

**The Susan B. and William K Wasch Center for Retired Faculty  
Wesleyan University  
A Report for 2007-2008**

**Introduction**

The Wasch Center completed its third year of operation in 2007-08. It was our second *full* year of operation, since the building was not finished and offices were not available for most of the first term of 2005-06.

It was a year of progress and continuity for the Center. One innovation this year was the establishment of a mentoring program, bringing together new members of the Wesleyan faculty with retired colleagues. Our facility continued to be well frequented—both by retired faculty members and by other individuals and groups in the university community who have sought us out as a place to meet.

**Advisory Board**

Two members of the original Advisory Board stepped down from active service. Ellen D'Oench and Wistar Comfort retired from the Board, both after having served virtually since our beginnings. Both were enthusiastic and loyal contributors to the activities of the Center and the deliberations of the Board. We will miss them at our meetings, but look forward to seeing them around the Center as participants in our programs and activities.

We were fortunate in being able to appoint two new members of Board in this past year. Susan Berry joined the Board at mid-year to fill the D'Oench vacancy. Susan is the widow of a retired faculty member, Spencer Berry. She is an artist and a former teacher in the GLSP program. Lew Lukens, Professor Emeritus of MB&B, was appointed to fill the vacancy created by Comfort's resignation. The two new members have received letters of appointment from Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Joe Bruno for three-year terms, extending until June 2011.

The current members of the Advisory Board are: Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Lewis Lukens, Paula Paige, Peter Frenzel, Herbert Arnold, Susan Berry, and *ex officio* members, Susan Wasch, William Wasch, Donald Moon, Sean McCann, and Karl Scheibe.

### **Administrative Assistant and Student Help**

Ann Gertz has completed her first full year of service as our Administrative Assistant, having joined us in the middle of the last academic year. She works half-time during the academic year and one day per week during the summers. She has performed her job with constant good will and high competence. She has been a constant and friendly support for all of our residents. She has been assigned the job of administering all of the small research grants for retired faculty members, awarded by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Ann recruited and supervised a group of five work-study students, who served at the reception desk at times she was not present. They performed countless errands and tasks for residents of the building and others during the course of the academic year.

### **Association for Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE)**

Wesleyan has agreed to host the 2010 meeting of AROHE, to take place in October of that year. The 2008 meeting will take place this coming October at the University of Southern California. Bill Wasch and Karl Scheibe will be presenting a paper at that meeting describing the growth and development of our retirement center at Wesleyan.

Hosting the 2010 meeting is a major responsibility. The Office of Academic Affairs has been informed of this initiative and will lend assistance to our efforts. We expect representatives from 80-100 retirement organizations throughout the United States and Canada. Space has been reserved at the Usdan Center for this event, with accommodations to be arranged at the Inn at Middletown.

### **Use of Offices**

The five individual offices on the third floor were assigned and occupied in this year. At the end of the year, one of the occupants of this suite of offices elected to give up space, and this office space was promptly assigned to Vera Grant, a new space applicant.

Three double-offices on the second floor were available, accommodating six people. Four of the spaces were assigned at the beginning of the year. One these four tenants, Arthur Upgren, withdrew at the end of the year. Gertrude Hughes has moved downstairs into his former office. Bill Firshein moved into one of the other spaces in the middle of the year. This leaves one unoccupied space as we begin our new year. We will start the next year with ten residents plus the Director claiming space in the building.

In May, the Director circulated a notice of available space to all eligible retired faculty members who live in Middletown and the surrounding area.

The list of residents for this coming year is as follows:  
Karl Scheibe, Jerome Long, William Firshein, Herbert Arnold, Joe Reed, Eugene Klaaren, Joyce Lowrie, Gertrude Hughes, Yoshiko Samuel, Paula Paige, and Vera Grant.

