



Table of Contents

Spring, 2021

- EIUAA President's Message
- Guest Speaker Series
- EIUAA People
- Academy of Lifelong Learning
- Luncheon Update
- Farewells
- Calendar
- Committee Reports

President's Message



The website of the State Universities Annuity Association (<https://www.suaa.org/>) provides good evidence of the value of SUAA membership. One example is under the website's "Speaker Videos" tab, particularly the linked recording of a webinar cohosted by the UIC Annuity Association and the SUAA on "Will the State Keep Its Promise? Are SURS Pensions At Risk?" The February 24, 2021 program featured Professor Ann Lousin of UIC's John Marshall Law School and Springfield-based Attorney & Lobbyist Eric Madiar. Professor Lousin specializes in Illinois constitutional law, and her credentials include working as a research assistant at the Sixth Illinois Constitutional Convention where she also assisted in drafting the 1970 Illinois Constitution. Attorney Madiar has been actively involved in public pension law for the past ten years, including Chief Legal Counsel to Illinois Senate President John J. Cullerton when pension reform was on the legislative agenda.

Article 13, Section 5 of the Illinois Constitution was the central backdrop for the webinar. This article is of great importance to all Illinois public employees, since it asserts that membership in an Illinois state or local government pension system "shall be an enforceable contractual relationship, the benefits of which shall not be diminished or impaired". We will recall the Illinois Supreme Court's ruling against the State of Illinois in *Kanerva v. Weems* (2014), which affirmed that state officials must honor this powerful constitutional provision.

Professor Lousin drew from her experience at the Constitutional Convention, highlighting key factors that led to language guaranteeing pension benefits and rights for public employees and retirees. Prior to this change, state and local employees, from firefighters to teachers, experienced not only underfunded pension systems but also questions over whether they even would have retirement benefits. Pensions in that era were viewed by government officials either as an employer "gift" or a benefit that could be diminished or even rescinded if funds were needed elsewhere. Attorney Madiar's presentation included a survey of protections via the Constitution's pension clause. The state legislature cannot unilaterally cut or reduce retiree benefits; pension payments must be made upon retirement regardless of state fiscal condition; and pension benefits are fundamentally contractual in nature. He also addressed major causes for the unfunded liability problem, noting that for the period of 1985 to 2020, 47 percent of total unfunded liability was due to employer contribution shortfall, followed by 23 percent due to changes in actuarial assumptions. Benefit increases account for just 5 percent of the unfunded liability.

The pension system politics waters have a degree of calm at present, but we also know of the seemingly annual efforts to dilute Article 13, Section 5 and its application. Fortunately we benefit from the SUAA Legal Fund and SUAAAction's work on behalf of us, along with opportunities to hear from experts such as Professor Lousin and Attorney Madiar. SUAA membership has its advantages!

Guest Speaker Series

Dr. David Glassman, EIU President

Eastern President David Glassman said the Gov. J.B. Pritzker's proposed 2022 budget will freeze higher education funding at 2021 levels but wouldn't harm the university too badly. "We appreciate and are grateful to have a flat budget relative to the resources the state has right now," Glassman told the Eastern Illinois University Annuitant Association via Zoom Feb. 25 at its first chapter meeting of the year.

Glassman pointed out that the \$42 billion proposed budget could still be altered by the General Assembly. He also discussed enrollment concerns, plans for the fall semester, the university's battles with COVID 19 and the possibility of holding Homecoming again in October.

If higher education funding stays constant, Glassman said, "We can continue to grow." However, if the university received 5 percent or 10 percent reduction in state funding, maintaining the status quo would be problematic. If the university receives the same appropriations as last year, it means plans for a new science building on campus will move to the architectural phase.

This fall the university will begin an electrical engineering major and the university's new school of nursing – financed largely through the Lumpkin Foundation – will open in the former Ninth Street Hall facility.

Glassman, who is completing his sixth year as president, is hopeful enrollment will continue to go up in Fall 2021. "Our enrollment continues to grow," he said. "The freshman class has increased every year for the last three years." In the last couple years, high school students taking dual credit classes and teachers taking graduate-level classes have added to enrollment numbers. He said the university hopes to increase transfer and international student numbers as well as undergraduates. "Our goal in four years is to have 9,000 full-time graduate and undergraduate students."

This fall, Glassman is hopeful the university can offer 65-70 percent of its classes in person with the remainder being online or a combination of the two, if the nation can get COVID 19 on the run. In 2020-2021, the university has offered one-third of its classes face-to-face, one third online and one-third a combination of the two.

The university has spent nearly \$8 million fighting COVID, some of which has been reimbursed by federal funds. Eastern has had to constantly test students and staff for the coronavirus and disinfect and clean classrooms daily, Glassman said. The university has used 200 classrooms this year and had to hire a new crew of building service workers to clean the classrooms nightly. Social distancing has been practiced in class and on campus and masks are mandatory 24/7. Off campus, students are asked to not meet in groups of more than 10 people. "You would be extremely proud of our faculty and our students," he said. "We all had to change our game and we all had to buy into it."

Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center handled COVID testing on campus at first. Then the Illinois Department of Public Health and now the university has purchased the University of Illinois saliva test. A total of 500-550 students and staff are tested at random and via personal demand each week and results are known within 24 hours, Glassman said. Last week three students and one employee tested positive. "We haven't seen much transmission. We had some clusters among athletic teams and fraternities and sororities. We are very pleased about that."

Glassman is hopeful the campus can return to normal in the fall. He also hopes that Homecoming can be held in October. A decision on that will be made soon.

Ms. Sarah Livesay, Grand Prairie Friends

All of the planning had been done for the April 8, 2020 edition of the EIU Annuitants' Speaker Series, with Sarah Livesay, Executive Director of Grand Prairie Friends, scheduled for a presentation on the Eastern Illinois University campus. But then the event was cancelled as we all went into lock-down mode due to the pandemic. However, one year later (March 25, 2021) with an assist from Zoom, we were able to host Sarah Livesay in a revitalized speaker series.

Ms. Livesay began by pointing out that East Central Illinois is part of our state's Grand Prairie Division, which has its roots in an earlier robust, vibrant tall grass prairie system. Unfortunately, very little of the original prairie remains today, with only about 1/100th of 1 percent left of remnants left in Illinois. This is where Grand Prairie Friends comes in; it plays important preservation and stewardship roles in managing our region's natural heritage. For example, it oversees irreplaceable original prairie remnants at preserves such as the Loda and Fairchild cemeteries and the Shortline RR Prairie.

The Warbler Ridge Conservation Area, located just outside of Charleston along the Embarras River, is a growing part of the network of land trust sites managed by Grand Prairie Friends. Following the initial acquisition of a parcel of land in 2011, Warbler Ridge has grown to include about 1200 acres that features a diverse terrain of upland woods, ravines, prairies and river bottom land. It continues to grow, as seen in recent additions to the conservation area--14 acres of floodplain forest (Warbler Crossing) near Lake Charleston and a wooded hillside terrain along the Embarras River (Warbler Bluffs).

We learned from Sarah Livesay that Warbler Ridge definitely is a place to visit and enjoy, particularly its system of trails for activities such as hiking, bird watching and observing its unique collection of wildflowers and woodland grasses. There also are opportunities for EIU annuitants to volunteer, and we were urged to consider volunteering. One way to start is by helping on "Stewardship Saturdays", which are held on 9-11 am on the first Saturday of each month.

Submitted by Rich Wandling

EIUAA People

Academy of Lifelong Learning

EIU's Academy of Lifelong Learning begins a new semester of learning on August 21, 2021.. You will find more information on their webpage: <https://www.eiu.edu/adulted/all.php> Contact phone number: 217-581-5114.

EIU Annuitants Luncheon

2021 Update

46th Annual EIU Annuitants Association Luncheon

At the recent Board meeting, after much discussion (and taking into consideration the fact that COVID restrictions are, or may be, still in place) it was decided that rather than try to have an indoor, sit-down luncheon this year, we are working on putting together an outdoor Ice Cream Social to be held sometime in September. More details to follow.

FAREWELLS

*Following are brief notices only. To read a full obituary or leave condolences, visit www.jg-tc.com
www.mitchell-jerdan.com www.adamsfuneralchapel.com*

Dr. Harold G. Coe (Psychology Professor), 91, Charleston, IL died January 14, 2021. Harold is survived by Peggy, his wife of 63 years; children Mitch Coe and Mark Coe and grandchildren Jasmine Coe and Angela Coe.

Dr. Edward McCrory Corley (Economics Professor/Dept. Chair), 86, Charleston, IL died Thursday, February 11, 2021. Mac is survived by Barbara, his wife of 56 years; children Rachel (Jon) Simon, Todd (Ciara), and Doug and six grandchildren – Zac Simon, Nate Simon, Caleb Corley, Campbell Corley Monroe Corley and Truman Corley.

Nina L Cottingham, 90, Charleston, IL, died Wednesday, February 17, 2021. Nina is survived by her sister-in-law Elizabeth Cottingham, and nephew Paul (Joyce) Cottingham.

Lindel R. Martin, 87, (Instructor) Mattoon, IL, died Tuesday, April 27, 2021. Lindel is survived by his wife of 64 years, Betty; son Stephen Martin, and daughters Kimberly Dalton and Tamara (Miles) Overton; five grandchildren – Joshua (Rochelle) Martin, Jessica (Nathan) Ryan, Kyndall (Adam) Kaufman, Tayli (Zac) Frantz, Logan (Bryce) Thornton; 11 great-grandchildren and one brother.

William B Meyer, (Plumber), 78, Charleston, IL died Sunday, April 4, 2021. Bill is survived by Judy, his wife of 53 years, children Diane Meyer and Andrew (Valerie) Meyer, and grandchildren Lauren Meyer, Katie Meyer, Matthew Phillips, Sam Meyer and Alex Meyer.

Thomas P Moncada, (School of Business Professor), 76, Charleston IL died January 20, 2021. Tom is survived by his wife Susan, his daughter Elizabeth Moncada, and his brother John Moncada.

