shared regarding trends in newscasting and network news were fascinating. Several folks noted that they had not thought about the way mobile newscasting changed the way news could be reported in real time so dramatically--not to mention the presence of a woman who was not afraid to be sitting up there with all the men at WJZ. Ms. Koch's willingness to take detours in life and not just seek the straight line to success was deemed "laudable" in one note I received from an attendee and "thoroughly liberating" in another. It was especially exciting to hear her talk about her time teaching at UMBC many years ago. Her story was compelling, and attendees agreed with President Valerie

Sheares Ashby who facilitated the session and remarked that Ms. Koch would be an outstanding commencement speaker as well.

If you were unable to attend, or were there and want to revisit the program, you may go to the Wisdom Institute website, wisdom.umbc.edu, and watch a video of the luncheon program. It really was inspiring, informative, and fun!

Next year's program is already in the works. In fact, it's not too early to save the date for our 2025 Signature Event that will be held on Friday, April 4, 2025, at the Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena on campus. Our keynote speaker is Rebecca Hoffberger, Founder, Primary Curator, and Director Emeritus of the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) in Baltimore. A quick glance at her biography in Wikipedia reveals that Ms. Hoffberger has a list of awards that would fill this page. She has been awarded the title of "Dame" for her work to establish medical field hospitals in Nigeria, she has been inducted in the Baltimore Sun's Business and Civic Hall of Fame, and she has received the World Trade Center

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Denise Koch speaking at the 2024 Signature Event held at the Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena.
Photo by Michael Mower

(Message cont'd from page 1)

Institute's Governor's Visionary Leadership Award.

Ms. Hoffberger's unusual career began early. She was accepted into college at the age of 15, but she chose to accept an invitation from the famed mime Marcel Marceau and became his first American apprentice instead. She co-founded her own ballet company by age 19, and by age 21 was a successful consultant to a spectrum of non-profits, including research and development scientific companies. As noted, there are many other awards and honors recognizing her unique contributions and service and particularly her distinguished achievements in the museum field. We are thrilled to have Ms. Hoffberger join us and hope you will be there as well.

In the meantime, please note the menu of programs and events planned for us by the Wisdom Institute's busy Programming Committee, chaired by Joan Costello and Dottie Caplan. Mark your calendars now and call a friend or two to join you and take a tour of the

Howard County Conservancy October 9th from 10:30-12:30. Mark your calendars for UMBC's Homecoming Grit X talks on October 24 from 4-6:00. Clean out your coat closet and donate those you can afford to share with Retriever Essentials. Bring them to campus and join us at Admin Circle on October 25th from 11:00-1:00. See page 11 of this newsletter for more details and events. We look forward to seeing you!

Best wishes for a pleasant and colorful fall,

Diane

Prescription Drug Plan Update

Kathlyn Miller

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) began mailing letters to eligible retirees on September 9, 2024 regarding retiree prescription drug benefit plan information. The State has contracted with Via Benefits to process the transition from the State Prescrip-

tion Plan to Medicare Part D prescription benefits.

DBM posted updated Retiree Prescription Drug FAQs on September 9, 2024. The following information highlights the changes that are being made, but are not all inclusive. Please review the new FAQs as of September 9, 2024 on the <https://dbm.maryland.gov/benefits/Pages/Retirees.aspx> website.

The new information emphasizes that retirees eligible for a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) and/or the Life Sustaining Prescription Drug Assistance Program MUST sign up for a Medicare Part D plan through the Via Benefits website, AND must enroll or stay enrolled in the State's group medical plan.

IMPORTANT - If eligible retirees enroll in a Medicare Part D plan other than through Via Benefits they will not be eligible for the financial assistance (the HRA and/or the Life Sustaining Prescription Drug Assistance Program) that the State has offered.

The HRA will be provided in the form of a debit card that the retiree may use to pay for "out-of-pocket" costs of



Prescription Pills. Image designed by Freepik

COVERED prescription drugs at the pharmacy. DBM will provide more Information about the Life Sustaining Prescription Drug Assistance Program later.

If you are currently enrolled in the State of Maryland's Prescription Drug Plan, you have a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) and may enroll in a Medicare Part D Plan from October 1 through December 31, 2024. Don't delay until the end of the year to enroll or you won't have your Medicare Part D enrollment card or the HRA debit card before January 1, 2025!

If you are not currently enrolled in the State of Maryland's Prescription Drug Plan, you may enroll in a Medicare Part D Plan through Via Benefits during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period between October 15 through December 7, 2024.

Sign up for a Via Benefits account by following the links on either the Via Benefits website at my.viabenefits.com/maryland or through the Via Benefits link on the DBM website at <https://dbm.maryland.gov/benefits/Pages/Retirees.aspx>. After you register you can sign in to your account to access an information video on the Via Benefits website Homepage by selecting the box at the bottom of the Homepage entitled Important Information. Also, you can register for in-person meetings that are available beginning October 1 - 31, 2024. In-person meetings are limited. You can also phone 1-855-556-4419, Monday through Friday 8 am - 7 pm Eastern time for an appointment or more information.

