



Unitarian Universalist
Retired Ministers and Partners Association

Elderberries

Volume 37 Number 3 SUMMER, 2021

www.UURMaPA.org



APRIL 26-28, 2021



Theme speaker
FRED MUIR



Convener & then-vice-president
SUSAN RAK

JUNE INGATHERING



Spring Conference— A Report in Six Parts

by JACO TEN HOVE

Annual Event Honors Latest UURMaPAns

We came together digitally for another three-day affair, following last October's first virtual conference. It may have paled in comparison to the uplifting hugs, chats and programs that have enlivened previous in-person conferences, but again afforded a large degree of connectivity, plus a major talk by **FRED MUIR** on the theme "**Renaissance in Retirement**."

In fact, more of us have been able to join in these online events than could make it to conference centers, so there's even been an uptick in our numbers. Both three-day events as well as the last two June online Ingatherings all hovered around 100 participants.

As we imagine a future that could someday perhaps hold both (such as a "hybrid" model of onsite *and* online programs), here's a wrap-up of how this Spring affair went down, spread out evenly over the three weekdays, featuring two sessions each day, with some well-received off hours between engagements.

DAY 1, Session 1 – *Reconnecting*

DENNIS and **MARY KAY HAMILTON** were our very cheerful hosts from their home locale of the Monterey Peninsula in California, accompanied by lovely scenes of nearby Asilomar Conference Center and environs.

After further greetings from UURMaPA Board president **DIANE MILLER**, we subdivided into two rounds of breakout groups to eagerly check in and catch up with old and new friends.

Continued, pages 6-8...

For the second consecutive year, we held our summer **Ingathering** virtually, just ahead of General Assembly (with hopes that perhaps next year the '22 G.A. in Portland OR will be in person and we can restart our yearly luncheon affair during that event).

Convener and UURMaPA vice-president **SUSAN RAK** opened the hourlong session and greeted numerous dozens of Zooming participants. She announced that our fall conference would not be held in New Hampshire in person, but online, October 18-21. (*See full story on page 4.*)

Susan lit a chalice and led a naming of newly retired colleagues. "In these moments, we remember that we are here together, to support one another, to offer acknowledgement, encouragement, inspiration, camaraderie, celebration and congratulations. So welcome to UURMaPA!"

Continued, pages 9-10...

ALSO FEATURED INSIDE THIS **ELDERBERRIES**:

- 3 — Latest Large Bequest to UURMaPA
- 4 — Our Conferences Upcoming: This Fall & Next Winter!
- 9 — Latest "Intent to Retire" colleagues
- 10 — Unsung UURMaPAn Award to **PHYLLIS HUBBELL**
- 11 — New, helpful handbook by **BARBARA CHILD**, focusing on partners of retired ministers
- 12-15 — Obituaries

UU Retired Ministers and Partners Association

The Board:

Susan V. Rak (2023)
PRESIDENT

Ned Wight (2023)
VICE-PRESIDENT

Gloria Perez (2022)
SECRETARY

Richard Speck (2022)
TREASURER

Jaco ten Hove (2022)
ELDERBERRIES EDITOR

elderberries@uurmapa.org

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Anne Spatola (2022)
CONFERENCES

Wayne Arnason (2023)
UUA/UUMA LIAISON

OTHER LEADERS

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Patt Herdklotz
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Duane Fickeisen
WEBMASTER

Susan LaMar
HISTORIAN

Jay Atkinson
and **Roger Rochester**
OBITUARY EDITORS

Contact info for most of the folks above can be found in the most current online Directory under **Publications** at www.uurmapa.org (password: WISDOM).

President's Message

Even though I've been officially retired for some seven years, I still feel like I'm a newbie to this. Perhaps that's because there were four years of interim ministry and two part-time summer ministry jobs before full retirement kicked in.

I didn't have a real plan for retirement, just vague ideas about following some artistic pursuits or taking up writing; perhaps doing weddings or guest-preaching; or getting a job of some kind. The pandemic and its attendant restrictions put a new frame around retirement pursuits and I've settled into a groove of being a householder. My wife is far from retirement still, working full-time as a university dean, so I've embraced the responsibilities of cooking and baking (even nurturing sourdough starter), gardening, renovation planning, and the like.

The kinds of activities that beget gentle attention are now part of my daily routine. Grace is there, and creativity, with the time and bandwidth to truly focus and notice. It may not be fodder for exciting holiday newsletter reports, but it's turning out to be a good life of its own.

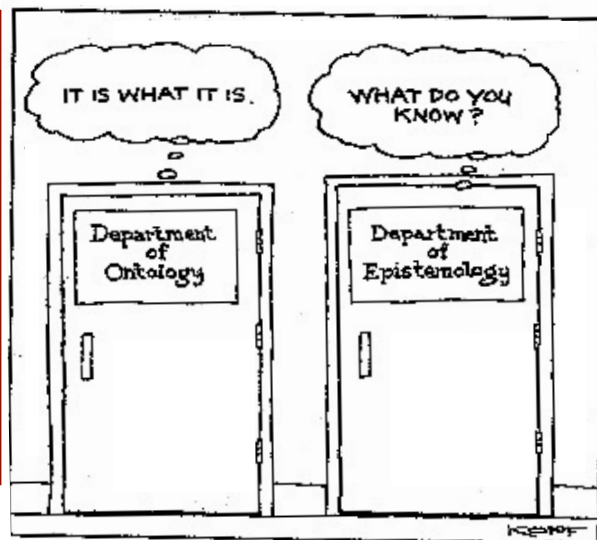
And yet, the world around me spins and I'm not living this life in some cocoon. That's the part I'm still working out: how to continue social justice efforts that seemed to flow seamlessly out of my congregational ministries. So my retirement remains a work-in-progress.

And now as President of the UURMaPA Board, I've got a new focus and new responsibilities. I have a feeling that these retirement thoughts will be informing my new position here—wondering where this road is taking us as we embark on another year in our virtual community, still discerning our role in the world.

~Susan



(Editor Humor vs. Clergy Humor...)



EDITOR'S NOTE TO ONLINE READERS: You'll see some lines in **bold, red type**, which indicates they contain web links. I avoid familiar underlinings, since they don't translate live into a print medium and the added line can be distracting for readers. —JTH

Four Board Members Finish Terms, Apparently Still Undaunted

The UURMaPA Board listing on Page 2 shows the latest set of leaders of this 36-year-old organization, as we continue to grow and flourish in cultivating the field for retired ministers and partners among us.

Most of us know how this works, meaning that a complement of notable players have concurrently just completed intrepid terms on the Board. We honor these outgoing principals for their dedicated efforts, as noted below.



★ **DIANE MILLER** departs the Board (but will take up the last portion of a NomCom slot). She has been a stalwart and creative leader of UURMAaPA for two solid years following a couple years as vice-president. True to form, Diane sent a gift of gratitude to the other departing Board members (as well as to the editor of this journal): jars of **Mrs. Miller's Elderberry Jelly**. ("Not me," she explained—"an Amish berry person. But making Elderberry jam is an aspirational idea for me.")

