



WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

## WASCH CENTER FOR RETIRED FACULTY

Newsletter Vol. 8, No. 1

Fall 2016

# REMEMBERING SUSAN WASCH

Susan Beck Wasch died in her home on February 6, 2016. She was 81. It is tempting to say that she died after a long illness, since she had been diagnosed with cancer more than a year earlier. But, in fact, she did not seem to be gravely ill during the last year of her life, even though it became evident after a time that her usual level of ebullience and effervescent energy



was somewhat diminished. Susie continued to come to regular monthly meetings of the Wasch Center Advisory Board and spoke eloquently and effectively on November 7, 2015, at the tenth anniversary celebration of the founding of the center that she and Bill established and funded. People who did not know of her diagnosis were taken aback by the news of her death, for she was by no means confined by her illness. Until the final two weeks of her life, she was up and about.

On May 7, 2016, a funeral and memorial service was held at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in

*Continued page 2*

## Changes Afoot in the Organization of the Wasch Center

Karl Scheibe was first appointed Director of the Wasch Center in the pre-operational year of 2004 for a period of three years. Until the fall of 2005, the building at 51 Lawn Avenue was in construction. It was ready for occupancy for the fall semester of 2005. Karl was reappointed for successive three-year terms three times, with the final term ending in June 2016.

Karl announced his intention to retire as Director of the Wasch Center in the fall of the current academic year. Joyce Jacobsen, Vice-President for Academic

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Middletown, with over 300 people in attendance. The family included Bill and their four children: William, Christina, Heidi, and Frederick. The testimonies at this service about Susan reflected her constant good humor, her generosity, and her courage, coupled with acceptance of her own vulnerability. Hers was a positive and yet realistic temperament—something she acquired early in life and continued to manifest until the end. The powerful, crowded service at Holy Trinity was a tribute to her character. The ceremony was followed by a large barbecue dinner served at the Wasch home on Coleman Road, topped off by a fireworks display. Images from the events of this day will long survive in the memories of those who attended. And it is sure that many who were not able to be present will also remember Susan Wasch with gratitude and admiration.

As a teenager Susie was afflicted by a serious illness that prevented her from going to college. It was a difficult time for her, seeing her high school classmates going off to college while she lay confined to her sickbed. It would be another 33 years before she was able to earn a BA in Art History from Smith College. She underwent two surgeries. She was told she could not play tennis again. (She had been a tournament tennis player.) But, during her recovery, she took up platform tennis. Despite a bleak prognosis, she learned the game and played it with determination and exhilaration. Her passion and tenacity led to a number of national titles and, eventually, her induction into the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame in 1996. She is cited for her tenacity, her sportsmanship, and her radiant smile. One of her

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opponents said of her, “You’d see that lovely smile just as she was about to crush you at net.”

She married Bill Wasch in 1958 and the couple moved to Middletown in 1964. Bill had joined the Development Office and soon became its Director of Alumni Relations. They often worked as a team, welcoming alums, students, and faculty into their gracious home on Washington Terrace. She managed as well to take in a series of high-school exchange students under the auspices of the Rotary Club—from Mexico, Brazil, Japan and elsewhere. She and Bill also acted as a family for the first of Wesleyan’s mainland Chinese students, Naogan Ma and—a year later—her husband Shaozhong. There are many other things one could cite: her devoted service to the community, her sportsmanship, and—of course—her infectious smile.

Yet the crowning glory of her service to Wesleyan and its environs was—with her husband Bill—the founding and funding of the Susan B. and William K. Wasch Center for Retired Faculty at Wesleyan University. It will keep its name in perpetuity. Those of us in the first generation to benefit from this institution will retain a wealth of palpable memories to go with the name, many of them associated with the irreplaceable Susie. Those who come later to the Wasch Center will have to be content with stories. Monuments have their function—and one of them is to remind us to inquire about what they represent. The Wasch Center as a monument represents the humane values that Susan Wasch held dear—community, the life of learning, and generosity of spirit. It us up to us to keep these values alive.

# FALL 2016 FILM SERIES

Yoshiko Samuels and Joe Reed have selected another round of significant films for the fall semester. Screenings will be in the Butterfield Room of the Wasch Center at 3 pm on the first Tuesday of each month. As always, Popcorn will be available.

