

The Association of Retired Rice University Faculty Annual Report for 2020-2021



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Prepared for

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2020-2021 REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED RICE UNIVERSITY FACULTY

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Pictured on the cover

- Top Row:* Canadian lake photo; Vice Provost Alex Byrd; Stephen Kleinberg; ZOOM meeting; Robert Stein; New Zealand photo
- Middle Row:* Directors Mark Kulstad, Clarence Miller, Ahmad Durrani, and Sidney Burrus (now deceased), Speaker John Anderson
- Bottom Row:* VP Caroline Levander; Sam Houston University Flyer featuring ARRUF member Lucille Fultz; Conference keynote speaker Kelly King, AuD., MPH, NIDCD

2020-2021 REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED RICE UNIVERSITY FACULTY REPORT SUMMARY

Background: Formed in May 2017, ARRUF's mission is to transform traditional forms of faculty retirement through innovation and collaboration. It promotes intellectual and scholarly activities, service, and collegiality among members with diverse specialties (see [Charter](#)).

ARRUF's 2020-2021 Accomplishments in a Changing Context. As Professor Emeritus Steve Klineberg has affirmed in *Prophetic City: Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America* (2021), the number of adults over 65 in Houston and throughout the world is expected to increase dramatically. A retiree organization can anticipate changes and help communities adjust to this growth. It can also support University initiatives on diversity, equity, and inclusiveness. Through on-line events and meetings in 2020-2021, ARRUF continued to transform members' retirement by

1. **Demonstrating a new role for ARRUF in the university—providing intellectual space for events about topics associated with increasing longevity, such as healthcare access.** At a half-day webinar on April 15th, distinguished speakers from the NIH, Rice, and Johns Hopkins explored how researchers could address disparities in hearing health among older adults. Four Rice panelists suggested creative prospects for implementation of results.
2. **Exploring issues relevant to retirement in virtual general meetings** related to members' situations, including architectural and technological developments that improve retirement housing, teaching on-line, and how Covid-19 is changing retirement life.
3. **Increasing collegiality and multidisciplinary awareness through small groups interested in nature, travel, and the arts** (pp 15-17). The total of nine interest group meetings indicates the high level of interest; some sessions featured ARRUF experts adding disciplinary perspectives.

Each of these types of accomplishments is supported in the Discussion Section of the report.

The Directors' Conclusions and Recommendations: Because all three ARRUF Directors' terms will end in June 2021, the current directors offer key conclusions and recommendations based on ARRUF's record over the past three years as follows:

- In 2017-2018 ARRUF focused on setting goals and obtaining facilities. The Provost's office ensured that Fondren 412 would be renovated from a classroom to an ARRUF activities center.
- In 2017-2021, like the rest of the University, ARRUF experienced the communications revolution. New technologies rapidly changed people's expectations about the form and style of communication, making viewers apply sophisticated new standards in web presentations, email newsletters that link to web sites, professional quality edited visuals, and eventually, trouble-free ZOOM meetings. The Provost's newsletter, revised websites, and other innovations also illustrate the way communication has become central to maintaining identity and community. **ARRUF lacks members who can keep up with this specialty.** Luckily, the Provost's staff rescued ARRUF several times. Because support for web and on-line communication is crucial, we request greater access to the division's experts and staff for photography, the Web, and other on-line communication.
- ARRUF's ability to serve the University and its members described in this report also would be increased by representation on relevant committees. ARRUF needs representation on the Faculty Senate and on the Benefits Committee (which dropped retirees from the insurance program).

The directors express their heartfelt appreciation to all who helped the organization transfer its activities to on-line events and ZOOM meetings and webinars.

DISCUSSION

The Discussion's sections are drawn from drafts written by Directors or Committee Chairs:

- ARRUF Highlights 2017-2021
- Membership
- Activities
 - General Meetings
 - The Half-Day Conference on "Why Hearing Matters for Individuals and Communities"
 - Activities Communication
- Interest Groups Initiative
- Finance and Budget
- Nominations and Elections
- Ethical Issues for ARRUF

ARRUF Highlights 2017 – 2021

This section is intended to benefit new administrators and newly elected directors in planning for ARRUF's future. In the first four years of its existence, the Association of Retired Rice University Faculty analyzed the purposes and features of other universities' retiree organizations and explored the conditions retirees were likely to face in the future (aging, health, and lifestyle). Its leaders secured facilities, began communication, and launched social events to encourage collegiality. Members continued to enhance the University's reputation as they pursued their specialties in science, humanities, and the arts. These brief yearly summaries provide snapshots of ARRUF and the unusual kind of organization it became.

2017-2018. The Steering Committee explored types of retired faculty organizations at other universities, surveyed retired Rice University faculty to discover the purposes they wanted ARRUF to serve, and proposed a Charter and By-laws. Director Herb Ward began the negotiations for a space on campus for ARRUF. Newsletters were sent to inform known members of the new organization. ARRUF also sponsored a talk in the spring by Robert Patten on meeting Queen Elizabeth II and four workshops on retirement issues or special projects, plus a holiday lunch.

Fall 2018. ARRUF created a Committee on Benefits and Privileges, which issued the first report on roles offered by the University and benefits available to retired faculty. A half-day conference on "U.S. Universities' Retiree Organizations" featured Dr. Roger Baldwin of Michigan State University, who presented results of his national study.