★ **ART and CATHIE SEVERANCE** have recruited Caring Connectors in various regions, and have stayed in touch with the ever-changing lives of our members. Cathie also took on the Obituary Coordinator role.

★ **MARNI HARMONY** returned to the Board to finish out a term and do another year as our valuable liaison for denominational matters.

These true servants now get to return to larger retirement (and other animating projects), with great thanks from all UURMaPA boosters. ~JtH



UURMaPA Receives Large Bequest from GEORGE BROOKS

In May, Treasurer **RICHARD SPECK** happily reported receipt of a bequest from the estate of the Rev. **GEORGE BROOKS** as an unrestricted gift to our organization. George attended the February, 2018, UURMaPA Conference in Tampa FL and enjoyed the camaraderie of this gathering, not long before he died on June 18, 2018, at the age of 95.



He served our faith in nine congregations from 1951 until retirement in 1992, and was named Minister Emeritus at the UU Fellowship of Charlotte County, Port Charlotte FL. (See his obituary in the *Elderberries* of Autumn 2020.)

UURMaPA received \$27,179 from George's estate. The Board decided to invest the bulk of it (\$25,000) in our Endowment Fund and put the remainder in the Money Market Account for ready access should a need arise.* Receiving this bequest will increase our Endowment to over \$85,000.

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are doing advanced estate planning, you might consider naming UURMaPA as one of the beneficiaries of your estate. Your gift, just like George's, will keep UURMaPA strong into the future for those ministers and partners who will be joining us and seeking the collegiality and programming that we offer. Consult your legal services to put us in your estate. *We thank you in advance.*

* The UURMaPA Board had already been discussing revising the Endowment Policy that governs such gifts. The Board subsequently approved a revised policy that gives more discretion about how the funds in the Endowment can be utilized. The Board may draw on up to 4% of the balance in any given year based upon the value as of July 1 of the year. The budget runs from January to December, giving time to incorporate the funds into the budget. This draw may be used to fund special programming or other projects that the Board feels will benefit the organization. The Board may also take more than the 4% after two Board votes to affirm the action.

While the cover stories are about Conferences PAST, here's news of Conferences AHEAD!

FALL '21 CONFERENCE ONLINE: October 18–20



Our next UURMaPA gathering will be offered via Zoom, featuring theme speaker **BRUCE MARSHALL** (Silver Spring MD) on:

The New Normal: Adjusting to a New World.

Bruce has been a UU minister for over 50 years and has authored five books, most recently a Skinner House title, *In Later Years: Finding Meaning and Spirit in Aging*. His theme will address the “new normals” in which each of us lives—specifically, a world changed by the coronavirus pandemic and the reality of our own aging.



The theme presentation will be interspersed with small group conversations in which we will consider what has changed for us in these new normals, and what has not. How is the world different and what does that mean for us at this stage of our lives? And where do we find the spirit leading us now?

In addition to our rich theme presentation the conference (designed with three separate sessions on each day) will include our poignant and celebratory Service of Remembrance and much anticipated Odysseys. There will be moving and meaningful Opening and Closing Worship Services that touch the mind, body, and spirit. We will hear from the hard-working UURMaPA leadership on issues that affect our membership and denominational issues that impact us personally and institutionally. There will be music, a time to hang out and a time to connect with far-flung ministers and partners in large and small groups.

This latest UURMaPA conference is being offered virtually again based on a complex decision that considered budget and membership polls on preference for an online or in person presentation. Overwhelmingly, we preferred online.

Conference fees have been set at \$50 for single individuals and \$75 for couples. Online registration will be available around September 1, and details will be communicated as the Planning Committee firms them up. Look for these on our Facebook pages (*see page 10*), our website and in emails which will be sent directly to you.

So for one more conference at least, hugs will have to be given through our eyes and voices until a time we can gather again in person. Meanwhile be well and be safe.

Your Planning Team,

BARBRO HANSSON, *Convener*

ROGER ROCHESTER, *Registrar*

ROSEMARIE SMURZYNSKI, *PR & Publicity*

DAVE HUNTER+KERRY MUELLER, *Worship*

MARNI HARMONY, *Odyssey Coordinator*

JOHANNA NICHOLS, *Small Groups*

RICHARD SPECK, *Internet Advisor*

ANNE SPATOLA, *UURMaPA Board*

AND NEXT YEAR! Winter Conference:

March 1-4, 2022

We are currently scheduled to be onsite **LIVE** in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the Franciscan Inn (site of our last in person conference in February of 2020). Evolving pandemic demands notwithstanding, we hope to once again gather together at this excellent site.

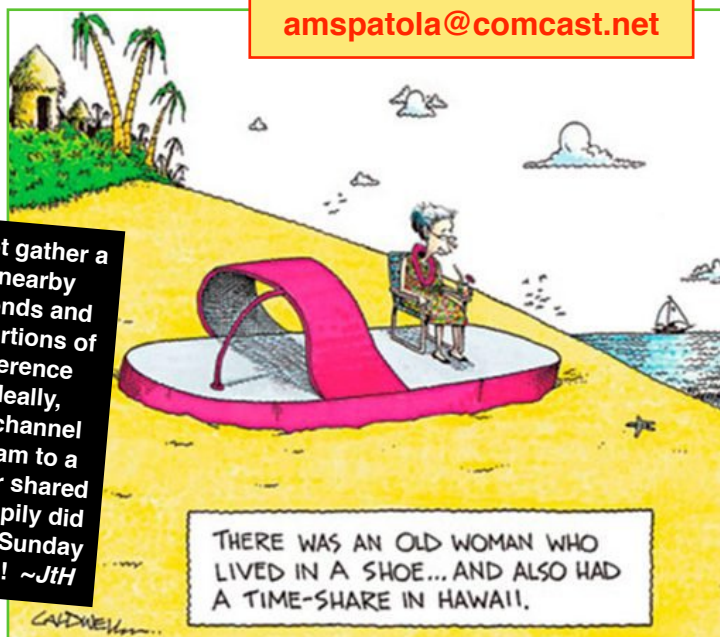
BUT we have to commit our deposit by October and YOUR ideas and help are critically needed! If you'd like to get involved with other planners to create another exciting experience for our members, please contact me SOON.

Your involvement can be as little or as much as you can handle but I assure you, it will not be boring or overwhelming. *This conference will not happen without YOU!*

~ANNE SPATOLA

amspatola@comcast.net

IDEA: Why not gather a few of your nearby UURMaPA friends and enjoy some portions of the Fall Conference together?! Ideally, someone can channel the online stream to a larger screen for shared viewing. We happily did that for the G.A. Sunday morning service! ~JtH



Travel Advisory

~Anonymous

I have been in many places, but I've never been in **Cahoots**. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Cahoots with someone.

