

## Retiree Initiative Planning Group (RIPG) Annual Report 2022-2023

The retiree community at Skidmore had another successful year. Thanks to newly-retired Deb Fernandez, we added yoga to our roster of activities, while our featured speakers included Penny Jolly (on Zoom), Gordon Thompson (in person), two speakers from Saratoga Hospital (Angelo Calbone and Mallory Otto) as well as President Marc Conner and Carey Anne Zucca and Art Tracy from Advancement. There have been many transitions in Cabinet positions this year, and RIPG is making efforts to introduce Skidmore's new leaders to our retirees.

As always, our events and activities are guided by our mission of supporting the connection of retirees with one another and with the college.

### 1. Communications:

RIPG members sent out periodic emails to retirees to keep them informed of events and other matters pertaining to retirees. Idalia Sepulveda from the Office of Communications kept the retiree website updated. In fall 2022, Terry Diggory also issued a survey on behalf of RIPG to ascertain the kinds of programs retirees would welcome; to explore interest in a series of yoga sessions; to gauge interest in having a dedicated space for retirees on campus; and to find out who would like to offer presentations to retirees.

### 2. Events:

RIPG hosted or promoted a variety of events this year:

- Concert at SPAC (organizer, Sharon Arpey) to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra's performance of Beethoven's *Eroica* and other works (8-11-22)
- Retiree Fall Lunch (organizers, Terry Diggory + Laura Goodwin), with speakers Carey Anne Zucca (new VP for Advancement) and Art Tracy (Director of Gift Planning). The lunch was followed by tours of the new CIS building led by Paul Lundberg (Project Manager, Facilities Services) and Kara Cetto Bales (CIS Safety Officer) (10-3-22)
- Trip to NYC (organizer, Gove Effinger) to see *A Strange Loop* or *Death of a Salesman*—or to visit the city (11-2-22)
- Seminars related to Skidmore's main stage play, *Eurydice*, directed by Marie Glotzbach (September-December) as well as an invitation to the dress rehearsal (11-17-22)
- Yoga sessions with Deb Fernandez (Jan 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2023)
- Lecture by Penny Jolly, "The Visionary World of Hieronymus Bosch" (Zoom, 1-26-23)
- Reception (organizer, Terry Diggory), with remarks by President Marc Conner on "The State of the College" (3-23-23)
- Social/Educational Event (organizers, Mike West + Susan Kress), "Saratoga Hospital and the Age-friendly Health System," with speakers Angelo Calbone and Mallory Otto" (4-19-23)
- Social/Educational Event (organizer, Pat Poirier), Wine, Cheese, & Chat, featuring Gordon Thompson, "She Loves You: The Rise of Beatlemania" (5-25-22)

In addition, Sarah Goodwin has hosted a monthly (open-to-all) Zoom discussion group on "Race and Racism" since July 2020 that includes readings proposed by group members. Please be in touch with Sarah ([sgoodwin@skidmore.edu](mailto:sgoodwin@skidmore.edu)) if you would like to learn more about the work of this group or join in the discussions.

### 3. Grants:

Grants this year were awarded as follows:

#### Fall 2022

##### Emeritus Grants

- John Anzalone (World Languages and Literatures)  
Travel to support work on “Representation of the Colonial Other in Selected WWI Graphics”
- Kate Leavitt (Art)  
Workshop at Penland School of Craft
- Gordon Thompson (Music)  
Permissions for book, *Sixties British Pop, Outside In. Vol. One: Downtown, 1956-1965*

#### Spring 2023

##### Emeritus Grants

- Jay Rogoff (English)  
Permissions for book, *Becoming Poetry: Poets and Their Methods.*

##### Staff Grants:

- Brien Mueller (IT)  
Tutorials in Dutch
- Ginger Ertz (Tang)  
Project MoonCatcher

##### Ad Hoc Grant:

- Leslie Mechem (Classics)  
Botanical Plant Markers for Congress Park

Those interested in RIPG’s grants program can find more information about faculty and staff grants at [Grants for Retirees \(skidmore.edu\)](https://www.skidmore.edu/grants-for-retirees) The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) makes decisions about faculty grants on behalf of RIPG. A committee chaired by Sue Rosenberg of RIPG, and including representatives of RIPG and HR, oversees staff applications.

### 4. Advocacy:

#### A. IT Issues

RIPG’s IT Subcommittee (Ken Hapeman, Sue Rosenberg, and Mike West) continued to advocate on behalf of retirees.

- Retirees are no longer able to access an Office 365 suite through Skidmore’s Microsoft license (for a time we could for \$30). After several inquiries, it looks as if this license will not be changed to accommodate retirees. We will explore whether our institutional peers have access to this benefit.
- There is still work to be done in securing access to certain college data bases and in gaining media services support for retiree events.