Spring 2019. ARRUF again sponsored a half-day conference, this time on "Purposeful Aging," featuring Paul Irving, Chairman of the Milken Institute's Center for the Future of Aging." The year was especially productive for ARRUF scholars. "How We Praise," a historical and analytical assessment of the *encomium* was presented by ARRUF member Thad Logan. Professor Emerita Jane Chance's second volume of poetry, *The Middle Ages*, was published. The memoir writers group continued to meet, and monthly discussion meetings were held about books and articles on aging, assistive technologies for older adults. ARRUF held a holiday luncheon, and the Provost hosted a reception for new retired

faculty. A GrandArts Lecture series was launched with ARRUF Emeritus Professor William Camfield and independent scholar Candace Clements presenting their work on the latest volume of the *Catalog Raisonné* for famed artist Francis Picabia. The first ARRUF bird walk, led by ARRUF member Emeritus Professor Mark Kulstad, was held, and Bas Poulos's paintings were featured in two exhibitions in the US and one in Greece.

2019-2020. The December holiday reception in 2019 was attended by an enthusiastic overflow group at the Faculty Club. In the fall the same combination of discussions of books and articles on longevity, assistive technologies or hearing, receptions, and bird walks remained the program. In mid-March ARRUF responded to new policies.

2020-2021. (discussed more in later sections) On-line meetings, begun in summer 2020, quickly became the norm. The memoir writing group ceased to meet, but new interests groups on travel and nature formed with the leadership of director Mark Kolstad, and one on Collecting, Arts, and Museums also formed. The Activities Committee arranged programs on Rice University's response to the pandemic and a national movement for racial justice; a webinar version of a half-day conference on research in adult hearing loss encouraged multidisciplinary research among younger faculty who were featured.

Members Engagement

Participation in an organization reflects members' expectations about identity. For decades, society in general had few positive expectations about retirees. Many retirees commonly avoided admitting that they were retired.

No one joined Rice as a faculty member thinking that he or she would eventually become a member of a retirement organization. Furthermore, the University did not foresee a role for retirees either; no unit in the University was tasked with keeping track of retired faculty or keeping records of them. Eventually the University began sending out email notices of "sad news" when current or retired faculty died. However, information about retirees was scattered among many different departments and units, such as the Development Office (variously named over time). As a result, attracting an active membership and fostering collegiality and friendships have been a major, not a minor challenge.

The pandemic forced ARRUF to begin holding meetings and events on ZOOM in spring 2019. Although most members were unfamiliar with ZOOM and some participation may have been lost when members felt challenged by using a new program, moving on-line actually had some benefits. People living in other states could and did attend meetings; being able to see familiar faces inspired more members to attend and to return to future meetings. ARRUF's three-part effort to assist its members and to find a new role for retired faculty in the University also had a notable effect on member engagement. ARRUF was successful with this combination in smoothing members' adjustment to a definition of "retirement" as a positive identity factor that added rather than lost personal prestige at Rice.

A snapshot of the participants in the half-day webinar on April 15th shows the integration of retired faculty, younger faculty, university leaders, and a national institute representative:

"Speakers explored how researchers could address disparities in hearing health among older adults. Kelley King, Program Manager for the National Institute for Deafness and Other Communication

Disorders, gave the keynote address, “Why Hearing Research Matters to Individuals and Communities.” Two Rice faculty researchers, Robert Raphael (Bioengineering) and Stephanie Leal (Psychological Sciences), were paired with two assistant professors from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and School of Public Health (Carrie Nieman, MD, MPH, and Jennifer Leal, Ph.D. MPH) to illustrate the benefits of having a multidisciplinary perspective when designing research projects. Four panelists, Vice Provost Alex Byrd, Professor Kirsten Ostherr, Chair of the English Department and founder of the Medical Humanities Program, Dr. Jan Odegard of the ION Center, and Dr. Melia Bonomo, Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Bioengineering, suggested creative prospects for implementation of results, thereby fostering everyone’s long-term success.”

The Membership Committee: A new list of vetted members and the ambassador’s report

By Committee Co-Chairs Thad Logan and Meredith Skura

We begin by acknowledging the contribution during the past year of C. Sidney Burrus on this committee. Sidney was engaged and helpful even as his health declined and he grieved for his wife Mary Lee, who died in the fall 2020. Sidney passed away also in April 2021. He was a member of the Steering Committee that formed ARRUF in 2016 and was elected to a two-year term as director in 2018. The effects of his contribution are everywhere, and none more important than those in the Membership Committee.

The ARRUF Charter specified that everyone who retired from Rice meeting the legal requirement for “retirement” would automatically become a member:

Membership will include automatically all classes of faculty, both tenure-track and non-tenure-track, who have retired from the University faculty as retirees. Policy 422-98 defines retirees as “. . . individuals who leave the University's employ at the conclusion of a minimum of ten consecutive years of benefits-eligible service and for whom the sum of age and length of service is at least 65.” Members’ spouses and partners may participate in the organization’s activities as non-voting associate members, even when the member is deceased (Charter, 2017).

Unfortunately, there was no official record available of these retirees and spouses. To fulfill legal obligations to the company that processes emails, an official roster of those who agreed to receive communication had to be created. Thad Logan and Meredith Skura, retired from the English Department, became the co-chairs of the Membership Committee in 2020, and C. Sidney Burrus joined the committee as a member after serving as director.