I've also never been in **Cognito**. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in **Sane**. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my friends, family and work. I live close so it's a short drive.

I would like to go to **Conclusions**, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on jumping any more.

I have also been in **Doubt**. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in **Flexible**, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

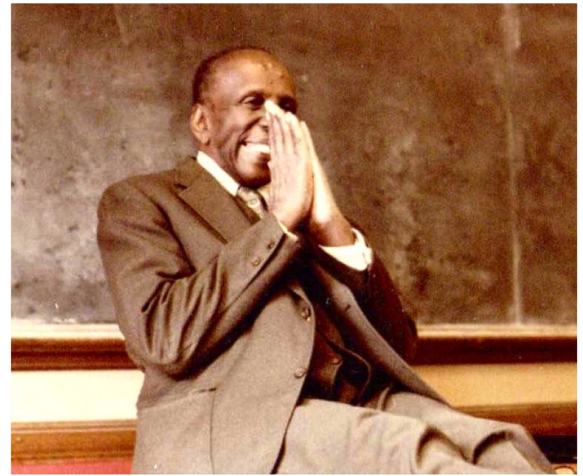
Sometimes I'm in **Capable**, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in **Suspense**! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart!

And, sometimes I think I am in **Vincible**, but life shows me I am not.

People keep telling me I'm in **Denial**, but I'm positive I've never been there before.

So far, I haven't been in **Continent**. But my travel agent says I'll be going soon.



The Green Growing Edge

—Howard Thurman

The hard thing when you get older is to keep your horizons open. The first part of your life everything is in front of you, all your potential and promise. But over the years, you make decisions; you carve yourself into a given shape. Then the challenge is to keep discovering the green growing edge.

There is a quiet courage that comes from an inward spring of confidence in the meaning and significance of life. Such courage is an underground river, flowing far beneath the shifting events of one's experience, keeping alive a thousand little springs of action.

I ORDERED A CHICKEN
AND AN EGG FROM AMAZON.
I'LL LET YOU KNOW.



MARY KAY & DENNIS HAMILTON,
Conference hosts

DAY 1, Session 2—Remembering

SUE REDFERN-CAMPBELL and **CHRISTINE ROBINSON** led a moving Remembrance Service which offered capsule descriptions of so many recently departed UURMaPAns, deepened by lots of fond personal honorings.

Viewer **CLAUDIA ELLFERDINK** called it “*A wonderful distillation of incredible ministries.*”



SUE REDFERN-CAMPBELL and
CHRISTINE ROBINSON, presiding



DAY 2, Session 1 – Featured presentation: *Renaissance in Retirement*

FRED MUIR (introduced by **THERESA NOVAK**) challenged us to a “revival of learning” and noted that his aim was to speak relevantly to partners as well as ministers.

Since retiring in 2017 from 42 years of parish ministry (the last 34 years at Annapolis MD), Fred has unexpectedly agreed to take on two institutional positions, first as part-time interim director for the UUA's International Office, and then as full-time interim executive director for the Partner Church Council, which continues. So he approached this theme of Renaissance in Retirement asking, “What retirement?”

He concentrated, then, on the first theme word and began by citing a Dan Wakefield “Spiritual Autobiography” exercise whereby participants “map” the course of their lives, diagramming the “roads” traveled, including detours, rest stops, “perhaps a crash or two.”

And he focused on the roundabouts we encounter—traffic circles with various exits to consider, some expected, some not—“those places you enter and have the possibility of changing direction.” Approaching retirement can be seen as the latest metaphorical roundabout, which we likely enter from a wide variety of angles, with different ways to exit the loop. What we might have in common is that staying in the circle was not an option.

These pivotal moments become an opportunity for renaissance, he declared, but cautioned that changing lanes (and minds) can be risky business. Nonetheless, it is still “quite acceptable” to choose a new path and then realize you’d rather turn around safely and reenter the same or a different roundabout, to consider a different path, perhaps something that wasn’t in view earlier. “That’s what happened to me,” he admitted.

Renaissance can also be described as a “revival of learning,” the makings for which are expressed in an anecdote told by a colleague. “One afternoon I heard a loud thump on the front porch, and went out to discover a soft bird with a broken neck on the floorboards.

“When I picked her up her eyes were still clear. Turning around to see what the bird had seen, I looked at the reflection of the mountain in the window glass, flanked by deep trees and crowned by a great expanse of sky. Poor bird—she had thought of all that was ahead of her, when it was really behind her, in the direction from which she had come.”

In pondering this story, Fred wondered, “Were the remnants of my past actually the building blocks of my future?” This sponsored a revival of learning for him. He was candid about a “haunting feeling (that I was) getting left behind in ministry and in a faith to which I’ve committed all of my professional life.”

Understanding that his future was shaped by his past, the challenge, Fred noted, “was not getting lost in that past, becoming it. He called upon an image invoked by author Barbara Brown Taylor: “There is new wine being poured that old skins cannot contain.”

Fred approached this reality thusly: “If I want a taste (of that new wine)—and I do—then I accept the invitation to refresh my vocabulary, retool my theology, relocate my boundaries, and recalibrate my calling. I even accept feeling lost much of the time, since losing my bearings is how I discover things I might not have found in any other way. Is this not an invitation to renaissance, to a revival of learning?”

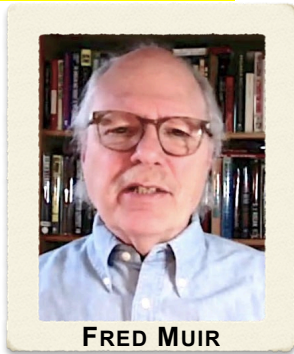
As a personal example, Fred described his unexpected exiting of an early roundabout to go to the Philippines, a now-30-year relationship that has led to a conversion, a change in orientation, and a still meaningful renaissance, providing opportunities he never planned or imagined. But some of his new learning also revealed a surprisingly extensive UU colonial activity in the history of the region, embodying what he came to call a “UU imperial theology” that legitimized commitments of UU players there.

He invoked Samuel Eliot, the American Unitarian Association’s first president (1900-27), who published a congregational handbook that “put in motion and legitimized a North American, Anglo-Saxon history by which UUs have ever since been strangled and stunted. It’s the same legacy that many, especially those in white supremacy, eugenics and anti-immigration movements, rely on to make arguments for nativism and exclusion.”

Fred was candid about a
“haunting feeling (that I was)
getting left behind in ministry and
in a faith to which I’ve committed
all of my professional life.”

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previous page...



FRED MUIR

And so Fred asked us to consider: "To what degree is this story still in play, shaping us, and if so, how long will it remain?" The point, he added, is that "the colonial, imperial posture held, exhibited and put into practice by those UUs...was in line with UU values, with the story Unitarians & Universalists have told about themselves for decades, if not centuries."