### **Program Series**

The program of speakers we inaugurated in our first year has proved to be popular and successful. In the last academic year, we scheduled and presented six such programs in the fall semester and eight in the spring. The presenters and titles are given below:

**Yoshiko Samuel: “From Waka to Haiku: Japanese Poetry in a Nutshell”**

**David Beveridge: “Science and Modernism, *Fin de Siècle*”**

**Paula Paige, Norman Shapiro, and Krishna Winston: “The Three Translators: Traitors or Magicians?”**

**Gertrude Hughes: "Emily Dickinson’s Poetry"**

**Andy Szegedy-Maszak: “An American on the Acropolis: William James Stillman.” Stillman (1828-1901)**

**Bill Firshein: “Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases: Serious or Minimal Threat”**

**Michael Roth: “A Conversation Hour”**

**Joyce Lowrie: “Reflecting on Reflections: Mirrors in French Fiction”**

**Mike Lovell: “Is Social Security Unfair to Couples, College Students, and Blacks?”**

**Joseph Reed: “My Paintings: Ants, Alphabets, Infestations, Automatics, and First Ladies in Space”**

**Laura Grabel: “Prospects for Human Embryonic Stem Cell-based Therapies”**

**Eugene Klaaren: “Creation Theology from South Africa”**

**Sherman Hawkins: “Promised End: The Last Scene of *King Lear*”**

**Jack Hoy: “Wealth and Admissions: Wesleyan over the Course of 60 Years”**

This program has become a central attractive feature of the Wasch Center for the community of retired faculty members and others. All of the presentations had capacity audiences in the Butterfield Room, and several were overflow affairs, leading some to consider possible ways of expanding the space of the Butterfield Room in order to accommodate larger audiences.

Most of the presenters were retired faculty members, some of them traveling considerable distances in order to be here. The positive and generous responses of these people offer encouragement and support for the proposition that retired faculty members still have something to say and welcome the opportunity to say it. We also had presentations from Wesleyan’s new President, Michael Roth, as well as several active faculty members.

## **Movie Series**

This was the second year for our movie series, designed and presented by Joe Reed, Professor Emeritus of English. We presented movies on seven Tuesday afternoons throughout the year. This program proved to be increasingly popular as the series progressed. While the expense associated with gaining exhibition permission for such a series is nontrivial, the Advisory Board decided to continue the program for the next year, given the evidence of growing enthusiasm and participation. Joe Reed proved to be an excellent host for these occasions.

The following movies were shown during the year:

*Sunset Boulevard.*

*It Happened One Night.*

*Rebel Without a Cause.*

*Strangers on a Train.*

*Yankee Doodle Dandy*

*Singin' in the Rain.*

*Double Indemnity.*

## **Mentoring Program**

At the beginning of the year, we sponsored two meetings at the Wasch Center in order to introduce new faculty members to retired faculty members for the purpose of providing an opportunity for mentoring for new members of the community. While these meetings were useful, it was the sense of the senior members present that a more focused activity would be more attractive to junior colleagues. Accordingly, we formulated a program of sponsored luncheons at the Usdan Center. With the help of Sean McCann, Director of the Center for Faculty Career Development, we asked those junior faculty members in their first three years if they would be interested in participating in such a mentoring program. We then matched those who said they would be interested (about 15 in number) with retired faculty members. We then informed people of their pairings and left it up to them to initiate appointments for luncheons. Concurrently, we asked the Office of Academic Affairs for a subsidy in the amount of \$1500 to support this activity, which amount was promptly granted.

The result was gratifying. Scores of lunches between senior mentors and junior faculty members took place in the second semester—and everyone reported that the experience was most worthwhile. Our intention is to continue this program in the next academic year.

### **Reception Honoring Retiring Faculty Members**

This year, we did not have our regularly scheduled reception for newly retiring faculty members. Only four faculty members retired this year and it happened that competing responsibilities made their attendance at this event difficult. As an alternative, we have planned a small reception for the Fall to honor these faculty members, to be held in the Butterfield Room of the Center. We expect to resume the custom of having the commencement weekend reception next year.

For the record, the four faculty members retiring this year are:

Richard Slotkin, Professor of English and American Studies

Jason Wolfe, Professor of Biology

Gayle Pemberton, Professor of English

Vera Grant, Adjunct Professor of German Studies

### **Plaque Honoring Professors Named by Endowment Contributors**

In this year, an attractive plaque was installed on the wall of the entry way to the Center by the Office of University Relations. This plaque displays the names of former faculty members in whose name substantial contributions have been made to the endowment fund for the Wasch Center.

### **Other Activities and Uses of the Center**

In collaboration with the Human Resources office, we presented an open meeting for all interested faculty members, active and retired, to review retirement benefits, TIAA-CREF options, finance and health insurance matters, and other issues that are of common concern for those entering retirement. This meeting was well attended—with about 35 people present in the Butterfield Room.