The feasibility of fostering collegiality and friendships among members depends, necessarily, on knowing the identity of members. The obvious task of discovering the retired faculty in all departments and centers, while seeming simple, was in fact, very complicated. The Membership Committee members, primarily Thad Logan, looked up names of all department chairs and department administrators and contacted them to create a list of known retirees. Next, all those retired individuals plus names from a temporary list collected but not confirmed in 2017, were contacted, and a refined list containing new addresses, email addresses, phone numbers (if agreed to), and so on was created. That list contains 210 names. The list allows for “tags” to be added to member profiles so that shorter lists of people with related interests can be generated easily and automatically. The Committee invested weeks of work in the process, and everyone is quite

grateful that future additions and revisions can now be made easily, and duplicate lists will be unnecessary. Legal questions remain about whether addresses and other details can be circulated to all the members. ARRUF needs to be connected to any University process that is adopted to keep track of retired faculty and spouses.

International Ambassador. One ARRUF member, Viqui Arbizu-Sabater, holds the position of International Ambassador for ARRUF. Viqui moved to Spain after she had been elected to a director's spot in 2018, vacating her position as director, which was filled by Ahmad Durrani. She agreed to serve in a new appointed role, making connections for ARRUF with individuals in other institutions and organizations abroad, chiefly in Spain. Also, Viqui and her husband formed a travel company, so work done for their company can possibly be of interest to ARRUF members seeking to gain an understanding of European cultures and destinations. Viqui Arbizu-Sabater reports that during the past year she represented ARRUF as follows:

International Ambassador's Report for 2020-2021

Viqui Arbizu-Sabater

- Worked as liaison between ARRUF and the University of Seville (Spain):
- Planned a spring 2020 visit with the Vice-Rector's Office for Institutional and International Projection.
- Planned to connect retired professors within ARRUF with some professors and researchers of hearing loss in the University of Seville School of Medicine.
- Due to the pandemic, many project steps are still pending.
 - In 2020 I started writing a section for ARRUF website with notes of cultural life, history, traveling, and on my living in Spain.
 - In October 2020, my family and I became ill with Covid-19; I was not able to focus on my Ambassador's duties until February 2021.
 - In February, I resumed posting my Ambassador's notes and participating in the Activities Committee; my husband Alfonso and I started leading the Travel Group in March 2021.
 - I will share my International experience with covid-19 during the May 20th meeting "How have seniors fared during the pandemic?"

The Committee may also work with Viqui Arbizu-Sabater to develop a list of collaborations and European ARRUF affiliates to collaborate on research and, possibly, travel.

Next year the Membership Committee expects to welcome new members from two years of retirements by assisting with the Provost's Reception for Newly Retired Faculty planned for the first weeks of October 2021. Increasing collegiality and members' understanding of one another's research and career trajectories results in a multidisciplinary awareness, and something else as well, the deep solidarity of intellectual companionship, recalling poet Gwendolyn Brooks's lines: ". . . that we are each other's / harvest; / we are each other's / business; / we are each other's / magnitude and bond."

The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks (Library of America, 2005). Copyright © 1970 by Gwendolyn Brooks. Reprinted by Consent of Brooks Permissions.

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE REPORT



Clarence Miller, Director

Members: Hiroko Sato, Mark Kulstad, Viqui Arbizu-Sabater, and Alfonso DuLuc. The Activities Committee's report is divided into sections--General Meetings, the Conference, and Communication--prefaced by an introduction. Formation of Interest Groups, which are part of the Activities Program, is detailed in a discussion by Mark Kulstad starting on page 15.

Introduction

Director Clarence Miller administered the Activities Committee as a whole. The Activities Committee pursued the goal of increasing collegiality and transforming identity by holding conversation periods before general meetings held on ZOOM, by holding readings, and by authorizing the development of interest groups.

Conference. One form of service, both to members and to the University, is facilitating successful research. The April 15th Conference was designed (a) to support Rice's efforts on equity and inclusion and (b) to interest more Rice faculty in research related to ARRUF's concerns and agency funding priorities. A novel presentation and panel response structure was developed. Dr. Kelly King, Program Manager from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, provided a keynote about the agency's latest priority initiative: equity of access to healthcare and inclusiveness in hearing research. Two Rice faculty, Dr. Robert Raphael and Dr. Stephanie Leal, were paired with speakers from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; each described work on aging, hearing and hearing healthcare equity. Panelists discussed innovative implementation prospects: Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness, Dr. Alex Byrd; ION Center Acting Director Dr. Jan Odegard; Dr. Kirsten Ostherr, Chair of English and Founding Director of the Medical Humanities Program at Rice; and Dr. Melia Bonomo, a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Bioengineering, who had recently published an interdisciplinary project.

General Meetings. This series fostered a new relationship between members and the University as Rice made many changes. "What are we part of? How are we part of that?" members might wonder. Programs in the early summer and fall featured talks by Vice-President Caroline Levander and Vice-President Kevin Kirby, who were invited to explain how the curriculum was converted to teaching on-line, how the physical campus had been altered, and how a serious program of testing, mask wearing, and gathering had been adopted to keep the campus safe. Rice's intensified commitment to social justice, equity, and inclusion was explained by the new Vice Provost, Alex Byrd. These programs also promoted multidisciplinary understanding as ARRUF members Bob Curl and Bob Brito presented the results of completing (during lockdown) their modeling project on artificial intelligence and employment.