Note: If you don't select a plan during the enrollment window, you will have to wait until the next open enrollment period (next year), unless you qualify for a separate special enrollment period, and you may be subject to a Medicare late enrollment penalty. If you don't

contact Via Benefits, they will contact you. Be cautious about accepting calls from other individuals who want to help you enroll in Medicare Advantage plans and/or Medicare Part D plans. The State has contracted with Via Benefits to make this transition. If you are not sure, hang up and call back Via Benefits at 1-855-556-4419.



Katharine Cole, Dean and Vice Provost Division of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. Photo by Michael Mower

Update from Dr. Cole Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide some information and updates about the Division of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (UAA). There are many exciting things happening that I am delighted to share with the Wisdom Institute. As you probably know, in 2019, UAA established the University's first Academic Success Center (ASC), a one-stop Center for student academic support services. The ASC houses all university-wide tutoring, the university's Writing Center, university-wide academic support services, and the Of-

fice of Academic Advocacy. In a recent collaboration with the College of Engineering and Information Technology (COEIT), we opened a new Computing Success Center which serves all majors at the university. And, last summer, a large part of the ASC moved to its new home on the first floor of the library. We have already seen a huge increase in student visits at the new location.

This year, UAA worked with our shared governance colleagues to gain approval for a new academic grading option, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (SU) grading. This option replaces the prior Pass/Fail grading option in a graded course and allows students up to 12 credits of SU grades to count towards their free elective degree credits. We now have approximately 2,200 courses that have the SU grading option. This grading option has some distinct advantages as it will allow students to remain in a course, even if they are not doing well, until the end of the term, and the U grade will not negatively impact a student's GPA, as the prior Pass/Fail grade did. Thus, our students are better able to maintain their scholarships and to change majors more easily.

In collaboration with Enrollment Management, we wrote and received funding for a two-year grant from the University Innovation Alliance (UIA) to address the student group with the largest gap in retention and graduation at UMBC. Termed the UMBC Students Transferring And Redefining Success (STARS) program, this program is open to students from all backgrounds who plan to pursue a degree in STEM and who are interested in the advancement of Black, male, transfer students in those fields. It begins a unique collaboration between UIA, UAA, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs to provide scholarships, academic support, a sense of community and belonging, and major exploration services for the

(Dean cont'd on page 4)

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UMBC STARS. The program began in fall 2023 and 83% percent of the UMBC STARS were enrolled and doing well in spring 2024.

The faculty in UAA's Individualized Study (INDS) degree program, developed and received Senate approval to offer a new Multidisciplinary Studies (MDST) track in their BA and BS degrees. This new degree track provides our students with an individualized degree program based on a multidisciplinary approach that meets all UMBC's functional competencies and bachelor's degree requirements. This degree track was specifically designed for our current students transitioning between majors, as well as our returning students.

Working with the Faculty Senate, we revised the Latin Honors requirement of 60 hours of UMBC graded course work to allow up to 6 credits of non-graded (P/F) course work. This allows our exceptional transfer students, who often do research or creative work only offered on a non-graded (P/F) basis, to be eligible for Latin Honors at graduation.

UAA's Academic Engagement and Transitions Office received final Faculty Senate approval in Spring 2024 for a new set of courses for entering and continuing students to help them transition into the university or be more successful once they are here. The courses are UNIV 101 (First year transition seminar), UNIV 102 (a course for students on academic probation); UNIV 201(a course for sophomore/second year students to help explore different options or be more successful in their current major), and UNIV 301 (transfer student transition seminar).

Along with our DOIT partner, we developed and implemented a 90-credit graduation audit for all students that

precisely details all remaining requirements for their degree.

Finally, to assist our UMBC students in completing the university-wide foreign language requirement, UAA now offers the full course sequence for American Sign Language.

As you can see, there is a lot happening in all areas of UAA. Our faculty and staff are providing new opportunities for our undergraduate students to gain knowledge and successfully progress in their degree programs. It is certainly an exciting time for us with much more to come. Thank you for this opportunity to update you, and as always, thank you for your engagement with UMBC.

Sincerely,

Katharine Cole, Dean and Vice Provost
Division of Undergraduate Academic Affairs



Scholars Corner

Faculty Experts

George R. La Noue

All UMBC faculty are experts in their particular fields. On campus, the work they have done with their expertise will be evaluated for promotion, tenure, and merit pay. Their expertise will be scrutinized off campus when they apply for grants, give papers at conferences, and submit articles through the peer-review process. These activities can create considerable stress and unpredictability, but they are essential parts of the job at a Research 1 university.

But there is another kind of expert work that is entirely voluntary and can have a major impact on our society for better or worse. Faculty can serve as experts in litigation. Such expert work is a sort of intellectual contact sport. There will



Dr. George LaNoue. Photo by Patricia LaNoue.

often be opposing experts and a team of lawyers who will seek to undermine your background and findings and maybe even your integrity. If they are successful, and a judge agrees, you may be formally disqualified or at least criticized in the final court decision. Your expert career will be publicly damaged and future expert work made unlikely.