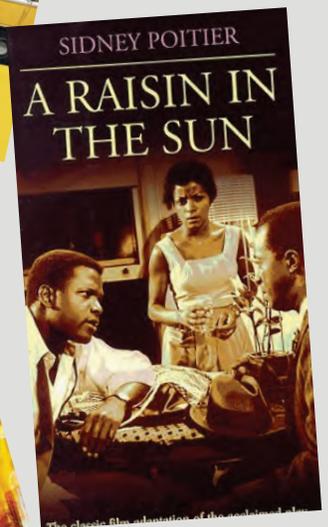
*Tuesday, September 6, 3 pm*

**LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE** (2006) Black comedy written by Michael Arndt; directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris; and starring Greg Kinnear, Steve Carrell, Abigail Breslin. Academy Awards for Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor. 101 minutes.



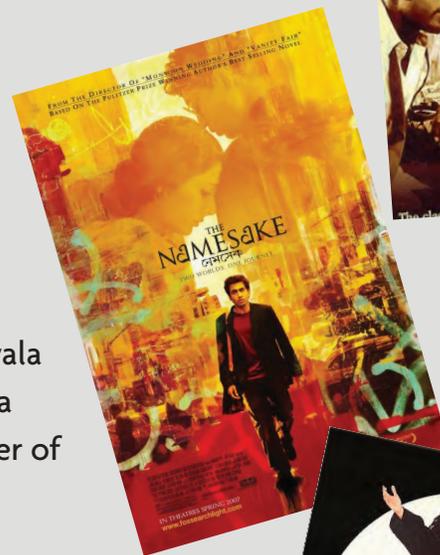
*Tuesday, October 11, 3 pm*

**A RAISIN IN THE SUN** (1961) A drama film written by Lorraine Hansberry (The Best Play of the Year, 1959); directed by Daniel Petrie; and starring Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee, Claudia McNeil. The National Board of Review Award for Supporting Actress; Nominated for the Golden Globe Award. 128 minutes.



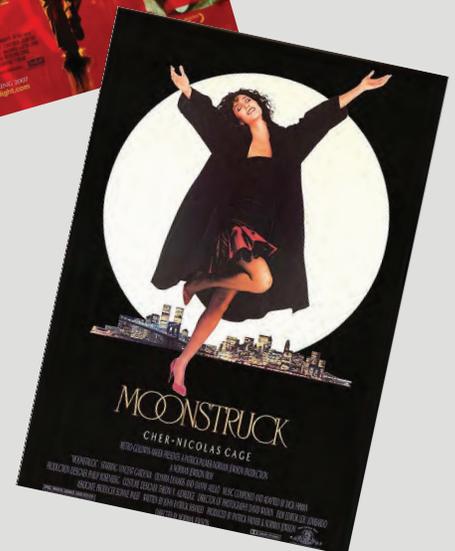
*Tuesday, November 8, 3 pm*

**THE NAMESAKE** (2006) Written by Sooni Taraporvala based on a novel by Jhumpa Lahiri; directed by Mira Nair; and starring Tabu, Irfan Khan, Kal Penn. Winner of International Film Festival, Bulgaria. 122 minutes.



*Tuesday, December 6, 3 pm*

**MOONSTRUCK** (1987) Romantic comedy written by John Patrick Shanley; directed by Norman Jewison; and starring Cher, Nicolas Cage, Olympis Dukakis. Academic Awards for Best Original Screenplay, Best Actress, and Best Supporting Actress. 102 minutes.



# THE WESLEYAN INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING FALL 2016

The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning (WILL) is offering seven regular courses and two all-day sessions. The offerings are listed below together with their times, locations, and costs. For more complete course descriptions or information about enrollment, please, visit [www.wesleyan.edu/will](http://www.wesleyan.edu/will) or call 860/865-2273.

