



WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

WASCH CENTER FOR RETIRED FACULTY

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WHAT I LEARNED FROM TEACHING

By Al Turco

This article is a revision of a talk for the Wasch Center Lecture Series on February 1, 2017.

In *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907) its author wrote that “A teacher affects Eternity: he can never tell where his influence stops.” More than 100 years later, I would turn that into a question: can a teacher ever tell where his or her influence begins—if it does?

This talk will not revisit revered discussions of pedagogy such as Alfred North Whitehead’s *The Aims of Education*—a lecture from 1916 later incorporated into his still readable book of that title.

Nor will it deal with socio-political critiques of academia written nearly a century later—such as our own Richard Ohmann’s collection from 2003, *Politics of Knowledge: The Commercialization of the University, the Professions, and Print Cultures*.

So much for what my talk is not; what is it, then? Probably to your relief, I’m going to be anecdotal and personal—though not evading such profound questions as why, in my many years of teaching here, did I never have a student named Ralph? (His revenant hovers as a mystic presence over my ruminations.) I realize that I run the risk of errors, omissions and lapses resulting from this idiosyncratic approach—but here it is, anyway.

Let’s go back to the start of my Westory in the Fall of 1957, when a clipped letter from

the then Assistant Director of Admissions, John Hoy (class of ’55), reached a high-school senior in Cranston RI, its purpose being to “discourage” his application to Wesleyan University. I was that student and the goal of my young rage was to find some way—any way—to “make the bastards pay”—especially the one soon to become Wesleyan’s most celebrated Dean of Admissions ever—Jack Hoy.

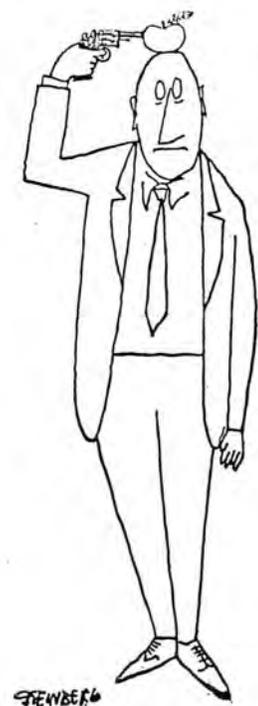
As it turned out, I matriculated at Brown University as a “townie,” and in 1962 graduated not just as a so-so *summa cum laude*, but as valedictorian of a combined class (including

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Pembrokers) of nearly 800 students—with Highest Honors in English and High Honors in music; also a James Manning Scholar, a Francis Wayland scholar, a junior Phi Beta, a Danforth Fellow; moreover, winner of the Preston Gurney Literary Prize, the Ratcliffe Hicks Premium in English, the Elizabeth Nicholson White Award in Music—all in all nine prizes, premiums, and awards listed on the University Commencement Program . . . Take *that*, Jack!

Then on to Harvard for five years of less than soul-stirring graduate work. And what more poetically apt revenge than, in the Fall of 1967, to land my first and last job—at none other than Wesleyan—and to persist for 43 gloriously tolerable years at the educational fount that had

ditched me a decade before? (I became Professor of English, emeritus, on July 1, 2009.) So I *did* make them pay—though not nearly enough.



Indignant as only a teenager can be indignant, I refused to realize at the time that Wesleyan's initial rejection made a kind of sense. It was the practice back then (maybe still is) to accept one graduating senior per secondary school, and the one who beat

me out at Cranston High was Kenneth Wing. He was Captain of the swim team, played varsity tennis, and unlike yours truly, excelled in a wide range of subjects—the hard sciences as well as the humanities, with grades a mere shade below mine. I was the egghead.

Since then there have been all sorts of

changes at Wesleyan and nearly everywhere else. Theoretically, the educated elite may welcome change, but in practice they—we—often don't. Not in academics only, old systems persist. When during my first year of grad school, the designation—Cambridge 38, Mass.—was changed to 02138, I was furious: who the hell was the US Post Office to tell me to deface an envelope with this wacky new thing called “zip code”? And much later on, verbal tics like “Have a good one,” “No problem,” and “Say what?” riled me to the point where I started using them myself.