He drew inspiration from the work of Rebecca Parker & Rita Nakashima Brock, *Saving Paradise*, which encourages us to approach the inherited forces of history with a will to "creatively transform, lament and engage." Fred suggested that these elements are what "in part, make for renaissance, for conversion, for a revival of learning."

So he invited our reflection thusly: *How have your ministry, your theology, your beliefs been shaped by the UU legacy of imperialism, that is, of power over others or over "the Other"? In what ways has your ministry been in partnership with others?*

Fred identified some lessons that have given shape to his renaissance in retirement, notably how "individualism remains a quintessential and vibrant tenet of our faith theology and its sustaining appeal...(It is) constructed on a near-pathological obsession with rights, rights as something deserved, which can lead to exceptionalism and distancing, rather than the bonds and gifts and gratitude that unite people."

Fred leaned on Marcus Borg's last book, *Convictions: How I Learned What Matters Most*, to help him see how "conversion leads to conviction; that is, a reorientation leads to a new way of understanding and acting." For Fred, as he neared retirement and found himself increasingly interested in subjects of history and legacy, that has meant a deepening probe into "the intertwining of US and UU histories."

He contrasted for us the formative figure portrayed very differently by Thomas Jefferson (*The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*) and by Howard Thurman (*Jesus and the Disinherited*). This suggested an inquiry that persists: "What does our religion say to those who are weak, suffering, or in urgent trouble?"

He developed this further by noting the powerfully shared experience of white UU ministers who went to and came back from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call to Selma: "It

wasn't Jeffersonian individualism that set their spirits afire; it was King's (and Thurman's) Jesus of love." But the persistent ethos of individualism back in their congregations held sway and frustrated them as they tried to explain their inspiration and conversion.

Barbara Brown Taylor wrote, "As a general rule, I would say that human beings never behave more badly toward one another than when they believe they are protecting their God." Fred took this a step further: "And

if that God is individualism—and I believe it is—then, as we have seen throughout US and UU histories, is it a stretch to assert they we have behaved pretty badly?"

"My revival of learning," Fred concluded, "has taken me to the conviction that we continue to miss opportunities for broadening and deepening our faith by ignoring and limiting our engagement with international partners. Unfortunately this is nothing new..."

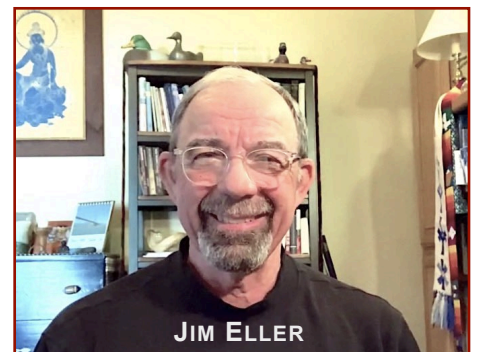
After this cogent and stirring critique, Fred left us with early 20th century French sociologist Emile Durkheim's notion of "collective effervescence—an event that excites individuals and serves to unify the group." He expressed his hope that Unitarian Universalism might see its way into such a moment, "which will lead to a UU conspiracy (from the root word meaning *breathe together*, as in individuals breathing together)" toward a UU renaissance, an opportunity for conversion and conviction.

DAY 2, Session 2—Odyssey #1

In his odyssey, JIM ELLER (Norman OK) noted that he was "imprinted" by growing up at All Souls Church in Tulsa OK, with his mother also a charter member of Church of the Larger Fellowship.

"Wonder has been my path to the religious life," including a baptism through the beauty of surfing, bioluminescence, and stars. He "hated war but loved the process of applying to be a CO (Conscientious Objector)."

The most important prayer of his life has been "surrender," and his favorite hymn is #128, "For All That Is Our Life." Jim was introduced by two pals since early days at Tulsa All Souls, BILL HAMILTON-HOLWAY AND FRED MUIR.



JIM ELLER

REPORT continued, next page 8...

COLLECTIVE EFFERVESCENCE—

an event that excites individuals and serves to unify the group.

—Emile Durkheim

Some FRED MUIR publications:

- **Turning Point: Essays on a New Unitarian Universalism** (Skinner House, 2016)
- **The End of iChurch** (UU World Magazine, Winter 2012)
- **The Whole World Kin: Darwin and the Spirit of Liberal Religion** (Skinner House, 2009)
- **Maglipay Universalist: The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines** (UU Church of Annapolis, 2001)

2021 Spring Conference Report

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MARNI HARMONY



Years shape souls.

Potters shape wet clay.

The wind bends the mountain tree.

The forces of life shape each of us.

The years and God

make souls strong for a purpose;

We are shaped by time and stresses.

We learn to forgive others and then ourselves.

We stay open to grace and keep learning.

And though over time we bend like the mountain tree

It is so that our clay becomes

a more beautiful vessel

with its numerous cracks and fault lines.

Created by **MARNI HARMONY**,
adapted from the work of Anne Hill



Carry the flame

DAY 3, Session 1 – *Odyssey #2*

In her odyssey, **MARNI HARMONY** (Orlando FL) described growing up in the Tauxemont neighborhood of Alexandria VA, where she was influenced by a strong and active vision of healthy intentional community. Her family and Tauxemont members started the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, where she would be ordained in 1974.

Civil rights activity, singing, and trees have been formative for her. (She wears tree rings on her fingers.) Some lessons from serving congregations: “Ministry will test you, and you will fail. The challenge is to fail creatively.” “Your heart will expand and break in almost equal measure.” Her favorite Hymn is #207, “Earth Was Given as a Garden.” Marni was introduced by longtime “colleague and admiring friend” **DIANE MILLER**.

DAY 3, Session 2 – *Grounded Closing*

UURMaPA president **DIANE MILLER** led an informative session, beginning with the Nominating Committee’s latest significant work. (See the honoring of board members completing terms on page 3, an updated staff box on page 2, and incoming leader bios in the most recent Spring Elderberries.) Vice-president (and president-elect) **SUSAN RAK** explained and promoted our upcoming June 15 Annual Ingathering event. (See story on pages 1, 9-10.)

Diane noted, “The Board is also a learning community. This year we have been discussing each month a few chapters of Ibram X. Kendi’s *How To Be An Anti-Racist*, using a discussion format developed by [treasurer] **RICHARD SPECK**. We are working on examining our practices and processes, to create a more welcoming community of retired ministers with more diverse identities.”

She introduced other Board members, who each gave quick comments on their portfolios, including [secretary] **GLORIA PEREZ**’s offer to start a Partners of Color online support group. Also acknowledged were non-Board leaders. (See similar mentions in June Ingathering Report, next page 9.)

A helpful message from the UU Ministers Association Executive Team was followed by the Unsung UURMaPAn Award presentation to **PHYLLIS HUBBELL**. (See story on page 10.) A number of questions from attendees were addressed by various leaders, with a brief break before Closing Worship.