Director Mark Kulstad joined the committee as a member and spearheaded the creation and expansion of interest groups. He has written the detailed section on Interest Groups, which follows the Chronological Listing of ARRUF meetings, events, and interest group sessions. Mentioned as one of ARRUF's primary activities in the charter, ARRUF's first two events were

invitations to attend a Shepherd Society reception and concert and to attend a Rice football game, but no ongoing groups continued. Interest groups needed to be launched as a specific program, and Kulstad's passionate belief in their potential, both for collegiality and intellectual stimulation, was the key to his efforts and demonstrated how academic and personal interests can be merged in ARRUF.

A Chronological Review of Meetings and Events June 2020 – June 2021

ARRUF met in Fondren 412 until April 2020. Meetings on-line began in June 2020. Each entry below is identified as a general meeting or a joint meeting featuring an interest group program.

- June 2020** **June 18. "Taking Rice On-Line" Caroline Levander, Vice President for Digital and Global Strategy.** In a matter of a few weeks over spring break, the 2000+ courses were transitioned from in-person to on-line classes for the second half of the spring semester and into the academic year 2020-2021. Dr. Levander also forecast her vision for Rice on-line in a global learning community of the future. She was responsible for enabling ARRUF to participate in the edX offer of free courses starting June 30th. ARRUF meeting members talked about diverse experiences they had already had with on-line learning. *General Meeting.*
- July 2020** **July 23. "Virtual Travel for the Coronavirus Era." Viqui Arbizu-Sabater, ARRUF's international ambassador, Alfonso DuLuc, Ahmad Durrani, and Mark Kulstad.**
- ARRUF's team in Seville invited members to their home and garden in Seville, Spain, demonstrating a delicious gazpacho soup recipe made with freshly picked tomatoes, and illustrating trips they lead with their new travel agency. Ahmad Durrani described a trip to the Rocky Mountains near Aspen, Colorado, and Mark Kulstad led a quick journey through the North and South Islands of New Zealand. The session illustrated the potential for an interest group devoted to TRAVEL. *Joint general and interest group meeting*
- August 2020** **August 20. Many Possibilities for Forming Interest Groups." Mark Kulstad, ARRUF Director.**
- Having seen the potential for interest group presentations demonstrated in July, members attending the August meeting discussed the possibilities for forming interest groups devoted to specific topics, including Travel, Nature, and Arts (broadly defined). An extensive list of possibilities had been circulated and placed on the website. Interest groups are discussed separately in the next section. *Joint Joint general and interest group meeting.*
- September 2020** **Sept. 17. "How's It Going (at Rice)? Two Perspectives"**
1. From the President's Office: Dr. Kevin Kirby explained about how things are going on campus, including labs, studios, and performance arts. Events in the BIG BUBBLES. Masking, T-Shirts and Rice Owls' irrepressible creativity.
2. From ARRUF Researchers: Bob Curl and Bob Brito Return. Earlier, in Fondren 412, they had spoken about their project combining and modifying models to drill down on the relation between artificial Intelligence and employment. By August their results had been released in a new Baker Institute publication at <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/files/b78932bb/wp-brito-curl-automation-080720.pdf>

October 2020**Oct. 15. Webinar: “How Collaboration Will Spark Innovation and Increase Resilience on South Main”: A Report on Transformation in Progress by Dr. Jan E. Odegard, Interim Executive Director of The Ion.**

This webinar, ARRUF’s first, explored how the former Sears Building and the 15-acre site on South Main, owned by Rice, are being renovated, indeed transformed, to become a hub for innovation, new products, and new companies. A distinguished panel shared insights on how an academic network of universities, plus industry, government, and communities can collaborate to supercharge the Houston economy. *General Meeting.*

The Panel:

Reginald DesRoches, Provost, Rice University

Robert Bruce Jr., Dean, Glasscock School of Continuing Studies at Rice

Neal Lane, University Professor Emeritus, former Rice Provost, former Director of the National Science Foundation.

R. F. Bob Curl, Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry, 1996, University Professor Emeritus

Tom Killian, Associate Dean, Wiess School of the Natural Sciences

Kerri Smith, Associate Managing Director, Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship

Montgomery Goforth, Strategic Pursuits and Partnerships, NASA-Johnson Space Center

November 2020**Nov. 19. “Initiatives to Expand Rice University’s Commitment to Inclusiveness, Diversity, and Justice.” Dr. Alexander Xavier Byrd, Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness.**

In June President Leebron and Provost DesRoches announced several actions in the face of a national movement to examine racial inequities and injustices. They appointed Dr. Alexander Xavier Byrd, Associate Professor in the Department of History, to be Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness. Dr. Byrd will oversee all relevant programs, including a new orientation course, a Research Fund, and the design and development of a new Multicultural Center, to be included in the new student center now being planned. *General Meeting.*

Nov. 12. "A Half Century of Science in Antarctica: The Wild Ride from the Age of Military Dominance to Addressing Antarctica’s Role in Global Climate Change." Professor Emeritus John Anderson.