When I first came to town there was no Exley Science Center, no Center for the Arts with its eleven modernist limestone buildings, no implacably vitreous Zelnick Pavilion linking the Patricelli '92 Theater to the Memorial Chapel. Not all the gaps were architectural. Issues of race, class, and gender? Hidden in plain sight. Diversity, inclusion, sensitivity, empowerment, and much else? Imposing intangibles not yet in focus. Instead, we settled for a murkily non-descript “Wesleyan ethos.” (Remember that?) And IT simply meant “it.”

I find it a troubling pleasure these days to walk past buildings and through spaces named in honor of luminaries who were youngish middle-aged men when I arrived fifty years ago: Kerr Lecture Hall (formerly Shanklin 107), Beckham Hall (a grand ballroom in Fayerweather), the Rosenbaum Squash Center. And *men* they all were.

What our late colleague, the irrepressible Bill Firshein, would describe as the “explosively wonderful joy” of the enrollment of female students as members of the freshman class, was not to take place until 1970. Before then, as Bill explained in an interview for the Wasch Newsletter, the student body “would disappear on Fridays because they were running up to Holyoke and Smith to see their girlfriends.

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But as soon as there were women here, the guys stuck around.” And why not? Now everyone could explode nearer home.

Though Wesleyan had, in fact, been coeducational to various limited degrees from 1872 through the graduating class of 1912, the first woman to be promoted to tenure from the regular teaching faculty was Geraldine Murphy of the English Department in 1964—so where is Murphy Hall? She must be content with a writing Prize in her honor—which is fine as far as it goes.

It was as far back as 1922 that the Smith Reading Room at Olin Library became the first space at Wesleyan named for a woman—Harriet Walker Smith, “a well-to-do Methodist widow from Springfield Massachusetts” (as Wesleyan’s website limns her) whose bequest became the nucleus of the library building fund.

More than this or that change in higher education down the years have been shifts in the view of what a university is and should do. We have come a long way from British poet laureate John Masefield’s triumphalist pronouncement, “There are few earthly things more splendid than a university,” to the even less modest local shibboleth: THIS IS WHY? Now what might that mean? *This* is why—but why is *this*? Why *is* this? *WHAT* is this? (I’ll have to ask the shade of Ralph the next time I don’t see him.)

If this—whatever it may be—ishypegleanedfromanadvertisingagency’s trove of zingers, the University could have saved a stash by reaching back to the Golden Arches to pilfer one of those McDonald’s one-liners from the 1950s. “Wesleyan: You Deserve a Break” OR “Wesleyan: Your Kind of Place” OR even “Wesleyan: Really good. And Still Only Fifteen Cents.” Combustible vocables surely, but what do *they* mean?

The really good fifteen cent solution would have been a joke even in the college’s foundational year of 1831—when annual tuition was all of thirty-six puissant dollars. But well before the present day we would have had to laugh out of the other side of our mouths. It was in the later 1970s that I happened upon a group of recent arrivals, disarrayed around a table at Downey House, the closest we had to a student union or faculty club at the time, sounding our school’s praises. Student #1: “Today a great lecture in psych” (no surprise there—Karl Scheibe was already in town). Student #2: “Big party at Alpha Delt this weekend!” #3: “Co-ed dorms? *Outtasight!!*” And then, after a tenacious pause, #4: “But still, nothing can be worth 7000 dollars.”

A knowing aunt had cautioned, before I lock-stepped into my first classroom in Fisk Hall, that I should take care to “give them a little more than they pay you for.” Little did I realize in the moment how easy that would be. To a fledgling “Instructor” who as an ABD pulled down the princely sum of \$8100, the job seemed (and in ways was) a sweet deal. Imagine: teaching only nine hours a week one semester and six the other, with practically no outside-of-class responsibilities, and twice the number of sabbaticals offered by comparable schools. Even without the touted “ethos,” it was Perfection—or something damned near it.

From the start I thought it would be great to earn a living by teaching in class books I had enjoyed reading outside of class—say since the age of ten. The downside of this prospect lay in the unsettling paradox that such reading tends, over time, to contract to texts being studied in one’s courses. In my own specialty of drama, what I have not delved into in more than adequate leisure is an embarrassment. Alas, poor Shakespeare!—I

THIS IS WHY?

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knew him—or some of his tragedies—very well, most of his comedies fairly well, and next to none of his “Histories” at all. There are canonical Western playwrights of whose dramas I’ve experienced only the two or three I’ve worked with in courses — Sophocles, Molière, Pirandello, Brecht and—more recently—Caryl Churchill. And then many others of whose work I’ve lucked into smidgens only—Plautus and Terence, Lope de Vega and Calderon, Middleton and Ford, Corneille and Racine, Goldoni and Beaumarchais—to pull up in the 18th century.