## THE GREAT WAR TO END ALL WARS

The War that no one Wanted and the Peace that Never Was: From August 1914 to Versailles  
*Herbert Arnold, Professor of German Studies and Letters Emeritus*

Germany's "World Policy" and the Origins of the First World War: a Reassessment  
*Erik Grimmer-Solem, Associate Professor of History*

Russia and the Great War: The treaty of Brest-Litovsk and its Aftermath  
*Philip Pomper, Professor of History Emeritus*

**Saturday, November 19**

Allbritton 311 | \$125

**SPECIAL ALL-DAY SESSION**

## EMILY DICKINSON AND THE POETRY OF PRESENCE

*Howard Einsohn*

Four Thursdays: October 6, 13, 20, 27 | 4:30–6pm

Wasch Center Butterfield Room | \$90

## MURDER WITH MALICE IN MIND

*Andrew De Rocco*

Five Thursdays: October 13, 20, 27; November 3, 10 | 7–8:30pm

Wasch Center Butterfield Room | \$110

## REVOLUTIONARIES IN 19TH-CENTURY PARIS: MANET, MONET, AND THE IMPRESSIONISTS

*Rhea Higgins*

Three Tuesdays: October 18, 25; November 1 | 4:30–6pm

Wasch Center Butterfield Room | \$70

## THE ENDURING BOOK: FROM MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS TO ARTISTS' BOOKS

*Suzy Taraba*

Three Wednesdays: September 28; October 5, 12 | 6:30–8pm

Davison Rare Book Room, 103 Olin Library | \$70

## ODE ON AN OYSTER: A CULTURAL ODYSSEY

*Richard Friswell*

**Saturday, October 1, 2016** | 9am–4pm \$125

**SPECIAL ALL-DAY SESSION**

## THE SCIENCE AND ART OF MEDITATION

*William Arsenio*

Four Mondays: October 17, 24, 31; November 7 | 6–7:30pm

Wasch Center Butterfield Room | \$90

## IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE AND OTHER TRUE STORIES: A WRITERS' WORKSHOP

*Sari Rosenblatt*

Six Mondays: November 7, 14, 21, 28; December 5, 12 | 5:30–7:30pm

Wasch Center Butterfield Room | \$125 | Limited to Eight Students

## CONNECTICUT CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS TELL THEIR STORIES

*Dione Longley*

Four Tuesdays: September 13, 20, 27; October 4 | 4:30–6pm

Wasch Center Butterfield Room | \$90



# News & Notes

from retired members of the faculty

The Wasch Center Newsletter welcomes short descriptions (ca. 150 words or fewer) of retired faculty members' research, scholarly writing, or other activities of note. The deadline for the next issue (January, 2017) is December 1, 2016. Submissions should go to [pfrenzel@wesleyan.edu](mailto:pfrenzel@wesleyan.edu).

## CHARLES LEMERT

The year past has been one of many pleasures, in particular those involving new projects. The first of these was a decision to write an historical and analytic study of American Social Theory -- interpreted as distinct from European theories. In addition, I am at work on a book with Kristin Plys of Yale that rethinks Communist theories of Communism as more embedded in and transformed by the events of their day than is commonly assumed. Then, also, I am researching a book on the social space of human settlements -- this with Martina Cvajner of the University of Trento, Italy. With Waverly Duck of the University of Pittsburg, I am working on a book on Global Ethnographies. Finally, Routledge will publish a collection of recently published and new essays, *Silence and Society*.

All this may seem a bit extreme, but the ambition arises from a realistic assessment of my age and just how I want to spend these last years. Recently that evaluation has become all the more urgent by the fact that in May I was struck by a compressed disc that turned into a spinal infection that kept me hospitalized and, until recently, unable to walk. I'll be moving on a walker or cane for some time to come. The truth is that, though I will have back pain

the rest of my life, the experience of being partially paralyzed has caused me to rethink life itself and to value what I have.

Otherwise, I have been invited to teach at the University of Brasilia and to participate in a Japan Society conference somewhere in Pacifica. I probably won't be able to do either. Curiously, I have had articles published (or soon to be published) in Turkish, German, and Brazilian books or journals. Of these the one that pleases me most is a reprint of an essay I wrote for an American journal on Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence* in a book devoted to Pamuk's work. Finally, the sixth edition of *Social Theory: The Global, Multicultural, and Classical Readings* has just been published after substantial revision in the selections and my commentary essays.

Other than that, I've continued my work in New Haven for the homeless and become an Associate in Community Relations with Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven. In the latter respect the work is organizing people in the city's poorest neighborhood to support their already successful work in renewing the vitality of what once was one of New Haven's proudest communities.