Travel, Climate Change, and Policy are deeply linked in Geology Professor Emeritus John Anderson’s experience. He traveled to Antarctica many, many times over decades as an integral part of his growing work on ice flows and critical processes. Research questions shifted as scientists coped with national policies, which moved from a focus on military dominance to understanding geologic and climate changes. *Joint General Meeting and Travel Interest Group.*

December 2020**Dec. 17. “The Elections: Sober Reflections and Collegial Conversation.” Professor Robert Stein, former dean of Social Sciences.**

Political scientist and former dean of social sciences Bob Stein contended that despite general alarm over the elections, not a whole lot had changed. Years of analyzing elections made Bob Stein's experience in 2020 a bit less jolting. Nonetheless, Bob described the turnout as "voting with a vengeance." He supplied the insights and raised the issues on ZOOM about the election's effects, inaccurate polling, and possible correctives. *General Meeting.*

Dec. 3. Holiday on ZOOM. A read-aloud party celebrating Truman Capote's memoir, *A Christmas Memory*, with comments from Dr. Sam Jones, former dean of the Shepherd School, about gaining permission from Capote to compose an opera based on the story. Members hope the opera will be performed soon. *The session was a preview of a possible Arts interest group.*

Dec. 10. Meeting of the Travel and Nature Interest Groups to Explore Future Actions.

January 2021

Jan. 14. "The Grand Tetons as Part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem."

Director Mark Kulstad led members through a photo trek around attractions of Grand Teton National Park. ARRUF members H. C. Clark (geologist) and Paul Harcombe (biologist) provided specialist insights into the region's geology and biology. *This was a joint session of the Nature Group and the Travel Group.*

Jan. 21. "Our Experience with the Pandemic." Members were asked to read a *Wall Street Journal Report* on how Covid-19 would affect retirement. At the meeting members discussed the article's predictions and how Covid-19 had already affected themselves and their families. *General Meeting.*

February 2021

The February general meeting was postponed because of severe weather and lack of power throughout Texas.

March 2021

March 11. Malta, Island of History. Jose Narbona. *Travel Group Meeting.*

March 18. "Discovering Your Ecosystem: Rice as a Model for Houston and Your Own Back Yard." Rice Geologist Cy-Tin Lee, who is both an artist and a scientist, sharpened members' awareness of the diversity and beauty to be found at places on campus and in members' own environments. Astounded by photos of many rare species, audience members proposed a letter to leaders urging conservation. *This was a joint General Meeting and Nature Group session.*

March 25. "Designing Retirement Residences: From Common Sense Solutions to Coming Technologies." Speakers were Brent Nyquist of Atticus Architects, on Common Sense Solutions for Renovation and New Construction, Dr. Mary McIntire and Dr. Jim Pomerantz, showing slides of the safety features of their new home; and Dr. Constance Johnson, Associate Dean for Research, University of Texas School of Nursing, discussing the "smart apartment" where research on new technologies for aging residents can be evaluated. *Rescheduled Meeting.*

April 2021

April 15. Half-day Conference, "Why Hearing Research Matters to Individuals and Communities." 9 a.m. to noon. Described in the next section.

April 22. "Houston as a City for Aging and Thriving." Stephen Klineberg, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Founding Director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, has mined nearly four decades of data from the renowned

Houston Area Survey. His insights have just been published in his new book, *Prophetic City: Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America*. He presented the crucial changes he believes are necessary for Houston to overcome disparities in education, employment, and healthcare. **Christine Galib, Senior Manager for programs at the ION Center Houston, and Marissa Aho, Resilience Officer for the City of Houston**, explained changes already underway to promote resilience and equity. *General Meeting*.

April 29. "How Studies of Coastal and Cliff Formations May Help Mars Exploration." Professor Emeritus André Droxler. A research investigation led by Professor Emeritus André Droxler examined how forces that formed ancient shorelines in the Texas Hill Country cliffs may explain what astronauts are likely to find on Mars. By comparing reefs from the Uppermost Pleistocene that stretch along the South Texas shelf edge with Upper Cambrian microbial reefs in Mason, Texas (Central Texas), the group found features of formative processes that interest NASA scientists who are planning work on Mars. This program illustrated the value of ARRUF members' basic research for new questions in science and exploration. *Sponsored by the Nature Interest Group*.

May 2021

May 11. Traveling to Stockholm to Receive the Nobel Prize. Bob and Jonel Curl. Relive the details of the trip of a lifetime. *Travel Group Meeting*.

May 20. "How Older Adults Fared During the Corona Virus Pandemic: Conversations on What Studies Have Shown." Paul S. Irving, Chairman of The Milken Institute's Center for the Future of Aging, headlined ARRUF's March 2019 Conference on Aging with a Purpose. On May 20th Paul bookends the January session on ARRUF members' own experience of the pandemic with a panel review of studies of how older Americans fared. **Viqui Arbizu-Sabater**, ARRUF's international ambassador, and **Dr. Maria Rivera, Medical Director** from the Harris County Health Service, explain the Covid-19 experience in Harris County and in Seville, Spain and address access issues. *General Meeting*.

Proposed programs for Summer-Fall 2021

June 2021

June 17. "Texas Coastal Birds in Poetry and Art," Jim Blackburn, Co-director of the Severe Storm Prediction, Education, & Evacuation from Disasters Center, who is an environmental lawyer, poet, and Professor in the Practice of Environmental Law, and **Isabelle Scurry Chapman**, artist and co-author of *Birds: A Collection of Verse and Vision*.