Homing in on the early modern period, I find my own favorites— Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw, O’Neill—adding up all in all to about seventy-five plays I know intimately—a vaguely dispiriting sum, even though dramatic literature was by no means the only thing that I taught. I used to read books, now I read *in* them . . . No problem.

A second illusion I had to walk back was belief that immersion in “Great Books,” authored by artists of conscience and conviction, would help bring about urgently needed reforms in society. I was like Herzog in Saul Bellow’s novel of that name, who recalls a time when he believed that, if only people read of injustice and inhumanity in books, they would be inspired to strive for a better world. Demand it, even!

Now if only that were so! Then *The Iliad* would have put war out of business, Ben Jonson’s *The Alchemist* would have put professional con artists out of business, Dickens’s *Bleak House* would have put the interminable venalities of the British Chancery Court—out of court. But what lasting effect did any of these famed cases-in-point, and so many others like them, have on the inhuman (or all too human) wrongs they exposed? The truth—unsuspected by me then—is that even

to those who love it, literature, however defined, is only of marginal interest in their lives— *unless* they are professing it, as I was. Granted that the artifacts I’ve noted fall under the long since contested rubric of the “canonical,” but there was not a whole lot else that made it on to college syllabi in those days.

Another pleasure that this beginner anticipated was sharing cherished works with wide-eyed acolytes. Yet that benign avuncular impulse often fails because most young adults don’t yet have the life experience to come fully to grips with them—and that’s not *their* fault. Take *When We Dead Awaken* (Henrik Ibsen’s self-described “Dramatic Epilogue” to his plays), or *The Iceman Cometh* (by a weary and defeated Eugene O’Neill), or the supersubtle late novels of Henry James! Is it any wonder that 20-year-olds more readily relate to the struggles of their peers, or even to those of the very old – think of King Lear at “four score and upward”—than to the mid-life trials of James’s addictively tentative heroes?

A sense of the pace of life receding, of the fading of possibilities that once seemed limitless—you have to have lived long enough for something to have gone radically wrong with your own life’s anticipated narrative, to have made mistakes that it seems too late to correct, in order to appreciate even the classics—perhaps them especially—for more than the purely aesthetic merits that are difficult enough to grasp in themselves.

Despite such lost illusions, I did find rewards in this inapposite line of work. Even in high school, if I read a book that went right through me, I felt as if I had written it; when I heard a piece of music which went right through me, I knew that I had composed it. Remnants of these transports never deserted me entirely. Why should I be bored teaching *Middlemarch*

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for the fifth time if I could be sure that, even the tenth time, my class would still be a first-night audience?

To adjust Henry Adams's conviction of the staying power of teachers, what best suggests where my own influence began (though admittedly not affecting eternity) are the careers of memorable students— often, though not always, those with the highest grades. I will mention a very few:

Bonnie Friedman, Class of '79, widely anthologized essayist; author of *Writing Past Dark* and other memoirs that include advice to aspiring writers.



Marc Shmuger '80, film producer; former Chairman of Universal Pictures, a position that he has described to me as “not as glamorous as it sounds.” He has since headed EuropaCorp film productions.



Jonathan Kalb '81, professor of Theater at Hunter College; winner twice of the George Jean Nathan Award for dramatic criticism. Interviewer, also twice, of Samuel Beckett at a Paris bar.



Sandy Aylesworth '02, sea Captain and environmentalist; veteran, among much else, of NOAA and the United States Antarctica Program.



Todd and Adam Stone '05, undifferentiated twins; now operating as the tactfully disgraceful risqué comedy team of Stone and Stone in and around NYC.



Add roughly twenty others out of a total of more than 5000. Each has remarked on my influence—if only in irrecoverable small talk—but a different sort of recognition is evident from one who sent this email: “You are an insensitive prick who has obviously never known love . . . Say what?”

There is a backstory to this fond farewell: the student had missed the first four classes of the term, but managed to persuade me, a lapsed skeptic, to re-admit him to the course. Then he missed the fifth and sixth meetings as well, sending a note explaining that his girlfriend had dumped him, and thanking me for my understanding (of what—why she had?).