DENNIS HAMILTON led the final event of our Spring conference, a worship service which opened with a moving video by our colleague, singer/guitarist **Dan Schatz**, of a song he wrote called *Carry the Flame*. (Available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYHmis2D4Hs.) Dennis offered a homily that described how “In my retirement it is the natural world that has seduced me.” Another visually stirring video of Peter Mayer’s *Blue Boat Home* polished off our time together.

The closing chat box was abuzz with friendly, appreciative comments, including much gratitude to the planning team. **WAYNE ARNASON** said, “What a joy to share these days with all of you. Thank you.” And **JANET TILLMAN** declared, “This was a wonderful conference!” Which it was. Even our professional tech host, Liz Roper, commented, “Fantastic event, and a pleasure to listen in as a non-member.” ☆



...Continued from page 1— Annual June Ingathering Celebrates Latest UURMaPAns

President **DIANE MILLER**, finishing up two years in that role, issued a warm welcome to the recent retirees. “What will it be like to be called to ministry, yet no longer working with a congregation, agency, clients, hospital? Here is where you will find colleagues who have been through this transition, who have discovered many different paths...The only cap on what we can do is our own capacity for what we can envision...Let this be a time and place of appreciation and warm regard” (which it was).

Diane gave an overview of UURMaPA, plus how some of the less visible players have enriched our activities. She lifted up **DUANE FICKEISEN** (webmaster), **PATT HERDKLOTZ** (membership coordinator), **SUSAN LAMAR** (historian and archivist), obituary writers **ROGER ROCHESTER** (partners) and **JAY ATKINSON** (clergy), **LILIA CUERVO** (resident agent, a role required for our non-profit status), and **THERESA NOVAK** (our Facebook page moderator).

She thanked outgoing Nominating Committee members **BARRY ANDREWS**, **WAYNE ARNASON**, and the late **JUDY WELLES**, who was sadly unable to finish her term. She welcomed new nominators **SUE REDFERN-CAMPBELL** and **GINGER LUKE**, who will join Diane, **JUDY GIBSON**, and chair **BARBARA WELLS TEN HOVE** on that Committee. She also described the nine-person Board's departing and incoming members. (See list on pg. 2.)

Diane concluded by illuminating the general purpose of UURMaPA: “What do we do? We connect. We share ideas. We learn and grow. We support one another in person and on-line. We tell the stories of our lives. We honor the work we have done. We memorialize. We give of ourselves and we have fun. So I hope you will find a place in this group. Welcome!”

Colleague **Diana McLean**, editor of the forthcoming Skinner House book on the UU Rainbow History Project, offered an update, noting that the scope of the book has become “more inclusive of a wider variety of gender identities and sexual orientations as well as queer people of color.” It has also involved more outreach, with a tentative first draft date of October 1.

We heard helpful information (and wisdom) from a quartet of UUA staff. From the Office of Church Staff Finances (ocsf@uua.org) **Linda Rose** and **Richard Nugent** led a walk through numerous angles on the UUA Retirement Plan and ran a couple of worthwhile informational polls.

They also described the quarterly Service Gratuity, eligibility for which is 21 years of at least half-time ministry, age 67+, and official retirement from one's position. They reminded us that Financial Aid funds are available as needed and that UUA Dental Insurance can be continued into retirement (credit for which Richard attributed to UURMaPA).



Linda Rose, Director
UUA Retirement Plan

UUA Dept. of Ministries and Faith Development co-directors **Sarah Lammert** and **Janice Marie Johnson** offered grateful greetings, provided an update on the renewed Targeted Ministry Program, and especially appreciated UURMaPA's leadership on the Rainbow History Project. “This matters greatly,” emphasized Janice.

**Ingathering continued,
next page 10...**

THE LATEST NEWLY RETIRED UU CLERGY!

**The folks listed below have
filed UUA “Intent to Retire”
forms as of July 22, 2021.**

NOTE: Some of these names were not shown in the 2021 UUA Service of the Living Tradition (SLT), probably because they were so honored earlier or will be at the next SLT. Others not here but who were shown in the SLT have been noted in earlier *Elderberries* or will be in a later issue. (It's been a bit of a challenge to keep accurate track.)

JOAN MARIE VANBECELAERE
STEPHEN GEORGE KENDRICK
DOAK MADDOX MANSFIELD
STEFANIE ETZBACH-DALE
CYNTHIA POWELL CAIN
STEPHEN R. ATKINSON
LEONETTA C. BUGLEISI
DEAN M. STAFFANSON
JOHN G. PASTOR, JR.
JANE ELLEN MAULDIN
SARAH KATE PERSON
KATHERINE A. JESCH
CATHERINE SENGHAS
JOHN ERIC GIBBONS
JUDY A. TOMLINSON
JONALU JOHNSTONE
GEORGE BUCHANAN
GRETCHEN THOMAS
MARC S. FREDETTE
DENNIS REYNOLDS
KAREN STOYANOFF
CATHEY EDWARDS
DONNA L. RENFRO
JEANNE W. LLOYD
RUTH MACKENZIE
VICTORIA INGRAM
LINDI RAMSDEN
SALLY B. WHITE
ALYSON JACKS
AMY RUSSELL
JANET ONNIE
JEFF BRIERE
EMILY BURR
ALEX HOLT

...Continued from previous page 9—Annual June Ingathering Report

We then heard interesting personal words from five folks who retired just a year ago, commenting on the experience of their first months in this realm: **JAN CARLSSON-BULL, NED WIGHT, CHRISTINE ROBINSON, GAIL SEAVEY** and one anonymous message.

Meanwhile, an active Chat Box shared lots of uplifting connections and also covered additional arenas of interest. One inquiry asked if there was any update on whether the housing allowance tax benefit will continue in light of the Freedom From Religion Foundation suit that went to the Supreme Court a few years ago. Richard Nugent replied, “(There is) no known threat to the housing allowance. The lawsuit against it died at the circuit court level.”

Mention of a Facebook group especially for “UU Ministers Retiring” (who want to talk about the transition from working to retired) led to a reminder about the larger FB group for all retired ministers and partners.

And **SUSAN RAK** closed the hourlong event: “Give everyone a wave and a blessing!” ☆



Check out UURMaPA on FaceBook:

Like our page:

www.facebook.com/UURMaPa/

Join our **UURMaPA** discussion group:

(Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers & Partners Assoc.):

<https://tinyurl.com/yyzrlam5>



PHYLLIS HUBBELL Surprised with Unsung Award

During our Spring online conference, UURMaPA Board President **DIANE MILLER** presented the **2021 Unsung UURMaPA Award** to **PHYLLIS HUBBELL**...

...in special recognition of her visionary launching, guiding and following through with a Rainbow History focus for UURMaPA, timed on the 50th Anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall resistance. Phyllis conceived the idea of honoring and celebrating our Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Queer UU leaders, and our institutional struggles for justice. She took on fundraising and event planning that yielded two outstanding in-person conferences on the subject in 2019.