Although many believe scientific investigation, environmental law, and engineering work originate from unemotional observation, Jim Blackburn's poems capture a much more passionate story of commitment and philosophic impact. His collaboration with Isabelle Scurry Chapman, an artist, led to their production of a charming book of poems and matching paintings that capture the birds' spirits and peculiarities. Blackburn is also author of *A Texas Plan for the Texas Coast*, and he may offer, also, a summary sketch of the cost-effective solution he developed. *Joint General Meeting and the Arts and the Nature Interest Groups*.

- July 2021** **“Let’s Solve the Houston Hurricane Problem—Retired NASA Engineers Unite.”**
Mallik Putcha, Retired NASA Engineer.
- In July Houstonians begin to feel anxious about hurricanes. Mallik Putcha devoted his early retirement years to a Master’s Degree in Liberal Studies at the Suzanne Glasscock School of Continuing Studies. His thesis drew together the prospects for successful management of circumstances similar to those forced on Houstonians by Hurricane Harvey. A TIMELY SUBJECT! *General Meeting.*
- July An “open house” meeting of the Travel Group to share members’ nominations for “Best Experiences” in dining, hiking, shopping, siteseeing.
- August 2021 Summer recess.
- September 2021 Proposed: What We Are Finding Out: What’s Happening to Your Brain? Assistant Professor Stephanie Leal and Research Colleagues Check in with ARRUF to Talk about their work on Aging and Memory. A Half-Day Relevant Research Conference.
- October 2021** **Tour of the Brockman Music and Performing Arts Center.**
Reception for New Retired Faculty (tentatively Oct. 19)

Conference: “Why Hearing Research Matters to Individuals and Communities.”

On April 15th, 2021 this webinar conference brought together researchers who focus on different aspects of hearing loss but pursue complementary questions that involve equity of access to healthcare.

Access is a key issue or priority concern in the requests for proposals of both agencies and foundations now, partly in response to the movement for racial justice and equity that has become an overarching national concern. The event also enabled ARRUF to support and highlight the research of two younger faculty who work on aging or hearing loss and aligned them on the program with researchers from Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Kelly King, a program manager and audiologist from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, gave a keynote lecture explaining the Institute’s priority initiative on equity in healthcare. In the next two sections, pairs of researchers discussed their projects and the relationship between their goals, methods, and results. Dr. Stephanie Leal, Director of the Rice Memory and Aging Laboratory, and Dr. Jennifer Deal of Johns Hopkins discussed their projects. Carrie Newman, M.D. and MPH, set out a vision of research from inception to implementation, which provided a context for Dr. Rob Raphael’s engineering approach in his collaboration with researchers from Baylor College of Medicine. A panel of four speakers gave brief comments on the presentations. Responding Panelists included Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness, Dr. Alex Byrd; ION Center Acting Director Dr. Jan Odegard; Dr. Kirsten Ostherr, Chair of English and Founding Director of the Medical Humanities Program at Rice; and Dr. Melia Bonomo, a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Bioengineering, who reported on a just-published interdisciplinary study on hearing responses recorded in brain “maps,” completed with colleagues in the Medical Center.

Approximately 75 people attended the webinar in one fashion or another: 67 registered, of whom nine were panelists, six were international viewers (according to email addresses), 17 were ARRUF members; 34 were non-ARRUF participants, and two were from the National Institutes of Health. Some screens we know were viewed by more than one person, and several people who could not attend requested

permission to view the recordings. The decision to invite people not from ARRUF or Rice came later in the program development process; probably many more might have been contacted and invited.

Communication Coordination for Activities

Intersecting external and internal factors have made communication coordination more important to ARRUF's functioning but more difficult to manage. Externally, Covid-19 caused ARRUF to move all its activities to on-line events. Internally, the rise of interest groups added more notices to the schedule. Further, the terms of all three directors will expire in June 2021 and the communication coordinator will resign simultaneously, so finding alternative processes for future use was essential. By June 1, ARRUF directors need to meet with the Provost's Office's new Communications Specialist, Kimberly Vetter, and negotiate for continued support based on this year's annual report.

Because uncertainties about returning to on-campus continued, most of the year was spent in temporary adaptations. Other factors, such as ARRUF's lack of access to Rice ZOOM accounts and Rice Box accounts increased the need for greater assistance from the Provost's Office, whose staff generously came with event-specific aid. ARRUF was able to continue to define its role in the University by holding general meetings with prestigious speakers on-line from May 2020 through May 2021, offering two webinars, one on the ION Center and the other on why hearing research matters to individuals and communities, and experimenting with integrating members living outside the Houston area in its events.

The present plan, ready for implementation in June, will involve the Activities Committee appointing one of its members to write up descriptions of proposed activities and send these to the executive committee for discussion and approval. Once approved, the descriptions, including dates and times, will be forwarded to the Associate Provost's Office staff for being entered into MailChimp and scheduled for distribution in a pattern that minimizes conflict with other ARRUF events. The Executive Committee will also forward the description to the person in the Associate Provost's Office who is trained for using Drupal 8, Lena McCarver. That person will copy the description into the ARRUF website. The website is organized in two rows of three columns each. The top row displays general meetings information for the current month, the past month, and the next month. The second row displays administrative information from the directors, and information about the interest groups. The bottom of the website displays a list of dates that individuals can click to discover scheduled activities.

Communication Cost Effectiveness.