I replied that the only thing I understood was that he was no longer in the course—which provoked that boorish parting shot. When during a post-retirement office clean-up I came across his turgid squiggle, I sent it back by snail mail with zip code (no longer wacky or new): “Dear Mark M.—I thought you might like to look at this again, now that you’ve had time to grow up.” No answer.

Oh, the tricks time plays on us! When a newly minted professor walks into a classroom, the freshmen look young—like our brothers and sisters lately grown up. Twenty-five years afterwards, the parents of the freshmen start to look young—and we might be their offspring's aunts and uncles. Add twenty-five years more to that

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and students seem like grandchildren who see us as inconceivably old. As William Bendix in the 1940s used to say on *The Life of Riley*: “What a revoltin’ development this is!” For the very young, time flies even faster. Those seemingly callow sophomores in your course, just ten years earlier, were little kids.

What are the problems that a neophyte in this calling must solve (or at least find a way around)? In one of my first days on the job I went to class with four short lyric poems to distribute, wringing my hands that they would provide enough material to get through the period. By the end of it, we had got through one of them—John Donne’s gorgeously morose “Twickenam Garden.”

What gives here? Few observers would guess that the main hazard for a scrupulous instructor is not under-preparation, but over-preparation that compels a class to run down deep invisible grooves. Its alluring alternative—winging it—can on occasion be a welcome relief from routine—but I had no routine at that point.

Another mistake a novice may fall into is to begin a class by asking members of a captive audience if they *liked* a book; that question inadvertently invites a negative response and overlooks, as well, that actively docile young minds may learn a lot from a book they did not like—or thought they didn’t. In my section of Humanities 101, one of the intransigently unconvinced waved his copy of the *Iliad* at the rest of us and pronounced it “Six hundred pages of garbage.” With a bland cringe I counseled: “Rather than putting your reaction in negative terms, might you express as an interesting problem for us to discuss?”

No complaint; though: at least he had *said* something. But what do you do with rows of blank silent faces in response to what was meant to be an inviting question? The imperturbable Phil Pomper knew how to deal with that: he would pause, pack his pipe, light up, and take a long slow draw before trying a different tack. But I didn’t have a pipe; and pretty soon, no one did. Nor did I have the knack of reformulating a question a half-dozen ways, in hope that someone across the room would take me up on one of them.

Before long the seasoned practitioner learns how to take a seemingly clueless or malapert remark and *go* somewhere with it. But for all that, you must know when to call a halt. At the end of a class meeting, do *not* try to summarize the key points, profound as they undoubtedly were, made in it. Students have stopped listening already; they want to get the hell out. Better just to say “We have to stop here” and turn the coda into a prelude for fresh faces next time.

Beyond shifts in standard practice, more daring moves are possible. Once I handed out copies of Gerard Manly Hopkins’s extraordinary sonnet, “The Windhover”—written in the traditional octave and sestet, employing a Petrarchan rhyme scheme—but seeming to break every rule with its intricately convoluted syntax, startling neologisms, and sonically unorthodox, even outrageous, meters—all deployed to express in mere words the “hovering” in flight of the falcon as a symbol of Christ. After reading the first three lines to the group, I let my sheet fall to the floor as if by accident. Instead of picking it up, I sprang

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the rest of the poem on them from memory. No one bothered to notice until a stalwart in the back row blurted out, first to me: “You didn’t read that!” And then to the class: “He just *knew* the whole thing!” The young man was Daniel Handler (’92)—now famous as Lemony Snicket, who started out as an infamous sophomore in a course that served as gateway to the English major.

Another favored tactic was my attempt, in the survey of Modern Drama, to undermine the stultifying routine of the typical in-class exam.

The mid-term that year included, among obstinately unmemorable essay questions, a clutch of cartoons by Thurber and others that students were asked to relate to a situation, character, or theme from plays we had read. This cue for free association resulted in such risible incongruity that an incredulous colleague from across the hall told me afterwards that never before had she walked past a room in which an exam was being taken—and heard students laughing out loud.

To move on now to the vexed topic of those notorious teacher evaluation forms filled out by undergrads, rumor and report have it that nearly half the faculty don’t read them—hardly a vote of confidence in the system. When I came up for pre-tenure renewal of contract in 1970, we all read them; and my 87 per cent positive total was described by Ihab Hassan as among the best he had ever seen. Nearer the century’s end, the same percentage might be taken as a sign of impending dementia; for I heard of candidates with scores ten points higher. Good for them, but the apparent surge in faculty quality may be the flip side of grade inflation for students. In the commodified university of which Dick Ohmann has written, both parties to a transaction must be satisfied: one hand washes the other.