## JESSIE STEELE

Stop by the Wasch Center and welcome our new administrative assistant, Jessie Steele. Born and raised in Haddam, she now resides in East Hampton. Jessie worked at Olin Library for thirteen years before leaving Wesleyan for three years due to illness. But now she is back and will be available:

Mondays - Thursdays, 8:30am to 2:30pm;  
Fridays 8:30am to 1:30pm.

Her extension is 3005.

## WASCH CENTER ENDOWMENT

Over the eleven years of our existence, the Wasch Center has received a number of gifts from retired faculty members, alums, and others. We are building an endowment that we hope might eventually allow the funding of professional travel and research expenses for retired faculty members, including the maintenance of computers. If you are considering either a bequest to Wesleyan or an annual gift, you might designate such gifts, in full or in part, to be credited to the Wasch Center. One-time contributions in any amount are, of course, always welcome. If you have questions, you can contact Peter Kilby (ext. 2365) at the Wasch Center or Mark Davis (ext. 3660), Director of Planned Giving for University Relations.

# Necrology

## Mary Connie Comfort

Mary Connie Lyon Comfort died on May 21, 2016 at her home in Essex, Connecticut. She was 81. She studied drama at the University of Washington where she received her BA degree in 1953. She married Wistar Comfort in 1957, after which the couple made a series of moves, settling in the Middletown area after Wis joined the Wesleyan Math Department.

In subsequent years, Mary Connie taught English literature and drama. She was also part of a feminist collective, establishing the first family planning clinic in Middletown and serving as its first director.

She served for two decades as a career counselor to Wesleyan undergraduates, specializing in pre-medical advising. Later, she directed the Wesleyan Honors College, supervising the Prose and Poetry reading series housed at the Russell House. She and Wistar moved to Essex Meadows in 2011.

Memorial contributions may be made to Middletown Friends Meeting, c/o Holder, 29 Long Lane, Middletown, CT 06457.

## Elmer Swanson

Elmer Swanson, Adjunct Professor of Physical Education emeritus, died in Portland CT on August 12. Born in 1923, Elmer began his collegiate career at the University of Michigan, where he starred in baseball and track. After college he was drafted by the Detroit Tigers, playing briefly on several farm teams before returning to Ann Arbor to finish his MA, after which he joined Michigan's coaching staff in track and cross-country. He was offered a position with Wesleyan's Athletic Department in 1963. He settled in Portland.

When Wesleyan became co-ed in the 1970s, he enthusiastically embraced the coaching of women and guided many of the women's track and cross-country teams to many successful seasons.

Elmer coached for fifty years, thirty of them at Wesleyan. During that time, he coached All Americans, Olympians, and two Boston Marathon winners, Amby Burfoot '68 and Bill Rogers '70. He was inducted into the Wesleyan, Portland, and Middletown Halls of Fame.

## Jelle Zeilinga de Boer

Jelle Zeilinga de Boer, the Harold T. Stearns Professor of Earth Science emeritus, died on July 23 at his home in Haddam. Raised in Indonesia, he studied in the Netherlands, earning a Ph.D. from the University of Utrecht. He came to Wesleyan in 1963 as a post-doctoral fellow and was offered a tenure-track position in 1965. He taught until his retirement in 2005.

Originally interested in coming to the United States to study the Appalachian Mountains, de Boer's research focused on the geotectonics of the Appalachians, Southeast Asia and South and Central America.

Much of his research has been on earthquakes and volcanoes, studies that yielded two books, *Earthquakes in Human History* (2002) and *Volcanoes in Human History* (2004), both co-authored by Donald Sandor. *Stories in Stone* (2009) deals with the influence geology has had on Connecticut's history.

He also investigated the role geologic phenomena played in Greek mythology, specifically at the oracle site at Delphi and the Apollo temples. His hypothesis that the geologic faults beneath the temple could produce trance-inducing gases led to widespread notice in both scientific journals and popular documentaries.

He won the Binswanger Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2004 and, last year, the Joe Webb Peoples Award presented by the Geological Society of Connecticut to someone who has contributed to the field of geology in Connecticut.

A memorial service is planned for later in the fall.