#### B. Campus Planning

An RIPG Subcommittee (Ann Henderson, Paty Rubio, Mike West, and Joanna Zangrando) continues to pay attention to campus planning and to advocate for the possibility of dedicated

space for retirees. The Master Plan acknowledges requests from the Retiree Initiative Planning Group for dedicated retiree space, but we are disappointed to see that no such space has been designated either for Library first floor or for Colton House. While it is fair to say retirees have not expressed an urgent need for space on campus, we do believe that a modestly-sized gathering space as well as some dedicated study space would be a strong statement on the part of the college that retirees are recognized as part of the Skidmore community.

### **C. General Support for Retirees**

On behalf of RIPG, Terry Diggory and Susan Kress consulted with Janet Casey, RIPG's liaison with Academic Affairs, as well as with the new Director of HR, Julie Delay. Both were very supportive of RIPG's need for some administrative support, and conversations are ongoing.

#### **5. The Retiree Oral History Project (ROHP)**

RIPG's Lynne Gelber, along with Sue Bender and Sandy Welter, continued to interview retirees this year and link those interviews to our website. Retiree interviews added (or in the process of being added) to the website this year include Sandy Welter, John Cunningham, Ruth Copans, Larry Ries, Lisa Aronson, Carolyn Anderson, Tom Denny, and Tim Brown. More than fifty interviews are now archived on our web site: [Skidmore Retiree Oral History Project · Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project](#). This year, the group discussed some ways of bringing these interviews to the attention of a wider audience, especially alums.

#### **6. The Age-Friendly University Global Network**

The mission and principles of this international network (as well as the list of colleges and universities that have already signed on) can be found at this link: <https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly> A RIPG committee (Sharon Arpey, Susan Kress, Paty Rubio, and Joanna Zangrando) has developed a proposal, still a work-in-progress (attached), that Skidmore might consider joining this network. The committee circulated the proposal to a wide group of Skidmore faculty, staff and administrators who might have interest in this project and held a preliminary meeting in June. Those attending were enthusiastic about the proposal and encouraged the committee to continue making contact with stakeholders and interested faculty and staff. Given the transitions in Cabinet-level leadership at the college, the group agreed that proceeding slowly was a good plan, making efforts to raise consciousness regarding the issues of aging and aging populations addressed in the proposal. Another meeting, with broader representation from the community, is planned for the fall. Please contact any member of the committee if you would like to be involved in these ongoing conversations.

#### **7. Resources**

RIPG added more than 50 items of interest to retirees to our library collection this year. To take a look at what is available, visit [Retiree Library Home - Retiree Library Collection - LibGuides at Skidmore College](#) Please note that Paty Rubio and Joanna Zangrando are now taking over the task of purchasing library materials. If you have a recommendation for the retiree library, please be in touch with [prubio@skidmore.edu](mailto:prubio@skidmore.edu)

#### **8. National Visibility:**

The website of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) [AROHE - Home](#) features the story of Skidmore's Retiree Library Collection as well as many other best practices either initiated or adopted by RIPG—such as our staff grant program, our

continuing project to interview retirees (Retiree Oral History Project), our In Memoriam project, our field trips, etc. This year, Susan Kress and Mike West attended the AROHE Summit (zoom), and Susan Kress was featured in a video publicizing Skidmore and AROHE. If anyone wishes to receive membership benefits (free for all Skidmore retirees), with full access to the website and regular news bulletins, please let Susan Kress know at [skress@skidmore.edu](mailto:skress@skidmore.edu)

### **Summary:**

In all, 117 Skidmore people and their guests (94+23) took advantage of RIPG-sponsored events and activities during 2022-2023, with more corresponding with us about these events and indicating their interest. (Ann Henderson keeps our records of attendance.) We welcome expressions of interest in serving as a member of RIPG, offers to give a lecture or presentation, as well as advice about future programming or resources for retirees. For information about current resources and benefits for retirees, please visit our website at [Skidmore Retirees](#)

### **Members of RIPG:**

Sharon Arpey  
Janet Casey (Academic Affairs Liaison)  
Terry Diggory (Convener)  
Gove Effinger  
Lynne Gelber  
Laura Goodwin (HR Liaison)  
Ken Hapeman  
Ann Henderson  
Susan Kress  
Pat Poirier  
Sue Rosenberg  
Paty Rubio  
Mike West  
Joanna Zangrando

### **Acknowledgements:**

We are very grateful indeed to Janet Casey (Academic Affairs Liaison) and Laura Goodwin (HR Liaison), who attend our meetings and champion retirees in numerous ways.

We also thank the following people. Without their support we could not sustain our programs and carry out our mission:

Jen Barthelmas (Budget)  
Bonnie Bertrand (Food Services)  
Megan Bove (Surrey Coordinator)  
Jim Calhoun (HR Liaison for Finances)  
Dung-Lan Chen (Retiree Library)  
Julie Delay (Director of Human Resources)  
Flagg Taylor and Faculty Development Committee (FDC oversees Emeritus Grant Awards)  
Patty Folts (Financial Reports)  
Marcia Godden (Accounts Payable)  
Carrie Imbrogno-O'Dell (Supervisor of Catering)

Jesse O'Connell (Assistant Director, MDOCS)  
Michelle Osgood (IT)  
Idalia Sepulveda (Web Manager)