I pitched my own reviews in 2009 when I retired from active service; but examples from the jejune “Rate My Professor” site, though aimed, usually at higher decibel level, at a multiyear swath of peers from a range of institutions, are not much different, in tone or range of opinion, from some I received as I headed for the exit door.

Here’s one: “[Turco is] absolutely the worst professor I have ever taken in a course (including high school). I cannot believe that this man is allowed to teach. He is extremely

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rude, inappropriate and ignorant. He is the reason why I dropped the English major. Save yourself and stay away from him.” (Now I can tell where *my* influence stopped.)

Let’s call that one *Who’s on First?* Next comes *What’s on Second?* “Professor Turco is highly underrated ... If students took the time to read the assigned plays and listen to his lectures (which, in point of fact, are nothing short of marvelous) they might derive some benefit from his class. He is also very approachable, kind and accommodating.”

“Rude, inappropriate and ignorant” or “Approachable, kind and accommodating”? You pays your money and you takes your choice! To complete the iconic anecdote, the answer to *Who’s on Third?* is “I don’t know”—but one thing’s for sure: No one’s home. Nearly as sure is a pervasive sense that decades-long efforts to refashion this well-intentioned system have ended up pleasing practically no one.

Lastly, I offer my necessarily inchoate take on the digital age, which for a quarter century after my arrival at Wesleyan, did not exist. But the new technology’s value as a source of information was evident long before I called it quits. Naturally I’d heard complaints about kids doing video games on their laptops during class; but did that really differ so much, except in the means used, from bygone eras when they doodled lasciviously in their three-ring binders?

[Pause] The more things change . . .

I once needed (in the ‘nineties) to find the location of a half-dozen lines from various English Romantic poems—Blake? Keats? Shelley? I remembered —“The light that never was, on sea or land”—but not where it came from. Instead of spending hours skittering through the Norton and other anthologies of poetry, I just googled the words, each from a different poem, and found all of them in what felt like seconds. Blake, Keats, Shelley—which one was it? In fact none of them: the line is from

Wordsworth’s “Elegiac Stanzas: Suggested by ‘A Picture of Peele Castle, In a Storm,’ Painted by Sir George Beaumont.” Now how could I have forgotten that?

E m b o l d e n e d further, I undertook (in the early ‘aughts) the more challenging ploy of assessing the reliability of Wikipedia for a few items that I actually *knew* something about: Elagabalus (a debauched teenage

Roman Emperor), Jelly Roll Morton, even penne arrabiata. They all checked out. *Eureka!* I felt as I imagined Archimedes did when he leapt from his bath.

While these heady feats date from the pre-K phase of the computer as time-saver, they were impressive enough to this greenhorn. But it was not all smiles. Near the close of my 43 years in the classroom, I assigned for the next meeting Shakespeare’s sonnet #73, the one on growing old that begins “That time of year thou may’st in me behold.” A hand went up:



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“What else ...?” “Nothing else” – I assured the hand’s owner. “But I’ve already read it,” he explained helpfully—pointing to the screen of his laptop—“while you were talking before.” Was this the ghost of Ralph again, divulging furtively that the sheer ease of reading on the web may trivialize the act of reading? “Why not try speaking the lines out loud?” I suggested, trying to sound helpful in turn. But the exchange was of no use beyond suggesting to me that belief in one’s own power to inspire is the last illusion to go.

Then there were the ethical problems, sometimes innocent, of web searches by students. Required to produce an essay on Ambrose Bierce’s splendidly surreal short story, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”? Just google the title and read a half dozen accounts of it. Take a paragraph from one, a couple of sentences from another, a few phrases from a third, link them by transitions of one’s own—and end up with a plagiarized text not recognized as such by its compositor because, for him or her, a paper is not an experiment in critical thinking but an exercise in information retrieval.

A more pervasive—and for today’s talk, final—problem was the effect of IT on student/faculty interaction. It used to be, in a time not long gone, that after winding up a class, I would beat a path to my office and leave the door open for whoever wanted to drop in. Even on dull days there would

be one or two. But as the years accumulated, instead of a conference between student and mentor there were more efficient e-mailed questions and answers—transactions made remotely, shrinking the chance for happily fortuitous surprise that may arise from personal contact. Should it become possible soon to become pregnant and produce a baby by computer, most parents-to-be are going to opt for the low-tech alternative.

