

July 12, 2006

To: The Office of University Relations
From: Karl Scheibe, Director

I have been asked by Elizabeth Attebery of your office to provide a report on the programs and activities of the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty in the last year. I am pleased to do so.

Wasch Center Completion and Dedication Celebration

The construction, repairs, decoration and furnishing of our new quarters at 51 Lawn Avenue were basically finished by the middle of the first term—in October, 2005. Everyone who has seen the facility has admired the tastefulness and style of the house and its furnishings. The Advisory Board of the Center was kept fully informed of developments and problems along the way to completion of the project, largely through the exemplary work of Barbara Spalding, our Project Coordinator. While there were a few inevitable delays and some problems with containing costs within our originally assigned budget, we were able to begin the actual use of the building for its intended purposes by the middle of the fall semester.

I note that an appeal was issued in the spring of 2005 to retired and retiring faculty members for additional gifts for this project. The response to this appeal was gratifying. By January of 2006, almost 40 faculty members, joined by a few alumni, had given and pledged about \$225,000 to the Wasch Center, to supplement the initial pledge and gift of \$1,000,000 from Bill and Susan Wasch.

On November 5th we hosted an open house and the dedication of two spaces in the building as part of Wesleyan's Homecoming Celebrations. Remarks were made by President Douglas Bennet, Vice-President and Provost Judith Brown, and Susan Wasch, with the Director of the Center serving as master of ceremony. Two rooms were dedicated. Our main conference space was named the Butterfield Room, in honor of Kay Butterfield. Robert McKelvey, '59, provided a generous gift with the objective of honoring Kay in this way. Kay was able to be present for this dedication. The front parlor was named in honor of George and Elva Creeger, in recognition of their many contributions to Wesleyan over the past 50 years. The open house was filled to overflowing with guests--returning alumni, retired and currently active faculty members. The response to the open house was equally positive, since several of those in the audience, noting that the third floor renovation of space was halted because of a lack of funds, immediately made pledges that enabled us soon to resume this work.

Composition of Advisory Board

Judith Brown, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, has appointed the following individuals to serve on the Advisory Board of the Center. William Barber, George Creeger, Ellen D'Oench, Paula Paige, Wistar Comfort, Donald Moon, Andy Szegedy-Maszak, and Karl Scheibe. In addition, the Board has enjoyed the regular attendance and full participation of Bill and Susie Wasch, as well as Kathleen Norris, Administrative Assistant, and our Project Coordinator, Barbara Spalding.

Wasch Center Operations and Building Use

The Advisory Board of the Center has met regularly throughout the year—biweekly from September through May—and monthly during the summer. This has made it possible for the Director to consult closely with the Advisory Board on matters of program, details of construction and furnishing, financial planning, and establishment of policies on the use of our facility.

From the middle of the fall term throughout the year, we have enjoyed the excellent services of Kathleen Norris as our part-time Administrative Assistant. Kathleen also has a part-time assignment with the Environmental Studies Program. She coordinates our program series, pays bills, orders supplies, and supervises five work-study students, who act as receptionists and provide clerical support during the academic year. Kathleen has provided liaison with the Advisory Board and has coordinated use of the building for programs and functions.

Upon completion of the third floor of our building in March, 2006, it became possible to assign space to retired faculty members who had requested offices in the Center.

The following retired faculty members have now been assigned space at our facility:

Annamarie Arnold, German
 Herbert Arnold, College of Letters and German
 George Creeger, English
 Eugene Klaaren, Religious Studies
 Jerome Long, Religious Studies
 Joyce Lowrie, Romance Languages
 Joseph Reed, English
 Yoshika Samuel, East Asian Studies
 Karl Scheibe, Psychology
 Arthur Upgren, Astronomy

As soon as it became known that the Wasch Center was available as space for meetings and special functions, we began to receive requests to hold functions here. In consultation with the Advisory Board, we agreed to make our space available for four Friday afternoon cocktail parties, promoted by a group of faculty members and supported by the Office of Academic Affairs. All of these parties were well attended, with nearly 100 people present on each occasion. It is expected that we will continue to provide space for this sort of function in the future.

In addition, the Physics Department asked to be allowed to hold their weekly luncheon meetings in the Butterfield Room, and this they did throughout the year. Another regular use of the building is the weekly Quaker meeting, occupying the Butterfield room of the house every Sunday morning. The Quaker group has volunteered a monthly contribution to the Wasch Center as a token of their appreciation.

Many other groups were given the use of our building for single functions: Examples are a discussion group from the History Department, a committee from the Dean's Office, a meeting of the Development Office with a potential donor, a recital, and small parties and social functions.

A course on "Psychology and Theater", with an enrollment of 15 undergraduates, was given by Professor of Psychology Emeritus, Karl Scheibe. The Butterfield Room proved to be an excellent space for this course. Professor Scheibe also supervised the work of two honors students in the Psychology Department from his office at the Wasch Center.

Wasch Center Program Series

Our main program for the year was a series of seven presentations, listed below:

- December 7 – *Living Safely, Living Long, Living Well*, Bill Wasch
- February 8 – *Out of the Mothballs: Munich 1948 – 2005* Jerry Wensing
- February 22 – *A Reading from the Marchesa Columbi and Matilde Serao: The Plight of Young Women in Nineteenth Century Italy*, Paula Paige
- March 8 – *Revisiting Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma "1944"*, Bill Barber
- April 4 – *Older Americans, Vital Community*, Andrew Achenbaum
- April 19 – *African American Soldiers in WWII: The fifth Platoon*, Jerome Long
- May 3 – *Saul Steinberg, Secret Agent*, Joe Reed

All of these presentations, save one, were scheduled for 4:15PM on Wednesday afternoons. All except that one presentation had capacity audiences, consisting mostly of senior and retired faculty members. We learned from this experience that it might be best, in future, to schedule our talks for afternoons rather than evenings. Each of the talks was followed by an informal reception with refreshments, and all were quite animated affairs.

Reception Honoring Retiring Faculty and Dedication of Barber and Hallowell Spaces

The final event of the academic year was a reception and open house honoring the seven faculty members who are this year retiring from Wesleyan. This event was jointly sponsored by the Wasch Center and by University Relations. A tent in the back yard of the center was the setting for the program. Two new spaces were dedicated on this occasion. The foyer of the Center was named for Burton Hallowell, '37, through the generosity of the Class of 1952, of which Professor Hallowell was an honorary member. The front parlor to the right of the main entrance was named in honor of Bill and Sheila Barber, through the generosity of Steve Pfeiffer, '69 and other alumni and friends. Remarks were delivered about the contributions of the four retiring faculty members who attended this occasion. George Creeger spoke about Gertrude Hughes. Ron Kuivila spoke about Fred Linton. Russell Murphy spoke about Richard Boyd. Bill Barber spoke about Richard Miller. It is expected that we will participate in the co-sponsoring of an event of this kind on an annual basis, honoring faculty members who are newly retired. This first event was well attended, festive, and meaningful—both for faculty members who are retiring and for the community as a whole.

Summary

In summary, the first year of operation of the Wasch Center has been a clear success. Within a remarkably short time, we have moved from a mere idea into the concrete realization and establishment of a new institutional structure at Wesleyan. We anticipate increasing activities in the future that will contribute to the vitality of the Wesleyan community as a whole. At the same time the Wasch Center will encourage the ongoing teaching and scholarship of a number of senior faculty members who choose to continue their professional engagements in this way.