I have served as a trial expert in state and federal cases for over forty years and perhaps my experiences under oath will be interesting. It began when I crossed the street from the Yale Hall of Graduate Studies to its Law School. I still graduated with a Ph. D. in Political Science, but about forty percent of my course work was in law. That was the foundation of a fifty-year career teaching constitutional law, specializing in our civil rights embodied in the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

In my first academic position, I began to provide expert testimony before legislative committees for the National Council of Churches and the American Civil Liberties Union on religious liberty issues. My focus, however, changed in 1973 when, as a new UMBC faculty member, I was appointed a Public Administration Fellow to serve as assistant to the Executive Director of

the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). That agency is responsible for enforcing Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and it had just been given jurisdiction to extend its authority to higher education. Campus personnel decisions seemed a strange new world to the Commission. Was a Ph. D. a bona fide employment qualification? Was tenure a sort of seniority system? I was tasked with speaking on behalf of EEOC to various academic conferences to tell them Title VII would apply, without being very specific about the details. After that I spent the next three years taking a bus to DC every Friday to work with EEOC staff on new regulations.

One day during that period, two lawyers from the Department of Labor (DOL) invited me to lunch to explore the possibility of becoming their expert in an equal pay case against Memphis State University. Could I inform them and then the court about how faculty salaries were determined and whether the difference in male and female salaries in the MSU music department were discriminatory? I joined the DOL team and sat beside them during the whole five-day trial. A key moment occurred during the testimony of a male professor who claimed his high salary was warranted because he had a doctorate, and the female faculty didn't. The claimed degree was from some suspiciously high-sounding London institution. I had just finished a sabbatical in England and had never heard of it. But we needed to be careful. Music is far from my field. So, I wrote a note to our attorney, "Ask him how often he had been to the London campus." If he had had an extended residence, there would have been no further questions. But when he sheepishly conceded in the open court room that he had never been to London, casting doubt on the validity of his degree in the era before distance learning, MSU's case collapsed. I did two more academic equal pay

cases for DOL and consulted with several universities on those issues, but then moved to help private clients on the question of promotion and tenure for women faculty. It was in these cases that I learned about the joys of the litigation discovery process. Plaintiffs can require defendants under oath to admit to certain facts, answer precise questions, produce relevant underlying data, and depose defendant witnesses and their experts. Of course, defendants have the same rights. It is a wonderful device for preparing for trial and getting at the truth. I very much like working with attorneys to design the discovery process. Many cases are settled after the discovery stage without going to trial. That can be very satisfying, but no judicial precedent is made.

Nevertheless, judges are always in charge of what can be discovered and admitted in court proceedings. In working with four women plaintiffs who alleged discriminatory treatment in tenure and salaries, I needed relevant discovery documents from the defendant Cornell University. The women could only afford a Lincolnesque lawyer who worked from a third-floor walkup office with no copying machine. On the other hand, the campus had the deep pockets to hire a very prominent large law firm. An Ithaca judge's chambers hearing was scheduled, so I could explain why particular documents were needed to show discrimination. The Big Law attorneys objected, and the judge decided after about four of my sentences that he didn't want to hear anything from me. The tenure case outcome was predictable, though the University provided some back pay.

Then in 1989, the Supreme Court decided *City of Richmond v. Croson*, which changed the whole trajectory of my trial work. The Court found that any use by a government of a racial preference was subject to "strict scrutiny," meaning there had to be a "compelling

interest" and the preference had to be "narrowly tailored." That appeared to doom all sorts of racial preferences, except that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor added this sentence:

*Where there is a **significant** statistical disparity between the number of **qualified** minority contractors **willing and able to perform a particular service** and the number of such contractors actually engaged by the locality or the locality's prime contractors, an inference of discriminatory exclusion **could arise**.* (Emphasis added)

Governments latched on to this paragraph, leading to a massive investment in so-called disparity studies, which sought to create a predicate for the creation or continuation of preferential programs. That formula appeared to turn the issue of the existence of remediable discrimination into a matter of social science research.

More than 600 such studies were commissioned over the ensuing years, at an estimated cost of more than 300 million taxpayer dollars. Almost no academic institutions attempted procurement disparity studies, though they had research centers with the necessary capacity. Eventually most studies were completed by a handful of for-profit consultants who understood the results the market demanded. A recent article in the *Review of Black Political Economy* concluded that: "In practice, these firms are contracted to find evidence of disparity and there is institutional pressure on these firms to find it—they have failed if they do not find it or if they find the 'wrong' disparity (with the wrong group). These are not academically neutral studies."

At UMBC, I created the Project on Civil Rights and Public Contracts housed

(Scholar cont'd on page 6)

(*Scholar* cont'd from page 5)

in the AOK Library which eventually collected 289 disparity studies. On my retirement, the studies were given to the Library of Congress where they are accessible today. The studies also provided a resource for my own future trial work and consulting. I successfully challenged the validity of these studies in 35 cases from Philadelphia to San Francisco, though I lost cases in Denver and New York. At first my critiques were standard social science reviews of samples, statistics, and anecdotes. I had to sit through many eight-hour depositions and weeks of trial before testifying. In a case against the City of Chicago, I was seated in court beside plaintiffs' lawyers for six weeks.