Affairs, assumed responsibility to recruit and appoint a new Director. In January 2006 she asked Karl to appoint a committee within the Wasch Center to conduct this search.

He quickly convened a meeting to which about 20 people were invited—current residents of the Wasch Center, members of the Advisory Board, and others who had had strong involvement with our programs. At this meeting, an Ad Hoc Search Committee was formed, consisting of eight volunteers: David Beveridge, Joyce Lowrie, Jerome Long, Peter Frenzel, Duffy White, Rick Elphick, Yoshiko Samuel, and Jerry Wensinger.

After prolonged and sedulous deliberation, this committee produced a recommendation that Peter Kilby and Yoshiko Samuel be appointed as Co-Directors of the Wasch Center for the next year. The committee also recommended that Karl Scheibe be appointed for a term of one year as Director Emeritus. This recommendation was accepted by the Office of Academic Affairs, and appointment letters reflecting this new arrangement were sent, signed, and returned.

In addition, it was agreed that a support group, sometimes called a cabinet, be appointed to assume special responsibilities for the new management of Wasch Center programs and activities. A listing of these people and their functions is as follows:

- Joe Reed and Yoshiko Samuel** — Film series
- Peter Frenzel** — Newsletter Editor
- Herb Arnold** — Co-Director of WILL program
- Rick Friswell** — Co-Director of WILL program
- Duffy White** — Lecture series
- Richard Adelstein** — Fundraising & utilization  
of existing funds
- Karl Scheibe** — Coordinator of Oral history Project

**Rick Elphick, Joyce Lowrie, and Jerome Long** will be part of the cabinet, but without specific portfolios.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all those involved with the reorganization, but especially to Rick Elphick and Duffy White, the Ad Hoc Committee co-chairs, who worked tirelessly in collecting ideas, twisting arms, drafting and redrafting, and generally keeping the committee ruly and on track.

And, needless to say, we are indebted to our longtime director Karl Scheibe, who has worked tirelessly without pay for the good of the Center.

## FALL 2016 LECTURE SERIES

### **Wednesday, September 14, 4:15pm**

Yoshiko Samuel and Peter Kilby:  
“The New Wasch Center – Changes.”

### **Wednesday, September 21, 4:15pm**

David Westmoreland, Professor of  
Chemistry:  
“The Art of the Science Demonstration.”

### **Wednesday, October 5, 4:15pm**

Joe Rouse, Professor of Philosophy:  
“What is a Scientific Conception of the  
World?”

### **Wednesday, October 19, 4:15pm**

Barbara-Jan Wilson, Development:  
Lecture by Barbara-Jan Wilson,  
Vice President of University Relations.

### **Wednesday, November 2, 4:15pm**

Kit Reed, Author and Resident Writer:  
Kit reads from her next novel  
“MORMAMA”

### **Wednesday, November 16, 4:15pm**

Mike Nelson, Assistant Professor,  
Department of Government:  
“Dragons, Jaguars, and Tigers: West Africa  
and its New Partners.”

### **Wednesday, December 7, 4:15pm**

Chris Parslow, Professor of Classical  
Studies:  
“Hamming It Up in the Villa of the Papyrus  
at Herculaneum.”

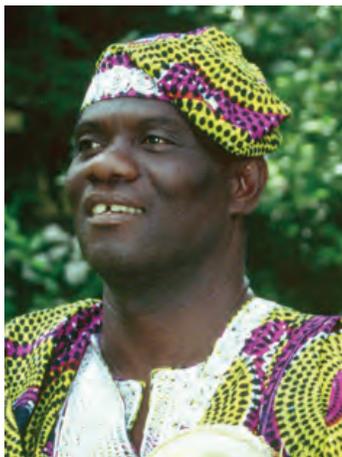
### **Wednesday, December 14, 4:15pm**

Performance by Celtic Melody.

# FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS ATTAIN EMERITUS STATUS

There were four retirements in the past academic year. The retirees will be honored at a reception at the Wasch Center during next spring's Commencement/Reunion Weekend.

**Abraham Adzenyah**  
*Adjunct Professor of Music*



**Philip Bolton**  
*Professor of Chemistry*



**Alex Dupuy**  
*Professor of Sociology*



**Mark Slobin**  
*Professor of Music*



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## Editorial Board of the Wasch Center Newsletter

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