Ambitious to preserve this history as more than conference conversations, Phyllis then pressed on patiently and enthusiastically to transcribe and edit recorded talks, and to ensure that they are archived at Andover-Harvard Theological Library. A website was established, including materials contributed by many and thus made available to all. A book has also been launched from this Rainbow History project, to be published soon by Skinner House.

Phyllis worked with the late Dorothy Emerson, the late Judy Welles, and many volunteers to move all this good work forward. With patience and good humor, Phyllis continues to implement the project, which has had a very long follow-up of collecting and editing.

In addition, Phyllis served on the UURMaPA Board as vice-president and showed her resilience when she had to pivot just ahead of our June 2020 G.A. Ingathering, to quickly create our first entirely online event.

*Phyllis has been a stalwart participant in UURMaPA programs since her retirement from full time ministry. She and spouse **JOHN MANWELL** continue to provide part-time ministry as clergy partners, while they live in Gaithersburg MD.*

Phyllis—huzzah and thank you! We sing your praises!

John, who apparently succeeded in keeping this a secret, then handed Phyllis the award check for \$500.



JOHN MANWELL with Awardee **PHYLLIS HUBBELL**, at an earlier occasion.

New Resource for “Navigating in Unfamiliar Territory”

An 18-page handbook by **BARBARA CHILD** (Nashville, IN) is now available on the UURMaPA web site*—

The Former Minister’s Partner, the Former Minister, and the Current Minister: Recommendations for Navigating in Unfamiliar Territory

This valuable resource emerged from a thorough study of the needs, interests, and issues of people in these three often intersecting roles. The goal of the study was to see what might help them navigate for the good of all and ultimately for the well-being of the congregation and its ministry.

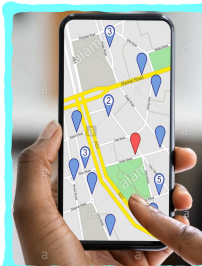
During 14 years in parish ministry, including a decade as an interim minister, **BARBARA CHILD** became increasingly aware of issues relating to former ministers’ partners as well as the needs and interests of the partners themselves, especially if the former minister and partner were still living in the community where the minister had previously served.

In preparation for co-facilitating an April 2019 Transitional Ministers Seminar workshop on issues related to partners, Barbara began looking at the UUMA Guidelines and related materials with newly focused vigor. By the time the workshop was over, it had become clear to everyone present that, first, an addition to the Guidelines deserved attention (encouraging former ministers to invite their partners into the covenanting process)—and soon a helpful one-sentence addition was adopted at the 2020 UUMA Business Meeting.

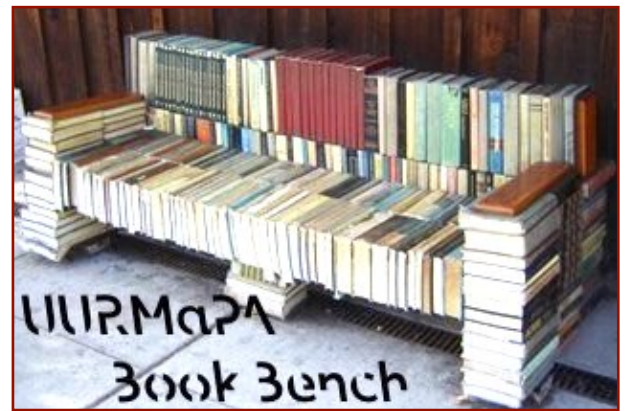
But also, as valuable as that was, it alone did not, and could not come close to addressing the multiplicity of partners’ needs and issues. So Barbara was asked by the UUMA and UURMaPA boards to further investigate and make the fruit of her research available in an accessible form.

Thus began months of interviews and collecting responses to a rich questionnaire that ultimately led her to create this work as a kind of helpful device for navigating in unfamiliar territory. “It has been a fascinating journey of exploration,” commented Barbara, “finding one piece of lived experience after another sitting side by side with one unexplored assumption after another.”

The handbook features insights, recommendations and details, including an effective, adaptable innovation—the Retired Minister’s Working Group. This resource is a worthy addition to the assembled wisdom now available to interested parties. ~JtH



* Download the handbook as a pdf document, found in the Best Practices section on UURMaPA website’s Publications page here: <https://uurmapa.org/publications/>



REVIEW by ART SEVERANCE

Transcendentalism Yesterday and Today: A Collection of Addresses and Sermons on Transcendentalist Themes

By **BARRY M. ANDREWS** (Xlibris US, 2020)

Minister Emeritus of the
UU Congregation at Shelter Rock NY

BARRY ANDREWS (Bainbridge Island WA) has written other books on Transcendentalism that I have also enjoyed, but I think this is his best and I highly recommend it. I find myself especially resonating to Emerson, and have come to realize that I, too, am a transcendentalist!

The chapter on “Transcendentalism Yesterday and Today” was particularly inspiring because Barry was able to bring the early- to mid-19th-century characters and their writing into today’s thinking and feeling, such as around the paths of spirituality and social justice.

I believe this offers us wisdom for many contemporary issues, as when he considers white supremacy of the 19th-century and how Transcendentalism was speaking out against slavery and for women’s and Native American rights, as well as the poor. There is also a great section on Whitman and his radical sexuality.

I’m always inspired by Barry’s writing as he brings Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller and other transcendentalists to life. It reminds us that they really were the inspiration for much of American spirituality both then and now.

He mentions and quotes from a book which led me to read that as well: *Restless Souls—The Making of American Spirituality from Emerson to Oprah*, by Leigh Schmidt (2006). I would call this a related work because it basically gives Emerson and the transcendentalists credit for inventing American spirituality, especially of the liberal bent. ☆

Longer versions of all obituaries can eventually be found on the UURMaPA web site (no password needed) at uurmapa.org/obituaries/.

If you learn about the death of a minister or partner, PLEASE let us know at board@uurmapa.org.

Continuing gratitude to **JAY ATKINSON** (~JA) for careful researching and composing of obituaries for ministers. **ROGER ROCHESTER** (~RR) does a similarly fine job for partners.

IN MEMORIAM



EILEEN B. KARPELES (1925 – 2018)

The Reverend Eileen Karpeles—parish minister, creative writer, teacher, liturgist, skilled conflict mediator, and free spirit, who came to UU ministry in midlife—died on 25 October 2018, aged 93.

Eileen had a lifelong interest in writing, with pieces appearing in both secular and UU publications. Her 1951 poem, “Postwar Panorama: Europe, 1945,” won second honors prize at Ohio University.

Eileen Julia Botsford was born on 8 June 1925 in Cleveland, Ohio, to Grace Alnora (Tong) and Laurence Calvin Botsford. After her parents’ separation when she was two and her mother’s death six years later, she was raised by Christian Science grandparents.

She earned a Ph.B. from the University of Chicago (1947) and then went to Ohio University (Athens) for a B.S.Ed. (1950) and a M.A. in English (1951). Eileen headed out to Seattle to teach high-school English and discovered University Unitarian Church, where she met a young medical student, Leopold Karpeles, whom she married in 1951.