Eventually new discovery techniques and judicial precedents made the long expensive trials unnecessary. Then in June 2023, the Supreme Court found the use of racial preferences in college admission illegal. The new judicial standard was that race could only be used to remedy previously identified constitutional or statutory violations. Almost no disparity study and the preferential procurement programs based on them can meet that test. Readers interested in that development may find my recent law review article useful:

<https://fedsoc.org/fedsoc-review/racial-preferences-in-economic-benefits-from-widely-accepted-to-legally-in-defensible>

I may still take a few more cases and help governments improve their procurement process. When I look back, I hope my trial expert experience improved my law teaching and helped a bit in protecting the civil rights of all Americans.

George R. LaNoue is an Emeritus Professor of Political Science and Public Policy. He came to UMBC in 1973 to serve as Director

for 18 years of the new Ph. D program in Public Policy. He is the author of "Improbable Excellence: The Saga Of UMBC" and composer and lyricist of the UMBC fight song.



UMBC Stories

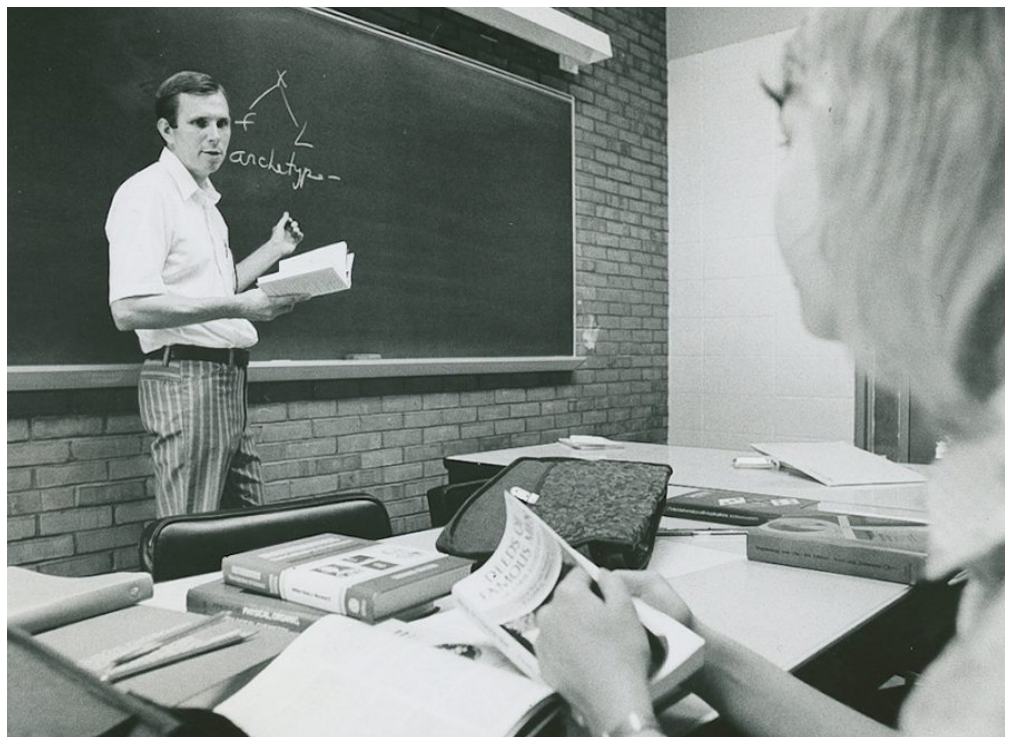
At The Dawn of UMBC

Rosalie Sherwin shares her memories of the founding of the Ancient Studies Department at UMBC with Sam Helms

Walt and Rosalie Sherwin arrived at UMBC in the fall of 1966, coming from Ohio State University to participate in the creation of a new campus of the University of Maryland System. There were a couple of classroom buildings, a gym, lecture hall, Administration Building, sidewalks comprised of solid concrete, and concrete steppingstones – all located on farmland once part of Spring Grove State Hospital. Walt had just gotten his doctorate in Classics from Ohio State University and was recruited to establish a Classics Department at UMBC. Instead, he

created the Ancient Studies Department that combined Classics, Archaeology, and Ancient History. While Classics Departments were being eliminated at some universities, the Ancient Studies department was thriving.

With so many new faculty members, the academic environment was one of congeniality and excitement. Some of the faculty were young and in their first professional year; some of the students were the first generation to attend college. I recall a special chemistry that existed in those first years. There were many social events that provided the faculty and staff opportunities to intermingle and get to know each other. These social events included afternoon teas that required wearing white gloves. Several new faculty members opted to settle in the new town of Columbia. While Walt developed the department, he and his children began to run regularly. Walt participated in the Maryland Marathon and others. The campus had a faculty basketball team that Walt joined, and he was known for never missing an undergraduate UMBC basketball game. After our three children started school,



Dr. Walter K. Sherwin writing on a chalkboard in front of class, circa 1970-1979. Photo courtesy of the University Archives, UARC Photos-08-02.