To ensure that all members know in what activities they might participate, everyone must receive adequate notice of events, but keeping communication costs low and avoiding recipient irritation means sending infrequent emails. In contrast, competing for readers' time and attention requires sending frequent emails that elicit attention. And the tendency for informal groups to make decisions that are not available to everyone complicates the mailing schedule. If, in the future, every month there is a general meeting and at least three interest group meetings and one informational notice (concerning an election, change, or issue), that means 4 (possibly 5) notices must be sent to 210 recipients each month:

- For every event, 4 mailings (2 notices, one reminder, and at least one ZOOM invitation), which totals 16 to 20 mailings spread over 30 days
- 4 to 5 meetings (one general, three interest groups, and one informative notice)
- Web work to maintain the website as an information reference

In addition, In December 2019 to January 2020, the University generously transitioned the original ARRUF website produced in Drupal 7 to Drupal 8 (the required software) while the communication coordinator was in hospital, but some problems occurred during this process that have not been fixed. In addition, not all screens are big enough to display three columns. A person familiar with Drupal 8 should deal with these matters as soon as possible.

ARRUF Interest Groups in 2020-2021



Mark Kulstad, Director and Leader of the Interest Group Initiative

What are interest groups? And why was the initiative undertaken? The new interest groups are subsets of members coming together in meetings designed especially for individuals with a special interest in common. For example, the first new interest group launched was Virtual Travel for the Covid Era. It was hoped that this group, devoted to discussing various travel adventures during a time in which non-essential travel was basically not possible, would be of interest to at least quite a number of members in the challenging pandemic period. Several additional interest groups were sketched out as possibilities, and information about them was made available to members to create additional interest. During the course of the academic year two additional interest groups were launched, making for a total of three that were in operation as the end of academic year 2020-21 drew near, with many others possible for the future (See below for details). A total of seven interest group meetings, either as separate meetings or as joint meetings with other interest groups or with a General Meeting.

With this explanation set out, along with an example, we turn to the question of why the initiative was launched. First, it seemed like a good way to increase engagement of members, an objective important to ARRUF from its inception. Some believed members would more likely find ARRUF activities engaging to them if there were a wide variety of options, enough options so that a member was highly likely to find a group activity that matched his or her special interests. In theory, members could join interest groups where the number of participants might be small (which for some could be an attraction), and the interest level among participants would likely be quite high – perhaps even reaching a level that might be described as passionate interest. In this context, engagement seemed to be a reachable goal.

A second factor in enhancing engagement was the planned active participation of membership in choosing and creating interest groups, and in running them. If members had a major role in shaping what went on in a subgroup of ARRUF, it would be more likely (or so it was thought) that the activity would engage them.

A rather different motivational factor was the following: ARRUF was dealing with a heavy burden on leadership to program quite a number of activities of general interest to members, which in turn was making it more difficult to attract members to volunteer for leadership roles

– something obviously essential to keeping the organization alive. Interest groups led by members, with meetings designed by members, could help in dealing with workload.

This section reports on the three interest groups launched in 2020-21, but the memoir writers who met in 2018 and 2019 could be defined as an interest group. The group stopped meeting when some members' projects reached publication stage; others turned to different activities.

The Virtual Travel Group has already been mentioned, and it was launched first. So this is a good time to fill in details. The first meeting was a kind of sampler of travel possibilities to be explored by a Virtual Travel group, providing details, images and memories associated with ARRUF members' travels to Spain, the Rocky Mountains and New Zealand. In this meeting we experimented with a procedure that we continued with throughout the year, namely, trying out ideas in ARRUF's general monthly meetings that had the potential to develop into interest groups. Such an experiment turned out to be the first in a series of meetings that currently constitute the Virtual Travel Interest Group.

The subsequent and separate meetings of the Virtual Travel Interest Group (held as Zoom meetings on the second Thursday of each month as opposed to the third Thursday, reserved for ARRUF general monthly meetings) involved, first, a panel of ARRUF members that covered New Zealand in much greater detail, then Italy, Antarctica, Grand Teton National Park, Malta , Stockholm (in association with the history of Bob Curl receiving his Nobel Prize there) and more (TBD).

Some additional points worth mentioning begin with this, that shortly after New Year's, new leadership came on board. Victoria Arbizu-Sabater and her husband, Alfonso LuDuc , took over primary leadership of the group from Mark Kulstad, although Kulstad agreed to continue on the leadership team in a more limited role.

Also, one of the meetings (Grand Teton National Park) served as a joint meeting with a new interest group to be described below, the Nature Interest Group. At least in our discussions about interest groups, this idea of joint meetings involving two interest groups came up repeatedly and was viewed by many as a way to enrich the ARRUF offerings and reveal to members more than they would experience if they were involved with only one interest group with no joint meetings.

Finally, one meeting, the one on Italy, was decidedly more informal than the others, and had a format very different from the others. Since it turned out to be more successful than expected, it is worth mentioning here. About the only thing fixed was the travel destination, Italy. There was no official presenter or presenters, as there were at all other meetings of this interest group. Instead of the floor being opened to attendees only at the end, after a presentation, it was open almost from the beginning. The announcement had encouraged members to come with slides, stories or whatever about Italy to share informally with other members. That is exactly what happened, and retired Rice faculty being the interesting people that they are, the result was many contributions and a memorable experience for all who attended.