Granted there have been collaborative remedies for such challenges—plus nearly unimaginable expansion of digital capabilities—that render my own account dated. Besides worse impediments, I speak from a traditional Humanities perspective with cases in point taken from English courses whose day, though not dead, is passing. But one thing should be apparent to all—with each new academic year, the educational experience, for better or worse, becomes less like it was when our generation was in school. As much as I miss teaching, especially the opportunity it offers for contact with the vitality of young people, I would not wish to return to the classroom except as a curious guest in a course taught by someone else.

And now, are you expecting a summation? No: look at the clock. We have to stop here. But for listening so amiably to this ancient avid crank, a thousand thanks from both me—and wherever his spirit may lurk—my invisible protégé, Ralph. . . . Have a good one!

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Necrology

FRED E. J. LINTON

Fred E. J. Linton, Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus died on September 2, 2017 at the age of 79. Fred was born in Italy to parents escaping to the United States from Hitler's Germany. He studied mathematics at Yale and received his PhD from Columbia, then came directly to Wesleyan as an assistant professor in 1963. He became a full professor in 1972 and continued to teach mathematics here until his retirement in 2006 after a total of 43 years at Wesleyan. Fred was an inspiring mentor who supervised seven PhD students at Wesleyan, including one of the first Wesleyan doctoral students.

Fred was a highly respected mathematician whose area of research focused on category theory. He participated in many scientific conferences over the years and his papers on functorial semantics were well known internationally. Fred also engaged deeply in other interests including international folk dancing, classical music, traveling, and Indian literature and philosophy. He and his wife, Barbara Mikolajewska, published twelve volumes of the Polish translation of the Sanskrit epic poem, the "Mahabharata."

At Fred's wishes, no memorial service is planned. Memorial contributions may be made to the Louis August Jonas Foundation (LAJF) and Camp Rising Sun (CRS), an international, full-scholarship leadership program, at 77 Bleecker St, C2-13, New York, NY, 10012 or contact@lajf.org

ARTHUR REINHOLD UPGREN

Arther Upgren, the John Monroe Van Vleck Professor of Astronomy, died on July 21, 2017 in Middletown. He was 83 years old. Art's interests were in stellar parallax and galactic structure luminosity of nearby stars. He had 285 scholarly publications.

Born and raised in Minneapolis, he developed his life-long interest in astronomy at an early age. He had the good fortune of having as a neighbor the distinguished astronomer Willem Jacob Luyten, who mentored and stimulated him in astronomical matters from an early age. Later, when Art was considering a graduate career in engineering, he consulted Luyten. The professor's prompt reply: "You get the heck out of engineering and into astronomy where you belong!" He did—and never regretted it.

Art went on to earn a master's degree at Michigan and a PhD from Case Western Reserve. After brief stints at Swarthmore, the U.S. Naval Observatory, and the University of South Florida, he was appointed to the Wesleyan faculty in 1966, taking over the stellar-galactic program. As he said, "It was a chance to do research pretty much of my own plan."

A few years later he took over the directorship of the Van Vleck Observatory from Thornton Page (he of the Rommel Mercedes). He served as the director of the observatory from 1973 to 1993. He held his endowed chair from 1982 until his retirement in 2000. Besides his research, Art was a champion in the fight against light pollution. He wrote a popular book, *The Turtle*

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and the Stars, which discusses the influence of light pollution on the breeding habits of leatherback turtles. Moreover, he was a long-time advocate for the reduction of light pollution on the Wesleyan campus. A memorial event is planned for later in the year.

RICHARD K. WINSLOW

Richard K. Winslow, John Spencer Camp Professor of Music, and Wesleyan Class of 1940, died on July 24, 2017 at the age of 99 in Antrim, New Hampshire.

Dick was one of the most influential faculty in any department during his 43 years on the faculty. Not only did he radically change the focus of the Music Department, he shaped its ethos with the introduction of ethnomusicology and experimental music into the curriculum and into the lives of students and faculty.