I obtained a master's degree from Catholic University and spent the last nineteen years of my career as Deputy Librarian at the United States Supreme Court.

The Ancient Studies department arranged for many mini-semester trips to Europe for students, faculty, and others. Countries visited were Greece, Italy, and England, to name a few. Walt and Rosalie retired from their careers and moved to Charlestown. It goes without saying that a lot changed in the subsequent years!

Sam Helms is a true Baltimorean. He was educated at all Maryland schools: Baltimore City College, Western Maryland College and UMCP. His career spanned 15 years at UMBC followed by fifteen more at Towson University. He moved to Charlestown in 2015.



Armchair Travel Morocco

Cheryl Miler

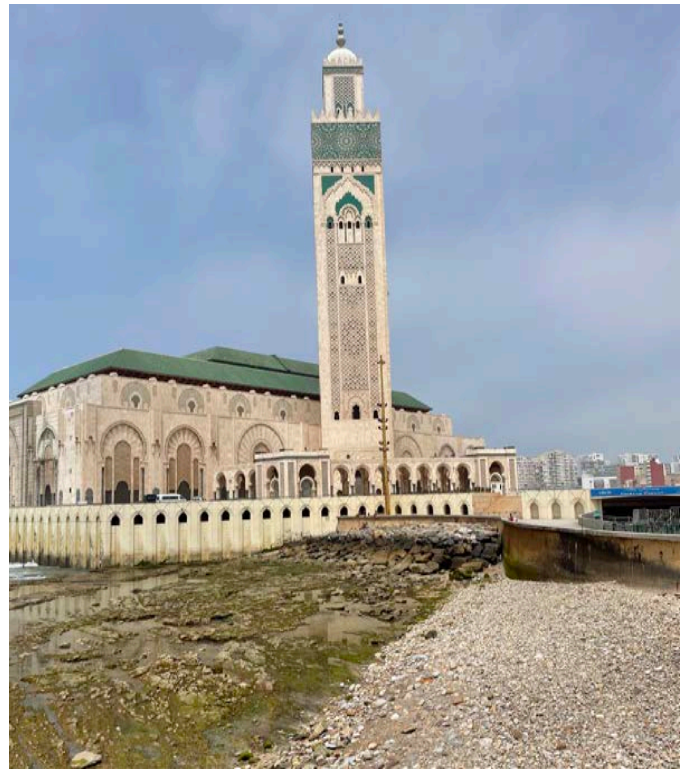
I have had wanderlust most of my life, beginning with an Experiment in International Living that took me to Ghana as a college junior. In the years since, I have travelled six continents. In May 2024, I travelled to one of the most fascinating countries in the world, Morocco, a country very diverse in ethnicities, language, and culture. The only other travel I had done in the Mediterranean region was a 2022 trip to Greece. Morocco was only the second Arab or Muslim country I had visited. Turkey is the other.

I had an educational and enjoyable eight-day trip that included stays in Fez, Rabat, Marrakesh, and Casablanca. Morocco was a French protectorate from 1912-1956, the year it gained its independence. Its languages include Berber, Arabic, and French. My travel group of nine people had an excellent translator

and tour guide, so there were no communication problems. However, I prided myself on being able to master “Salam Alaykum” (hello) to greet the Moroccans I met. One of three major highlights of my tour was that I was able to visit the University of Al Qarawiyn in Fez, the oldest university in the world. The second was a tour of the inside of the Royal Palace Dar al Makhzen in Rabat, home of the second oldest dynasty in the world. Third was the many beautifully patterned mosaics in the four cities. These mosaic tile designs are found in many public spaces, as statues, on water fountains, and unique walkways. Buildings in Morocco have a unique style, perhaps because of the blending of numerous cultures.

My first stop was the Imperial City of Fez. It is known for its leather tanneries and being one of the world's truly car-free zones. Second was Rabat, the capital city, known for its Kasbah des Oudais, Old City, Andalusian Gardens, and Hassan Tower. Seeing the ancient Kasbah was amazing, it gave me such a sense of history of that part of the world. Third was Marrakesh, known for its walled Agdal Gardens at the Kasbah, its medieval medina, complex irrigation system, and souks or outdoor markets.

Though it was apparent by the many collapsed buildings and damaged streets the city had suffered an earthquake in September 2023, markets and merchants found spaces were in full force. It was impossible to walk more than a few steps without being approached by merchants anxious to sell their food and wares, especially to tourists. I indulged



Mosque Hassan II, Casablanca. Photography by Cheryl Miller

in plenty of couscous, tagine, lentils, and fava beans. My last stay was in Casablanca (the largest city), renowned for its Notre-Dame de Lourdes/Church of the Sacred Heart Cathedral, its large Port, and the Hassan II Mosque – still a functioning Mosque. At different points in history, Fez and Morocco were also capital cities. I also saw the ancient Roman ruins of Volubilis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, I can truly say that the 8-hour flights and 5-hour time zone change were a small price to pay to visit such a remarkable country.