An event not in our initial plan for programs was held on May 7, 2008 to honor the memory of Norman Rudich, who served on the Wesleyan faculty for his entire academic career—from 1952 until 1991. At the time of his death in December 2007, he had been absent from the Wesleyan campus for many years. Even so, a number of his colleagues remembered him with admiration and affection. We decided to hold a gathering at the Wasch Center to honor his memory. His daughter and son-in-law were able to be present for this occasion. Paul Schwaber of the College of Letters helped to organize the occasion and was among those to speak of his memories of Norman. We had about 25 people present for this occasion. This sort of memorial is clearly an appropriate activity for the Wasch Center.

The Wasch Center was used for many other occasions during the course of the year. The Physics Department used the building for its regular Thursday luncheon

meetings. The Quaker Meeting used the building every Sunday morning. (The Quaker Group has made a contribution to the Wasch Center in consideration of its use privilege.) In addition, the Wasch Center was the site of two Friday cocktail hours sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs and planned by an ad hoc committee of the faculty.

Uses of the building included the following:

Every Sunday: Quakers' meeting  
 Every Thursday in term, Physics Dept. lunch  
 First Monday of every month in term, Wasch Center Board meeting  
 10/03 information Session: Long Term Care, conducted by Human Resources  
 10/20 meeting: Radical Teachers  
 11/12 meeting: Literary Club  
 11/29 Wesleyan Colloquium for the Study of Sci. & Rel.  
 11/30 Bio. Dept. lunch  
 12/01 meeting: Radical Teachers  
 12/15 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 1/04 Jerome Long's Church meeting for black history month  
 1/18 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 1/25 meeting: Upward Bound  
 1/29 meeting: Upward Bound  
 2/01 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 2/7 luncheon in Barber Room, Jerome Long  
 2/08 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 2/09 Jerome Long's Church Retreat  
 2/12 meeting: Upward Bound  
 2/18 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 2/22 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 2/27 Retirement Seminar  
 3/03 Wesleyan Colloquium for the Study of Sci. & Rel.  
 3/06 meeting: Upward Bound  
 3/07 meeting: Joe Reed  
 3/23 Wesleyan Colloquium for the Study of Sci. & Rel.  
 4/11 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 4/19 meeting: Radical Teachers  
 4/21 Wesleyan Colloquium for the Study of Sci. & Rel.  
 4/24 MB&B Reception  
 4/28 Bio. Dept. Majors Focus Group  
 5/01 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
 5/07 Gathering in honor of Norman Rudich  
 5/08 Classical Studies Majors dinner  
 5/09 Bio. Dept. Graduate defense dinner  
 5/12 Wesleyan Colloquium for the Study of Sci. & Rel.  
 5/14 Classical Studies Majors dinner  
 5/16 dinner party for Basil Moore  
 5/22 Commencement Marsahll orientation meeting

6/11 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
6/13 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
6/14 meeting: Radical Teachers  
6/17 Jerome Long's Church meeting  
6/20 Jerome Long's Church meeting

### **Fund-raising and Financial Condition**

We have operated throughout the year within the operating budget assigned to us by the Office of Academic Affairs. We have included a request for an appropriation of \$1500 for next year to help support the mentoring program described above.

We have received several additional gifts to the Wasch Center during the course of this year to add to the amount of our endowment. University Relations has promised to provide us with a summary update on the current status our endowment fund.

### **Summary**

It has been an active and eventful year for the Wasch Center. Our programs of speakers has proved to be just the kind of attraction we hoped for in the design of the Center—bringing together many of the older members of our community to share interests and experiences and to stimulate ideas and plans for future activities. Our building has been well used—both by retired faculty members and others.

In February, the Director of the Center met with the Provost of Williams College and two of his retired colleagues. They came to Wesleyan for the purpose of looking at our facility and becoming acquainted with our programs. Their intention was to examine the feasibility of the installation of such a facility at Williams. It is gratifying to know that Wesleyan has been able to establish a Center which might serve as a model for other institutions in our area. All of this would not have been possible without the generous and visionary support of Susan and Bill Wasch for the establishment of this Center. We owe them both a lasting debt of gratitude.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karl E. Scheibe  
Director

July 7, 2008