The Nature Interest Group, as mentioned, began with the joint meeting on Grand Teton NP of the Virtual Travel Interest Group. There was a general presentation, but the main distinctive feature of the event was that two emeritus professors from the natural sciences, a geologist

and a biologist (H.C. Clark and Paul Harcombe), joined in by presenting special information, from their disciplines, on Grand Teton National Park and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem that surrounds it. Mark Kulstad was the main presenter (and also leader of the new group).

A second meeting of the group was to be a birding field trip, following the model of ARRUF outings of the two previous years, but because of Covid 19, this was cancelled. The third meeting will be a talk on the geology of the Edwards Plateau of Central Texas, with a special emphasis on features of interest to NASA because of resemblances to the geology that may be encountered on Mars, during the upcoming unmanned mission, in which a prime goal is finding signs of life.

Collecting, Arts, and Museums, the newest of the interest groups, has not yet chosen leaders. Three possible leaders are already heading other committees or have other responsibilities. The first meeting was an on-line performance presented by the St. Cecilia Chamber Music Society of Houston. Members wanting to try out this new interest group bought concert tickets, attended an *ARRUF-only pre-concert party* on ZOOM, celebrated while sipping their favorite beverage, and shared ideas with other ARRUF members for future events of the new Interest Group. They then sat back and enjoyed the St. Cecilia concert, "PERSONAL FAVORITES," featuring [Judy Dines, flute](#); and [Rodney Waters, piano](#) and basso continuo. An upcoming general meeting featuring poetry (written by Jim Blackburn, a scientist who is an environmental lawyer) and paintings of birds (by Isabelle Chapman, an artist who is also a naturalist) will test the crossover appeal of the Arts and the Nature groups.

We've adopted the phrase, "If you're in ARRUF, you're INTERESTED!" in some of our mailings. If you would like to see one of YOUR interests promoted as a possible interest group, use the interim application form, posted on the ARRUF.rice.edu website. If you use it, members will be able to do what the directors have hoped, namely, make the interest group idea their own.

The Finance and Budget Committee Report



Ahmad Durrani, Director

ARRUF receives funding from the Provost's office in the amount of \$10,000 annually in July of each year. Since ARRUF does not have direct access to the Banner system, monthly financial reports are provided by the Assistant Provost. Expenses incurred to support ARRUF activities are submitted to the Provost's office for reimbursement.

The Banner report for April, 2021 showed that the balance on July, 1, 2020 (after addition of \$10,000 for the 2020-2021 year) was \$19,378.43. The balance is higher than in previous years because the Covid-19 pandemic prevented in-person activities during the last quarter of the 2019-2020 year when all meetings were held using Zoom. For the same reason expenses were greatly reduced to only \$3894.90 during the 2020-2021 year through April 30, 2021. No receptions or luncheons were held. No speakers had travel expenses. The largest expense was \$2800 for honoraria paid to speakers and panelists at the April 15 virtual conference on "Why Hearing Research Matters for Individuals and Communities," which is discussed elsewhere in this report. The account balance of April 30, 2021 was \$15,483.53. A few small expenses are

expected before June 30. As expanded programs become possible when members can meet face to face safely, in-person activities and excursions will increase next year's expenses.

The Nominations and Elections Committee: 2021 Election of Officers

Because the expectations about ARRUF have changed substantially in the past four years and because the influences of the pandemic remain, some changes in the procedures described in the Charter and By-Laws had to be adopted. The absence of in-person business meetings contributed to the lack of volunteers for committee positions, which made it difficult to recruit a full Nominations and Elections Committee. As a result, the Executive Committee acted as a Nominations Committee to secure candidates for the directors' positions, and the announcement will alert readers to the opportunity to nominate themselves if they are willing to serve. The results of the election will be ready by July. The traditional reception for newly retired faculty and our new officers will be delayed until the fall.

Ethics of ARRUF Leadership

The ARRUF Charter declares that "The Association of Retired Rice University Faculty serves the interests of Rice University and the association's members, affirming key Rice values: Responsibility, Integrity, Community, and Engagement." The ethics of caring for and leading the organization must be considered carefully.

- ARRUF leaders are **responsible** for approving and guiding the program choices it offers to ensure that members are aware of the University's decisions and actions, especially those that affect them. Leaders need to promote the actions of the Benefits and Privileges Committee so that best practices of departments can be shared.
- ARRUF leaders must promote **integrity** through ARRUF's programs so that the University's initiatives to address issues and honorable interactions with our communities are understood and strengthened by our concurrence and understanding.
- ARRUF leaders must make decisions that foster a sense of **community** among individuals who did not necessarily know one another well during their time on campus, building multidisciplinary appreciation for others' professional trajectories and accomplishments, often through programs and social events. They should also approve programs that build bridges to the communities to which Rice is connected—in Houston, in research relationships, with ethnic neighborhoods, and internationally.
- Finally, increasing **engagement** must be attended to through program offerings, surveys, and planning that smooths the transition to a meaningful and joyous retirement.

As the directors of the Association of Retired Rice University Faculty 2018 – 2021, we are honored to have had the trust of members and the pleasure of shared activities of the past three years. We encourage others to step forward to lead ARRUF in the future.

Directors: Clarence Miller, 2018-2021; Ahmad Durrani, 2019-2021; Mark Kulstad, 2020-2021