Dr. Cheryl Miller joined the UMBC faculty in 1988 and retired in 2016 as Associate Professor Emeritus. She held joint faculty appointments in the Departments of Political Science and Public Policy. She taught courses in the areas of American Politics, Public Administration, Public Policy Analysis, and Social Welfare Policy. During her UMBC tenure, Dr. Miller also served stints as Chair of the Political Science Department, President of the Faculty Senate, and as an Associate Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

Creative Endeavors

UMBC Gardeners

Joan Costello and colleagues

Spring 2024 was absolutely gorgeous! The mild winter and sufficient rain provided for more luscious gardens, and a great year for a garden tour. Five UMBC colleagues invited members of the Wisdom Institute to visit their gardens, and they shared their creative gardening practices for this article.

Lewis and Cindy Kubiet have a wonderful mix of formal and cottage gardens so that something is always blooming. They even have a stained-glass window depicting a garden that decorates their tropical plant room. Cindy's favorite planter has various levels that you can use to build a work of



One of Cindy Kubiet's gardens
Photography by Howard Caplan

art with various plants. For Christmas time she layers it with various greens and cones - stunning! What would she never recommend? -- use English ivy or another aggressive plant as a ground cover. A previous owner planted the ivy in her yard, and she has been tearing it out for 35 years! Her advice for new gardeners is to recognize that gardens can be a lot of work, but to take time to stop and "smell the roses" and enjoy the fruits of your labor. We certainly did!

When Kim and Tim Sparklin bought their house in 2010, they believed it to be a gardener's paradise. But they had to sort through and remove overgrown



Tim Sparklin's garden "rooms"
Photography by Howard Caplan

vines, plants and trees. Over time, Kim and Tim began the process of planting native plants to create habitats for birds, butterflies and other critters. The gardens have been certified as a sustainable landscape by Baywise/University of Maryland Extension Service and as a certified monarch butterfly habitat by North American Butterfly Association. The gardens are organized into "rooms" of different shapes and sizes for the enjoyment and relaxation of visitors. It's very charming and inviting.

Pam and Larry Wilt's garden was described in Larry's own words: "I try to keep rainwater and organic material from leaving the property, so I have dug a complex of water channels, swales and two ponds. I compost everything vegetable. The work in keeping these efforts going is a big part of my exercise program. I recommend a slow yet persistent and regular gardening effort for our age group. The Wilt Garden is oriented toward creating micro-environments for plants, animals, and humans alike. It includes bird houses, dense shrubs and trees for nesting, small hideouts for rodents and insects made of garden detritus for nesting and overwintering. While I tend to emphasize edibles in my garden, many of them are harvested by the animals, not me. The small animals, in turn, draw in predators like fox and herons, all there for our entertainment, from my point of view. The birds and the bats eat the insects, and the fish eat the mosquito larvae. I like to have tall growing

plants, that can separate off areas of a garden and amplify the feeling that the visitor has of being in the middle of nature. I embrace volunteer plants and some chaos in the garden. So, I never can be sure how the garden will look." And there is a lot to look at!

Paul and Rebecca Dongarra solved a standing water problem and privacy issue in their yard by planting a meadow and rain garden. The garden allowed them to install a patio not underwater, decrease CO2 emissions from reduced mowing, build flood resiliency, provide wildlife habitat and establish an example of just how beautiful this type of gardening can be to inspire others to follow suit. Building the garden involved large machinery, directing water from their neighbor's property, their roofs and downspouts to the rain garden via a 20" swale, a drainage box to an underground system that leads to the rain garden. Contrary to common perception, this type of gardening isn't passive. It is very important to weed the meadow to manage the seed bank of the area, removing plants that you don't want and encouraging those you do. There are, however, labor savings



One of Janet McGlynn's gardens
Photography by Howard Caplan

since you don't mulch or water except when establishing the meadow, and some of the grass cuttings are used to mulch other gardens in the yard. They use native species and leave the garden standing through the winter to provide insect overwintering habitat. Paul estimates an average of about 5-7 hours a week during the growing season to maintain the garden.

Regarding its benefit to wildlife, these plants are covered with pollinators and the lawn is filled with insects ranging from fireflies and dragonflies to a myriad of different butterfly species, various wildlife and numerous bird species who come to feed on the sunflowers, coneflowers and abundant insect life. All in all, it has certainly lived up to its certified Wildlife Habitat designation. (Please see a more thorough garden saga, along with the types of plants Paul and Rebecca used, on the WI website: Wisdom.umbc.edu/extended-features.)

Janet McGlynn has developed numerous gardens -- around the house, down the fence line, around the garage, across the back line and, if that wasn't enough, her gardens meander in an open field she refers to as the wayback (the owner of the space allows neighbors to plant there). People give her plant outcasts, or the results of thinning, and she gives them a home. She has a garden sign that reads "Auntie Jan's home for wayward plants." She regularly posts that she has plants to share, and she's not afraid to experiment and drop seeds here and there and see what happens.