Dick graduated in the Wesleyan class of 1940 and, after service in the U.S. Navy and graduate work at Julliard (BM and MS), he joined the Wesleyan faculty in 1949 where he served for more than four decades as a scholar, composer, teacher, conductor, and poet. During the heady days of the Center for Advanced Studies, he nurtured and was in turn nurtured by such minds as Norman O. Brown, C.P. Snow, David MacAllester, David McClelland, John Cage, and others.

He was a prolific composer of operas: Gertrude Stein's *Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights*, T.S. Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes*, and Samuel

Beckett's *Endgame*. He also composed musicals along with numerous choral pieces and songs including the oratorio *Job*, a brilliant merging of intellect, tone and word. Dick had an intellectual curiosity and unlimited enthusiasm for exploration in the worlds of music and ideas. The most important influences in his life came from his encounters with John Cage, who opened up new worlds of music, sound, and silence for Dick and others among the faculty. And Dick was able to convince then president Vic Butterfield of the value of these new programs and courses in experimental music and ethnomusicology. He was in the vanguard of those who transformed the music department from what had once been a small liberal arts music department teaching "music appreciation" into one of the two or three best programs in the field of ethnomusicology.

His personality was marked by kindness, a wry sense of humor, and a probing, questioning mind. He had no enemies and didn't like the word. And he was the only person, so far as we know, who conducted all his performances—choral, orchestral, or ensemble—with a pencil.

In 2010 the Richard K. Winslow Chair in Music was established through a generous gift of the Kaplan Foundation.

A memorial concert is being planned for later in the fall.

The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning Fall 2017

In the fall semester the Institute will offer eight regular courses plus one all-day program. The courses are listed below together with times, dates, and costs. For more complete descriptions of the courses and the one-day event, cost and enrollment information, please visit www.wesleyan.edu/ will or call the Wasch Center at 860-685-2273.

RISE OF THE RIGHT: HITLER, MUSSOLINI, STALIN, AND THE AGE OF EXTREMISM

Erik Grimmer-Solem, Karl Scheibe, Richard Friswell, Giulio Gallarotti

Saturday, October 14 | 9 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Allbritton 311 | \$125



NEW YORK CITY IN THE 1940s

Sean McCann

Three Thursdays: November 2, 9, 16 | 6 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Allbritton 103 | \$80

DIEGO RIVERA, FRIDA KAHLO, AND EDSSEL FORD: TWO COMMUNISTS AND A TITAN OF CAPITALISM CONFRONT THE REALITIES OF THE MODERN INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE AND MAKE GREAT ART

Richard Voigt

Five Tuesdays: September 19, 26; October 3, 10, 17 | 6 P.M. – 8 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$170



AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE

Tanya Pohrt

Five Thursdays: October 1, 9, 26; November 2, 9, 16 | 6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$170



FROM SAINT-DOMINGUE TO HAITI: THE REVOLUTION THAT SHOOK THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1791-1804

Alex Dupuy

Three Wednesdays: October 11, 18, 25 | 5:30-7:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$100 | Class Limit: 15

EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMONERS THROUGH THE LENS OF WOODBLOCK PRINTS IN THE EDO PERIOD OF JAPAN

Keiji Shinohara

Five Mondays: September 18, 25; October 2, 9, 16 | 5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$170



UNDERSTANDING ISLAM: INTRODUCTION TO A MISUNDERSTOOD FAITH

Sami Aziz

Three Tuesdays: November 14, 28; December 5 | 6 P.M. – 8 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield

Room | \$100

UKULELE WORKSHOP WITH JUMPIN' JIM BELOFF

Jim Beloff

Three Thursdays: September 21, 28; October 5 | 6 P.M. - 8 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$75



INSIDE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: LAW & ORDER AND YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Hon. David Gold

Five Mondays: October 23, 30; November 6, 13, 20 | 5 P.M. – 7 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$170

News & Notes

from retired members of the faculty

As always, we are seeking short descriptions (150 words or fewer) of faculty members' research, scholarly writing, or other activities of interest to our colleagues. The deadline for our next issue is December 1, 2017.

PAULA PAIGE

I've been working away at my writing, and am now busy with a new, longer project. In the past year I have published two short stories on-line, in "Stirring: a Literary Magazine" and in "A Diverse Arts Project." Recently, a short piece of mine on Rome has appeared in *Artes Magazine* (also on-line). And, a short story that was first runner-up in Red Hen Press's Short Fiction Award in 2015 has just come out in Reed Magazine's 150th anniversary edition, published by the California State University at San Jose.



