

Remarks at the First Annual Meeting of the West Virginia University Retirees Association, April 8, 2015

Welcome

Toni Christian:

Welcome to the first annual meeting of the West Virginia University Retirees Association. We are excited to see you here this afternoon.

Annual meetings are usually filled with committee reports and member updates. But, since this is the first annual meeting of the group, we have a slightly different agenda.

We don't have a lot of committee reports, but we do want to let you know what we have accomplished this past year and what we have in mind for the future. We want to recognize the Steering Committee for all its hard work this past year and the Nominating Committee for developing our slate of candidates.

And while we don't yet have a finance committee, we want to recognize that we certainly received financial support from the University. That was made possible by Narvel Weese, our vice president of Administration, Finance and Human Resources. Narvel funded our Launch in October and this annual meeting. We also have a small operating budget and administrative assistance thanks to him. So, if you have occasion to speak with him, thank him and let him know that this association is important to you and other retirees.

The most important item on the agenda, however, is the vote. We are excited to be able to identify the first board of directors for this Association. While the Steering Committee has been keeping things moving, the bylaws for the association assign that responsibility to the

board. I want to express my appreciation to those association members who have agreed to run for the board.

And, after you've had time to vote, we'll enjoy a dessert reception where you can reconnect with your fellow retirees.

You probably already know that the Association is open to all University retirees, no matter what position they held at the University. The President's Office and the Provost's Office have supported this organization from the beginning. And we're pleased to have C.B. Wilson here to recognize the Steering Committee. C. B. is the Associate Provost for Academic Personnel and we have taken him away from the promotion and tenure process this afternoon. However, he has graciously agreed to recognize the hard work of our committee members.

Ladies and gentlemen, C.B. Wilson.

Recognition of Steering Committee

C. B. Wilson:

Good afternoon. I am pleased to be here to recognize the members of the Retirees Association Steering Committee. They have been at it a while and have done an outstanding job.

When the steering committee members received their letters of appointment back in January 2014, I'm don't think they thought they would still be in place in April 2015. But their commitment to this endeavor has brought us to the first annual meeting of the West Virginia University Retirees Association.

The steering committee started out with giving shape to the association by developing its by-laws. That task took several months sitting around the conference table drafting and redrafting the

document. They also spent time with the attorneys trying to figure out exactly what they were. A University organization? A 501(c)? Turns out they really are a University organization!

Once the organization had a structure, the committee worked on developing a communication plan to announce the formation of the Association, to share its goals, objectives, ideas, and anticipated activities, and to build a membership.

The announcement was made initially to University groups like the President's Executive Leadership Team, Faculty Senate, and Staff Council. And other groups like the Dean's Council, the WVU Foundation, and the WVU Research Corporation. ENEWS went out to employees and Expert Business Offices were asked to pass the word on to their retirees. Schools and colleges that had newsletters were willing to include information about the new Retirees Association.

After that, the committee developed and implemented a marketing campaign to get the word out to retirees. You may have heard members talking about the Association on the radio on WAJR. Or you may have received a postcard inviting you to join the Association. Or you may have seen the newspaper ads or the banner on the Stansbury Hall overpass inviting you to join. Or you may have seen the announcement on the scoreboard during football games.

The committee also developed a website where retirees could complete a membership form to join the Association and a survey to let the Steering Committee know what they were interested in doing. You could also meet the committee members on the website and review the bylaws.

The first big event of the Association was the Launch Party on October 22, 2014. You probably received a postcard inviting you to the

Launch. Or you may have seen the newspaper ads, the banner on the Stansbury Hall overpass, or the invitation on the scoreboard. The committee worked hard to make sure retirees were aware of the party. The Launch was an overwhelming success. More retirees attended than registered – which caused a refreshment shortage as some of you know – but 300 retirees at the Launch was a successful event for the Association.

The Association was launched. Now what? Since the Launch reaffirmed the committee's assumption that the Association was something retirees would support, the committee agreed to stay in place until a board was elected in order to keep the Association moving forward. That meant keeping things going for another eight months.

You'll hear a little later about the other accomplishments since the launch and you'll hear about the further development of the Association. But, as Toni said, today is about electing the first board of directors.

As the bylaws indicate, the terms of these new board members will begin on July 1. So, even though we will have a board, the Steering Committee will continue for a few more months. However, this is the beginning of the winding down of the Steering Committee and an appropriate time and place to recognize their accomplishments.

We'll have Toni come back to the podium to introduce the steering committee members.

Toni Christian:

Will the Steering Committee members please come forward as they are called and take their place in front of the podium:

Bobbie Brandt

John Patteson

Lana Cantoni

Carolyn Nelson

Shirley Daft

Tom Witt

Art Jackowitz

Elaine Sholtis, Chair

Doug Maatman

Mary Thomas

Gary McPherson

These are the steering committee members. If you see them later, take time to thank them for their hard work and dedication to the formation of the West Virginia University Retirees Association.