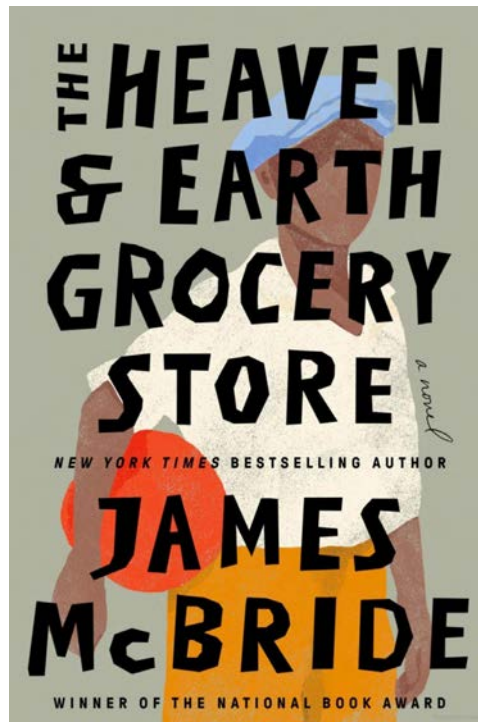
A friend on the tour commented that she learned about edibles and health benefits, where to buy plants, ideas for water flows but, mostly, she got inspiration. We can all echo that!

Joan Costello, who organized the tour, held various Media jobs over her 41 years at UMBC.

Contributors: Paul Dongarra, UMBC Alum and Rebecca Dongarra, Academic Affairs Management; Cindy Kubiet, Director of Sports Medicine, 29 years; Janet McGlynn, Director of Communication and Outreach for Office of Undergraduate Education, 16 years; Tim Sparklin, Director of Office of Research Protections and Compliance, 29 years; Larry Wilt, Director of AOK Library, 30 years.



Book Talks



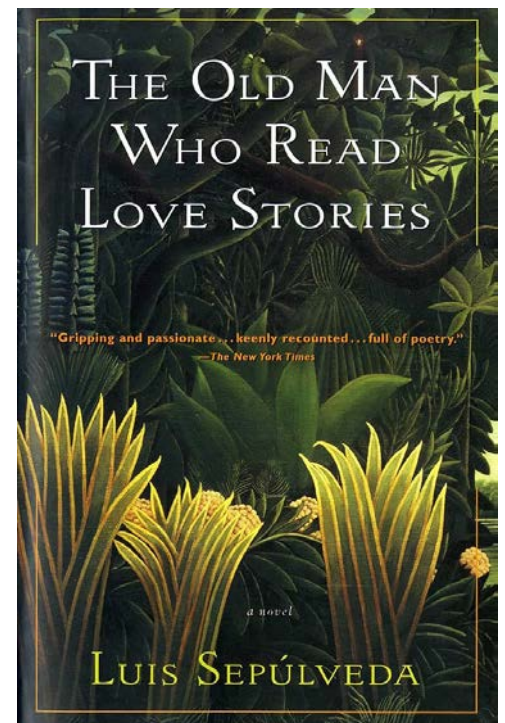
McBride, James (2023). *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*. New York: Riverhead Books. ISBN 978-0-593-42294-6

Reviewed by Dr. Pamela Williams Morgan

Set in Pottstown, Pennsylvania in 1972 while recounting life in the 1930s, *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* obviously required extensive research by its author, James McBride. McBride developed a powerful work of historical fiction and delivered it as a murder mystery.

The author masterfully employs flashback technique, introducing the storyline with the discovery of human remains at the bottom of the town well and a police interrogation of a local uncooperative rabbi. McBride then proceeds to fill in all of the details and events that led to the story's beginning. He guides his reader full circle to the story's climax, which easily could be missed if the reader has not kept track of even the most seemingly insignificant detail.

Much to my surprise, I really enjoyed reading this book. The suspense introduced in the first chapter kept me engaged until the very end, despite this kind of novel not being my preferred genre. After reading the book, I learned that James McBride was awarded the Kirkus Prize for fiction, a prize that is accompanied by \$50,000. I understand why!! 🌟



Sepúlveda, Luis (1994). *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*. Boston: Harcourt Publishing. ISBN 978-0-151-68550-9

Reviewed by Sandy Parker

(Book Talks cont'd on page 10)

(Book Talks from page 9)

Luis Sepúlveda, the author of *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, which won Spain's Tigre Juan Literature Prize, is a marvelous writer who brilliantly captures the exotic world of the Amazon frontier, both human and natural, in a mere 131 pages. It is the story of the ecological and human tragedy that follows from the expansion of civilization into the remoteness of Amazonia. The protagonist is Antonio José Bolívar, who lost his wife to malaria shortly after their marriage 40 years earlier and who lived for many years with the Shuar Indians learning the ways of the forest. He has ended up in a small river town on the very edge of the frontier.

He desires little more than to be left alone to read, and ponder, doomed love stories set in faraway places. These stories also serve to distract and isolate Bolívar from those who, in the name of progress, are committing atrocities against nature and those that live within it. His isolation is interrupted when the town is threatened, and he is called upon to employ his knowledge of and experience with the forest to address the danger. In so doing, the old man confronts the bitter reality of human stupidity, greed, and ignorance, and the sadness that comes from the knowledge that the Amazon he loves and deeply respects is coming to an end.

The writing is spare but evocative, and it is one of those books that can be read in a single sitting.