By 1960 the family, now with three daughters, had settled in Maryland, and Eileen took a part-time position on the English faculty at Towson State College. Both she and Leo became active in the Towson UU church, and eventually Eileen, “drawing on her love of writing, music, and theater...developed a collection of sermons that she delivered from guest pulpits around the mid-Atlantic region,” daughter Tamia recalled.

After separation from Leo in 1970, Eileen expanded her UU involvement, finding an outlet for her creative teaching ideas in planning, staffing, and directing youth camps at Murray Grove. Somebody commented, “You ought to become a minister.” She took the cue and in 1977 finished work for her M.Div. from Starr King School.

Ms. Karpeles was ordained on 28 September 1977 by her “home” congregation, the Towson UU Church in Lutherville MD. After settlements at All Souls UU Church, New London CT. (1977–80) and the Orange Coast UU Church, Costa Mesa CA (1980–83), she turned to interim ministry, serving over the next decade in Albany NY, Springfield MA, Eugene OR, Sarasota FL, Boca Raton FL, Sacramento CA, Miami FL, and Williamsburg VA, before retiring from the active ministry in 1993.

Daughter Tamia looked back: “In many respects, my mom was fearless with an independent spirit that could be both terrifying and inspiring. For example, she loved to drive, and continued to hit the open road on solo trips well into her 80s, visiting friends around the country and car-camping at night in Wal-Mart parking lots. Her life was an adventure...”

At her death, Eileen was survived by daughters Katherine Maeda, Robin Magdalene, and Tamia Karpeles, and a granddaughter, Kendra Maeda.

A family remembrance was held in Maryland on 15 December 2018. Memorial donations were encouraged to a charity of one’s own choosing as well as to UURMaPA. ~JA



*Student, age 25
Ohio University*



PATRICIA PREVOST (1951 – 2021)

IN MEMORIAM

Patricia Prevost, spouse of the Reverend Dr. **STEPHAN PAPA**, died 11 March 2021 in Colorado, at age 69. Patty was born 26 March 1951 in Freeport, New York, to Arthur and Katherine Prevost, and attended school in Wantagh NY, where she established friendships that she would sustain throughout her life. After high school, Patty attended Keene State College in New Hampshire, then graduated cum laude from The State University of New York in Geneseo in 1973. She had become involved with the student radio station and earned her degree in speech communications.

With her degree in hand, Patricia spent time trying out work experiences, taking employment in a variety of positions in Manhattan MD, and Florida. She had attended UU churches since grade school—a consequence of her parents being from different religious backgrounds—and it was at the Unitarian Church in Fort Lauderdale FL that she and Stephan met in 1980. They married in 1982, and moved to Denver CO later that year.

In Denver, Patty worked for a wine importer, then for a classical radio station, then for Colorado Public Radio (CPR), where she eventually became Vice-President of Development and Marketing. In 2001 they moved to Devon PA, where she worked for the Free Library of Philadelphia, and then as Director of Development and Communication for WRTI public radio. Returning to Denver in 2010, Patty worked again for CPR, for Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting System, and retired in 2017 from her position as Director of Leadership Giving at KUNC community radio.

Patty loved musicals, walking, talking, travel, Pilates and yoga, and she had an astounding capacity to engage with people. She was an excellent listener and unusually adept at remembering details of others' lives. She was charming and witty and caring, and her social skills empowered her success as a fundraiser. Many people testified to the joy they had in being with her for a variety of experiences.

In addition to Stephan, Patty is survived by daughter Alexandra Prevost Papa, her husband Tyler Childers, and their son, Parker Chapin Childers, and also by her mother, her brother, Roger, her cousin, Katherine Haynes and family. ~RR



BJARNE O. KJELSHUS (1923 – 2018)

The Reverend Bjarne (“Ben”) Kjelshus—parish minister, public servant, and a life-long activist and advocate for civil rights, mental health, environmental and food sustainability—died on 9 November 2018, aged 95.

Mr. Kjelshus remarkably found his deepest calling in retirement, pursuing what was essentially an environmental ministry as a co-founder of the Kansas City Greens in the mid-1980s. He worked toward replacing the industrialization of the world's food supply with a community food system, with sustainable agriculture and cooperation between local growers and consumers embodied in the Kansas City Food

Circle. The Circle grew under Ben's leadership from its first “Expo” in 1999 to a community of 100 member farmers and by 2015, a regular annual Expo attendance of about 2,000.

Bjarne O. Kjelshus was born on 9 March 1923 in Hanska, Minnesota, to Benjamin and Ovidia Kjelshus. Returning from US Army service (1942–45), he earned a B.A. at the University of Minnesota in 1949 and a B.D. at Meadville Lombard in 1954.

Mr. Kjelshus was ordained on 1 May 1955 by the Universalist Church of Webster City IA while serving there for two years (1954–56). Following that, he was settled at the First Universalist Church in Junction City KS (1957–62) and the UU Church of Kent OH (1962–65). “The main task in life,” he wrote in 1964, “should be to encourage the ways of love and diminish hate.”

At his death, Ben was survived by his wife of 68 years, Carol, children Jon, Karen, and Eric, grandchildren Letty, J.R., Amber, Mikkell, Kristin and Jennifer, and great-grandchildren Lauren, Brian, Emma, Annie, Wyatt, Lachlan, and Sterling.

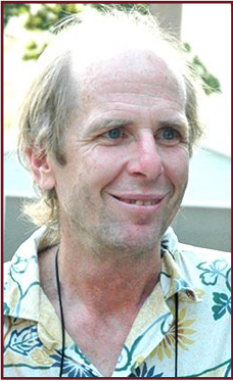
*Senior, age 26, at
U. of Minnesota*

A celebration of Ben's life took place on 17 November 2018 at All Souls UU Church in Kansas City MO. ~JA



STEPHEN KEYES “SKY” YARDLEY (1950 – 2021)

IN MEMORIAM



Stephen Yardley, spouse of the Reverend **JANE DWINELL**, died 23 Feb 2021 in Shelburne, Vermont. Sky, as he was known, had been living with dementia since 2015, and had shared the story of that journey in a series of Sunday services and workshops he and Jane presented at UU churches.

Sky was born 18 April 1950 in Boston, Massachusetts, and grew up in Needham MA. After graduating high school in 1968, he attended Amherst College for three years, before deciding to pursue other interests. He traveled to British Columbia, stopped in at Esalen, went to Hawaii, and trekked on the Appalachian Trail. Sky moved to Frog Run Farm, a commune in Vermont in 1973. He enjoyed acquiring practical and physical skills and started a dairy with other commune members.

In 1976, he and his partner, Polly Jerome, went to Iceland, worked for a year, and used their earnings to travel in Europe. In 1979, Sky helped launch Vermont Produce Cooperative, trucking produce from Boston to co-ops in Vermont, and then organic produce back to Boston.