Ladies and gentlemen: The Steering Committee. Let's give them a round of applause.

Steering Committee, you can take your seats.

Let me take a few minutes here to thank C.B. for taking time to attend our meeting. It's appropriate that the substantial work of the committee be recognized and C.B. has done an excellent job highlighting their accomplishments. Now he's going back to his office to continue the promotion and tenure process. Thank you, C.B.

The next item on our agenda is a review of the past year. Let me introduce Elaine Sholtis, the chair of the Steering Committee, and let her tell you all the exciting things that have been accomplished over the past year. Elaine . . .

Year in Review

Elaine Sholtis:

Thank you, Toni. Good afternoon. It's wonderful to see all of you here.

As you heard, the Steering Committee was very excited about the response to the Launch Party. With such a positive response to the launch, the committee agreed that their efforts were worthwhile and they agreed to stay in place and continue to offer opportunities to the retirees to stay connected. And they have been busy over the past five months.

One of the first things that the group developed was the rack card that you may have seen around town. It introduces the Retirees Association and includes a membership form to join. So if you know someone who wants to join or you know someone who you would like to join, please take a rack card with you and have them fill out and mail back the membership form. We're happy to announce that our membership has grown to 370 members.

Working with the Benefits unit in Human Resources, the committee was able to expand the disbursement of an athletic card to all retirees so that they could attend for free the non-revenue sporting events.

Working with the Benefits unit and the WVU Foundation, an agreement was signed so that the Retirees Association now has a WVU Foundation account. So now, in addition to being a University entity, we have a Foundation account so that we might begin to offer a different variety of activities to members.

Mary Thomas, our HR Liaison, has been working hard to keep communications going with the group. She keeps our website up to date. She maintains our membership database and sends out most of those emails keeping you up to date. If you called our phone line, you talked with Mary. Jim Whetsel contributes to the website with news items that are important to retirees.

As for activities, our goal was to try to offer something each month. Some things went very well. Other not so much. The trip to Oglebay to see the Christmas lights was cancelled because the numbers weren't there to support it.

As for the performance of *Dance Now!*, there was both good news and bad news. The good news for the concert was that Adam Barruck, an acclaimed dancer and choreographer, was a guest choreographer at the performance. The bad news was that Yoav Kaddar, the director of the concert, was obligated to attend a luncheon for his guest and could no longer do the Talk Back session for us. As a result, we had to cancel our special presentation.

However, there were lots of successes too. Art Jackowitz was able to get Oliver Luck on our calendar of events. The presentation, *Luck on Athletics*, in November was excellent. He spoke about the Big 12, about the BCS, and about the unionization of football players among other things. After hearing him speak, I can understand why the NCAA would want him on staff.

In December, we were invited to the President's home for a holiday reception. We had a lovely luncheon, a tour of the President's home, and left with a bow tie cookie and a bow-tie cooker cutter as our Christmas gifts.

In January, the Association received special support from President Gee when he announced that retirees would be able to keep their WVU email accounts. We worked through December and January to get those accounts set up and a postcard out letting retirees know they could reclaim their email addresses. If you still want to reclaim your email address, those instructions are on our website.

In February we offered a presentation by Ade Neidermeyer on preparing tax returns. We had a full house and came away with useful information and a worksheet developed by Ade called a Letter of Instructions that lays out detailed information that is vital for your heirs.

We owe a word of thanks to OLLI and Angela Faulkner-Van Deyesen, the Executive Director of OLLI. They let us use their classroom at the Mountaineer Mall for our February and March workshops. You probably know that finding a room big enough with available parking is quite an achievement at WVU. OLLI's room and location are perfect for retirees. They let us use the room for free and the OLLI staff has been very generous and gracious to us.

Based on our surveys, you told us you were interested in breakfast or luncheon gatherings. Janet Lemunyon, an Association member, helped facilitate a breakfast gathering. We worked with staff at the Terra Café in Star City to come up with a time when they could accommodate our group. In March we offered the first Coffee Chat. Our first Chat was small but very pleasant with excellent company, excellent food, and free coffee! The staff at Terra Café are very accommodating and supportive of our group.

We also offered two additional events in March. The Organizing and Downsizing workshop was offered, again at OLLI, with an almost standing room only crowd. Julie Mills offered us helpful hints and handouts on the topic.

A tour of the Regional History center was the second event in March. Stewart Plein and Kevin Fredette were very willing to give our group a tour and spent considerable time with us. I personally liked the Rare Books room; others preferred the West Virginia Collection. You

can find comments about the tour from the group on our website. Overall, we got a very positive response.

And that brings us to April and to the Annual Meeting. We're glad to see you here today. We're looking forward to seating our first board of directors. Your votes today will determine the future direction of the Association.

Future Activities

Elaine Sholtis:

As for future activities, C.B. described it accurately. The Steering Committee is winding down. But, that doesn't mean we're stopping.