Phyllis L Rearden, (Library), 90, Charleston, IL died May 13, 2021. Phyllis is survived by John, her husband of 65 years, three sons: John Jr (Melodee), Philip (Marsha), and David (Molly) and 10 grandchildren.

Dr. Calvin N Smith (Speech Professor), 85, Grace, Idaho died Friday, January 1, 2021. Calvin is survived by Nancy, his wife of 19 years, children Sherilyn Smith and Samuel S Smith, two step-children: Crystal Sparks and Kurtis (Phyllis) Sparks; four step-grandchildren, James, Jeremy and Haley Sparks and Emily (Jordan) Hall and a step-great-grandson, Rowan Hall.

Jim Forrest Stratton, (Geology Professor), Charleston, IL died April 28, 2021. Jim is survived by his wife, Debbie; son Jim (Megan), and granddaughters Maggie and Emma; stepchildren Liam and Liv; and niece Holly.

Donald G VanDusen (Math), 74, Charleston, IL died Tuesday, March 16, 2021. He is survived by his sister Carol VanDusen and numerous friends.

Donald J. Wisthuff, 83, Austin, Texas, died March 25, 2021. Don is survived by his wife Linda, sister-in-law Fran Wisthuff, Cathy and Mark Thomas (sister-in-law/brother-in-law), Brenda and Cory Adams (sister-in-law/brother-in-law), and several nieces, nephews and friends.

CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
May 27, 2021	Board Meeting	Virtual
July 15, 2021	Chapter Meeting	TBD
September 9, 2021	Board Meeting	TBD
October 7, 2021	Chapter Meeting	TBD
November 18, 2021	Board Meeting	TBD

Note: Virtual meetings will usually begin at 9:00 a.m., but watch your email for any updates.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee

No report.

Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee is proud to announce Abigail Bonnstetter, as the recipient of the 2021-22 EIU Annuitant Scholarship. Abigail is the daughter of Mark Bonnstetter, current Deputy Athletic Director in Intercollegiate Athletics. Abigail just completed her sophomore year at EIU. She is a Biological Science/Pre-Med major with a Chemistry minor. Abigail's goal is to work at St Louis Children's Hospital (SLCH), as a pediatric cardiologist. She has a CNA license which allows her to work in local hospitals and assisted living centers. Next summer, Abigail plans to work at a SLCH run camp to help children with cardiac conditions. "Without question, the adversity I have faced since birth has shaped me and influenced my aspirations in life. Thank you for your consideration and giving me the opportunity to achieve this dream!"

The scholarship award is \$1000, paid half in the fall and half in the spring. EIU staff and annuitant children or grandchildren may apply for this scholarship through the scholarship portal found on the EIU Foundation web page. The deadline for all EIU Foundation scholarships is March 15. Your generous donations to our scholarship program have enabled this scholarship to grow. We hope to continue growing our corpus and someday award a \$2,000 scholarship. Donations to the EIUAA Scholarship can be mailed to the EIU Foundation Office, 860 West Lincoln Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920 or gifts can be made on line at the [EIU Foundation website](#).

SUAA also has some scholarships. Here is the link to their information. [Foundation 2021 Scholarship and Professional Development Programs](#)

A big thank you to the Scholarship Committee and the on-campus group for their hard work processing the applications.

Nancy Dole, Scholarship Committee Chair and Margaret Messer, Committee Member

Membership Committee

EIUAA's Greatest Asset

Our membership is our greatest asset. Increasing and sustaining membership in EIUAA/SUAA is essential to the success of our organization. Here are a few tips for sustaining our membership:

#1 - Renew your membership as soon as you receive the first renewal notice from SUAA.

#2 - If you pay annually, switch to payment through a monthly deduction of \$3.67 from your SURS annuity so that you don't have to renew each year.

#3 - Thanks to all of our members who do pay dues through SURS deduction! That helps EIUAA and SUAA be more cost effective and efficient!

Thanks for maintaining your membership! EIUAA and SUAA will continue to advocate on your behalf to maintain your retirement and health care benefits.

Membership Committee: John Best, John Flynn, Mary Anne Hanner, and Jone Zieren

EIUAA OFFICERS

Richard Wandling rawandling@eiu.edu

President

Nancy Dole, jndole@consolidated.net

President-Elect

John Ryan, jmryan@eiu.edu

Past President

TBD

Secretary

Margaret Messer, mkmesser@eiu.edu

Treasurer

Web Page: <https://www.eiu.edu/annuitants>

BOARD MEMBERS

Gary Aylesworth, Beverly Cruse, Lisa Dallas, Nancy Dole, John Flynn, Wendy Long, Amy Lynch, Jeffrey Lynch, Margaret Messer, Marita Metzke, John Ryan, Richard Wandling

COMMITTEES

Communications: Wendy Long (Chair), John Ryan

Events: Marita Metzke, Margaret Messer, Rich Wandling

Legislative: Jeffrey Lynch (Chair), Jim Bush, Henry Davis, Sue Kaufman

Membership: John Ryan (Chair), John Best, John Flynn, Dale Wolf, Joan Zieren

Scholarship: Nancy Dole (Chair), Nancy Curran, Brad Green, Margaret Messer