He began delivering to Corner Café, a vegetarian restaurant in Randolph VT in 1984, and met **JANE DWINELL**, the café owner. In 1985 they embarked on their life journey together, building an off-grid homestead, Full Moon Farm, in Irasburg VT. They raised their two children, Dana and Sayer, there. While homesteading and parenting, Sky attended Woodbury College and became a family mediator.

In 2006, Sky and Jane retired and set off on other adventures. They volunteered in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, explored the rivers and canals of France in a houseboat, built and traveled in a tiny house, and cruised up the Intercoastal Waterway from Georgia to Lake Champlain in another boat. When Sky began showing signs of dementia, he and Jane traveled across country bringing that story to 25 congregations.

Sky was a curious, playful, easygoing and loving partner, parent and friend. His found joy in the natural world: working in the woods, hiking or skiing mountains, or floating on the water. He loved music—especially playing the piano and enjoying the live music of New Orleans—and had a song for every occasion.

He is survived by his beloved life partner and wife, Jane Dwinell, of Alburgh VT; his daughter Dana Dwinell-Yardley of Montpelier VT, and her circle of chosen family; his son Sayer Dwinell-Yardley and his partner, Emma Tait, of Burlington VT; and other family. Donations in Sky's memory may be made to the Lake Champlain Committee, 208 Flynn Ave. #3F, Burlington VT 05401, or lakechamplaincommittee.org; or to the South Burlington Community Justice Center, 19 Gregory Dr., South Burlington VT 05403. ~RR



JOHN A. “JACK” HAYES (1941 – 2021)

John A. Hayes, age 79, spouse of the Reverend **SUSAN LAMAR**, died at home 13 January 2021, after living with Myeloma for over 10 years. Jack was born in Milford, Massachusetts, attended nearby Hopedale public schools, graduating from the high school in 1959.

Even before graduation, however, he had begun working to help support his family, as his mother's health declined. In 1960 he began in the stock room of Worcester County Electric (later Massachusetts Electric). He rose through several positions there, becoming Union Steward and a member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Electric Credit Union. He also served as a Reserve Police Officer and as a volunteer member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

In 1973, Jack was elected to the Hopedale Board of Selectmen, and after successive re-elections became the town's Administrator in 1983. He left that position and moved to Millbury MA several years later. In 1994 he became Chief Security Supervisor at Centrum, a public arena and convention center in Worcester, MA. Jack retired from that position in 2002 to follow Susan as her career developed. That led them to California and then to Ellicott City, MD. In 2016 they returned to Massachusetts and settled in Uxbridge.

Jack was a model railroader, finishing his most recent layout in 2019, despite his illness. He followed politics closely and to the end read the Washington Post daily, particularly his favorite columnists.

He is survived by spouse Susan; his daughter Suzanne Hayes Lesch, her husband Will Lesch and their two children; his sisters Anne, wife of John Hogarth of Hopedale MA, and Barbara Sullivan of Medfield MA; several nieces and nephews and cousins; and his former wife, Marge Jensen of Braintree VT.

Jack's family requests that memorial gifts be directed to your local food bank. ~RR



CAROL FINCHER (1932 – 2018)

IN MEMORIAM

The Reverend Carol Fincher—who came to parish ministry in mid-life and served mostly in her native Oklahoma—died peacefully on 22 December 2018, aged 86, after a brief illness.

Carol Fincher was born on 25 December 1932 in Fairfax, Oklahoma, to Dorothy Ellen (Prall) and Ed Armel Fincher, and was raised in the Disciples of Christ (Christian) church. She dropped out of college after her first year to devote herself to marriage and motherhood.

Some years later, as the family was living in Clinton NY, Carol discovered the UU church in nearby Utica. She became an active layperson there and later in Hamden CT, where her interest in ministry gradually matured. Carol liked to say that she felt “beckoned” rather than called to her ministerial career.

By the late 1970s, with her two children grown, Carol resumed college, earning a B.A. at Southern Connecticut State Univ. in 1980. In 1986 she earned her M.Div. at Starr King School.

Ms. Fincher was ordained on 27 April 1986 by her “home” congregation, the UU Church of Utica NY and over the next 12 years she pursued a mix of settled and interim ministries in Charlotte NC, Amarillo TX, Stillwater OK, Newark DE, Syracuse NY and finally a small church in Tulsa OK.

In partial retirement the Rev’d Ms. Fincher returned to the UU Church of Stillwater OK in a part-time position of “pastoral care minister.” After full retirement, that congregation named her minister emerita.

Carol enjoyed traveling, going to Mexico and the Caribbean, but also made a trip to Singapore, led by her interest in Kuan-Yin Buddhism. In her spare time, she enjoyed jewelry making, paper making, photography, music, and ballet.

At her death, Carol was survived by a sister Dorothy, children Dennis and Ellen DeGraad, and three grandchildren. A celebration of Carol’s life took place on 12 January 2019 at the UU Church of Stillwater. ~JA



RAYMOND A. MICHEL (1920–2018)

The Reverend Ray Michel, beloved pastor of Congregational and Universalist churches in western Ohio for nearly 40 years, died on his 98th birthday, 18 October 2018.

Raymond Andrew Michel was born on 18 October 1920 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Margaret (Broeker) and Raymond George Michel. He began working in a local steel mill but after some years yielded to a ministerial call.

After study at Bangor (Maine) Theological School, Ray took a parish position in western Ohio. He earned his B.A. at nearby Earlham College in 1949 and his B.D. from Bangor *in absentia* the next year.

Mr. Michel was ordained to the Congregational Christian ministry in Concord OH in 1949 and continued yoked ministry to nearby churches until 1953. He then moved to Covington OH (1954–58), but that ministry ended when divorce made continued service unacceptable.

For seven years Ray was a social worker and remarried in 1961. Moving in a more liberal direction and encouraged by his new wife, the Rev’d Mr. Michel secured ministerial standing with the UUA in 1964 and began yoked ministry to Universalist churches in Eldorado and New Madison OH, where he served until retirement in 1992 and was named minister emeritus.

At a retirement celebration, the Rev’d **BRUCE LAKIN** recalled, “Time and again I have seen Ray come preach to people who seemed without enthusiasm for life, without spirit, dead. But after Ray preaches to them, the dead arise! They go forth into the world, happier and nicer to those they encounter.”

At his death, Ray Michel was survived by children Gerard, Terence, and Judith, two stepchildren, several grandchildren and great grandchildren, and his domestic partner and caregiver of 15 years, Grace Wilcox.

A celebration of Ray’s life was held 10 November 2018. Memorial contributions were encouraged to the Hawker UCC memorial fund (Beavercreek OH) or to **UURMaPA**. ~JA



Senior, age 28, at
Earlham College



Age 45, at start
of UU ministry



Unitarian Universalist

Retired Ministers and Partners Association

**c/o Patt Herdklotz
384 Clinton Street
Ashland, Oregon 97520**