We are working to establish interest groups identified in your surveys. Bobbie Brandt organized a meeting of the Painting group. And Linda Baer is working to establish a volunteering group. Lana Cantoni has been working on developing the other social activities identified in the survey. Other interest groups in the works are a book club and possibly a photography club. And now that the weather is getting nicer, we'll try to get the bird watching and biking groups organized.

We will continue with the Coffee Chats at the Terra Café. The next one is this coming Tuesday, April 14, at 9 a.m. We have them on the calendar through June. After that, the new Board can decide what direction it wants to go in.

And, we still have a few more ideas for workshops but those details aren't finalized yet. We'll announce them to the membership as they take shape. So watch the website for upcoming events.

If you would like to join any of our presentations and are hesitating because you think you won't know anyone there, Mary and I

are at every presentation to make sure everyone feels welcome. So join us and help make the Association a successful organization.

The new board, of course, will be busy electing officers and forming the different committees. The bylaws call for an Activities Committee, a Membership Committee, a Finance Committee, and a Communications Committee. If you have an interest in serving on any one of those committees or an expertise in any of these areas, please let us know. You can fill out the interest survey on our website, or email us, or call us.

Recognition of Nominating Committee

Elaine Sholtis:

As you can tell by the year in review, the Steering Committee acted as the Activities, Membership, Finance, and Communications Committees. We did not take on the task of the Nominating Committee however. Two of our Steering Committee members and three of our Association members took up that task.

The Nominating Committee worked with our interest surveys and contacted Association members to invite them to run for a seat on our board. They presented that list of names to the Steering Committee for approval and then contacted each member for their bios.

They also met with the Steering Committee to identify issues that needed addressed for this particular annual meeting. That discussion resulted in the voting guidelines that have also been posted on our website. We will use those guidelines for the voting today.

Let me take time now to recognize that Nominating Committee. Will you please stand when your name is called: Shirley Daft (Chair of the Nominating Committee and Steering Committee member), Karen

Davis (Association member), Joanne Evans (Association member), Paul Martinelli (Association member), and Carolyn Nelson (Steering Committee member). Please give them a round of applause.

Thank you members for serving and for all of your work on this committee.

Overview of Election Guidelines

Elaine Sholtis:

Given that the Association is open to all retirees of the University; given that we want to maintain that mix of position types on the board; and given that we are electing all seven members of the board this time, the Steering Committee adopted the following guidelines:

- The ballot shall include candidates from all position types
- The candidates shall be identified by position type
- The members shall be able to vote for any candidate
- The members can vote for seven candidates
- The candidate with the most votes will become a member of the board
- Thereafter, two candidates in each position type with the highest number of votes will become members of the board

We have also made provisions for resolving any ties and the counting of votes. If you want to see the guideline document, there is a copy at your table. The Nominating Committee, along with members of the Steering Committee, will count the vote today immediately after voting closes. We hope to announce the results before the reception ends.

Presentation of the Slate of Candidates

Elaine Sholtis:

You may have had a chance earlier to meet the candidates who are on the ballot. You may have had a chance to read their bios online. If not, the bios have been printed and a few are on your table. Hopefully they will give you some help in determining your vote.

Some of you may not have had a chance to meet the candidates. Let me introduce them to you. Candidates, if you will stand when I call your name, please.

From the classified staff: Lana Cantoni and Chris Tarabrella

From the faculty: Dan Della-Guistina, Art Jacknowitz, Donald Morrison, Jo Nath, and George Trapp.

From the non-classified staff: Linda Baer, Mike Cooper, and Bill Quigley. Bill is on travel and not here today.

Thank you candidates. You may take your seats.

Nominations from the Floor

Elaine Sholtis:

The Association's bylaws allow for nominations from the floor. I remind you however, the nominee must be a WVU retiree and a member of the Retirees Associations. And that person must be willing to serve. At this point, I will ask for nominations. Are there any nominations for a board candidate from the floor?

(There were no nomination from the floor.) There are no nominations from the floor. The nominations are closed.

Voting

Elaine Sholtis:

Now it's time for the voting. Let me remind you that only Association members may vote. You can consider yourself a member if you filled out a membership form today.

You have ballots and pens at your table. Please take a few minutes to mark your ballots. We will give you time to review the bios if needed and ample time to mark your ballots.

Please don't hurry. We will not open the doors to the reception until you have had time to give this some thought. We have ample time for our reception. If you are done voting, please wait quietly at your seat.

Adjournment of Official Meeting

Elaine Sholtis:

May I have your attention? Thank you for your interest in the Retirees Association and for taking time to contribute to the process. It looks like the group is done marking their ballots.

We will come to your table with a ballot box to collect your ballots. Please drop your ballots in the box and we'll continue in to the dessert reception once the doors are opened. Thank for your coming and enjoy the reception.

The meeting is adjourned.