I assigned *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* in one of my classes, and I would tell the students not to read it in a single sitting. They would roll their eyes knowing that would never happen. Not a few would come back to class and would tell me with a note of wonder in their voice that they had indeed read it in one sitting. I suspect you may too. 🍷

AROHE Free Webinar Cyber Fraud and Personal Security Insights

Thursday, October 24

10-11 a.m. PDT, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. MDT, 12-1 p.m. CDT, 1-2 p.m. EDT

Cyber threats are everywhere and it is important to learn to stay cyber-safe. Fidelity Investments is leading the way in cybersecurity best practices. We are proud to partner with them to offer this exclusive virtual workshop to share important information about common financial scams and ways you can monitor, protect and safeguard your data.

Register for free at the following url:

<https://www.arohe.org/events-5825195>

Members Corner

Name: Dr. Pamela Williams Morgan

Role at UMBC: Professional associate emerita, Department of Education

Retirement year: 2017

On August 16, 2024, our UMBC/Wisdom Institute family lost a gem, dear, long-time member, Mrs. Rochelle Sanders, retired Director of Benefits & Compensation. Rochelle began her UMBC career in 1981, fresh out of high school, and retired in 2019. She will be sorely missed by her Williams-Scott-Sanders family and everyone who had the privilege of interacting with Rochelle at UMBC. Despite being her first cousin, I cannot do her UMBC story the justice it deserves. I invite you to hear it in her own words by accessing the following link: <https://youtu.be/fuxvp9BCyhU?si=xvvpj7pCFfC6MlsG>. Rochelle was preceded in death by her dear husband, Willie, on March 29, 2024. "Back together again."

Name: Jodi Crandall

Role at UMBC: Professor and Director, Language, Literacy and Culture Ph.D. Program

Retirement year: 2011



This golden retriever's name is Justice and is a member of Jodi Crandall's family.
Photography by Jodi Crandall

Upcoming Wisdom Institute Events Fall 2024 & Spring 2025

For more information and updates, please sign up on the Wisdom Institute website: wisdom.umbc.edu.



October 9, Wednesday: Howard County Conservancy 10.30am-12:30pm.

Tour of donor's house, outbuildings, garden, animals, part of trail. Afterwards, those interested could lunch at a local restaurant. Tour by Tabby Figure, UMBC Alum.

October 25, Friday: Retriever Essentials Coat Drive 11am - 1pm.

Drive by and Drop off on Admin Circle. Help prepare our UMBC Community for our lovely winters by donating gently used coats and new gloves.

October 24, Thursday: Reminder - UMBC Homecoming Grit X talks, 4-6pm.

The talks celebrate the passions and achievements of faculty, staff, and grad students. Check homecoming.umbc.edu for the speakers and location. For previous years, go to research.umbc.edu. This year's talks will be posted a couple of weeks after the event.

October 25-27: UMBC Homecoming.

Reconnect and celebrate your Retriever pride with alumni gatherings including the Founding Four (first four graduating classes 1970-1973), share stories, brunch, carnival (great for grandkids), puppy parade, sports, crab feast. See homecoming.umbc.edu for schedule and costs, if any.

November 11, Monday: Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks with Kathy O'Dell, 5-6pm.

December 12, Wednesday: 4th Annual Holiday Happy Hour, 5-7pm.

UMBC Research Park, 5523 Research Park Drive, Rm 2302



January 12, Monday: Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks with Kathy O'Dell, 5-6pm.

February 27, Thursday: Tom Cronin, "Seeing Through Other Eyes", 4-5:30pm.

The zoom talk will focus on how visual systems of other animals differ from those of humans and would explain the evolutionary roots of the huge diversity of visual systems that exist around us.

March 28, Friday: UMBC Observatory tour and talk, 4-6pm. Physics Bldg.

April 4, Friday: 8th Annual Signature Event, 11am-2pm.

The keynote speaker is Rebecca Hoffberger of the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) in Baltimore. The reception and luncheon will be held at Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena on campus.

May TBD: UMBC Symphony.

Linehan Concert Hall



University of Maryland, Baltimore County
1000 Hilltop Circle
Sherman Hall 117
Baltimore, MD 21250

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PAST EVENTS

Zoom MicroTalks, March

The inaugural MicroTalks event, coordinated by Kathy O'Dell, was very successful, according to attendees. Presentations were given by six WI members across a wide range of topics. More MicroTalks are scheduled for the coming year (see Upcoming Events for dates).

Signature Event, April

The Signature Event featuring Denise Koch included a reception, a luncheon, and an entertaining and inspiring talk by our guest speaker (see also Diane Lee's description on Page 1). The Wisdom Institute website includes dozens of additional photographs taken at the event.

Garden Tour, May

The Garden Tour was an enjoyable event not only for the attendees but also for the five Wisdom Institute members who had the opportunity to showcase their gardens. The creative talents of these gardeners are described in this issue's Creative Endeavors feature (see pages 7-8).

Retriever Essentials Food Drive, August

The Wisdom Institute sponsored a food drive for Retriever Essentials at UMBC. Contributions were very much appreciated.