GEORGE PETERSSON

I have now been retired for 2 years and have moved to Philadelphia to be with my granddaughters. We have a beautiful condo in Haverford, PA. Margaret and I are enjoying the Philadelphia Orchestra, Philadelphia Opera, Pennsylvania Ballet, and a variety of theater available here. I am working part time at Temple doing research with undergraduates: <https://icms.cst.temple.edu/> click on [People] and then (my photo). My publications since retirement from Wesleyan: "Absolute configuration of iminimycin B, a new indolizidine alkaloid, from *Streptomyces griseus* OS-3601" Takuji

Nakashima, Rei Miyano, Hirotaka Matsuo, Masato Iwatsuki, Tatsuya Shirahata, Yoshinori Kobayashi, Kazuro Shiomi, George A. Petersson, Yoko Takahashi, Satoshi Omura, *Tetrahedron Letters* 57, 3284 (2016).

1. "Iminimycin A, the new iminium metabolite produced by *Streptomyces griseus* OS-3601" Takuji Nakashima, Rei Miyano, Masato Iwatsuki, Tatsuya Shirahata, Toru Kimura, Yukihiko Asami, Yoshinori Kobayashi, Kazuro Shiomi, George A. Petersson, Yoko Takahashi, and Satoshi Omura, *J. Antibiot.* 69, 611 (2016).

2. "A Density Functional for Core-Valence Correlation Energy" Duminda S. Ranasinghe, George A. Petersson, *J. Chem. Phys.* 143, 214111 (2015).

3. "Core-Core and Core-Valence Correlation Energy Benchmarks for Li through Ar" Duminda S. Ranasinghe, Michael J. Frisch, and George A. Petersson, *J. Chem. Phys.* 143, 214110 (2015).

George A. Petersson
Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Chemistry
Temple University
gpetersson@temple.edu
Institute for Computational Molecular
Science SERC 716 (035-07)
1925 N. 12th St. Philadelphia, PA 19122, USA



JERRY WENSINGER

Wensinger sez:

I attended the bi-annual Norman Douglas symposium in Bregenz, Austria, late last fall, where I (1) gave a talk – now published, I think -- on Douglas and Robert Frost whose first book *A Boy's Will* was welcomed into the world, in England, by Douglas, and whose 2nd, *North of Boston* (also first published in London) was passed on by Douglas for review to the amazing English WWII poet Edward Thomas (the war that killed him); (2) I presented, with a wee essay together with the by-this-time more productive co-editor, Michael Allen of Cologne, the publication of the letters between Nancy Cunard and Douglas, (3) We announced the impending publication of volume 9 of the *Selected Letters*, this one the correspondence between ND and Giuseppe Orioli (Florence publisher of D.H. Lawrence, et al., on whose intimate connection with Douglas I had published an article in 2010). (4) I then negotiated further ND business at the Vorarlberger Landesbibliothek with the sterling couple, celebrated British writer Jean Moorcroft Wilson and her biographer, critic, publisher husband Cecil Woolf (Virginia's nephew; yes, true).

I note as will others with a particular sadness the departure of Joe and Kit Reed from 41 Lawn Avenue and its neighboring house, our Wasch Center, to Los Angeles. Close, indeed an intimate friend of the Reeds since their arrival here in 1960 and for the first half and more of that fatal decade -- and before I removed to Higganum -- I was a constant and later frequent presence in that house, the Wesleyan Dean John and Verna Spaeths' former home. (To speculate here for a

moment, I reckon that that proximity had in the fullness of time more than a little to do with the ultimate selection of the Wasch locale -- and to venture a bit further: as 41 Lawn is likely to revert to WESU, I speculate on how fitting for all concerned the Spaeth-Reed homestead would be as 51's adjunct, as its dépendance or a somehow otherwise associated unit on campus. Just thinkin', folks. And by the time this can be read, the die may have been cast. . . . doch in der Zwischenzeit, wer weiss schon? Motto: strike before the iron gets hot, or before the cat gets out of the bag, or whatever.)

On the home front: one will have read about and seen that stupendous slice of the monster beech tree from the churchyard in Durham, as preserved and now on display by Prof. Joop Varekamp in the Science Center (or whatever it is now called in these days of purchasing everlasting fame as temporary celebrity top-bidder donor). At the time it was taken down, "my" smaller but probably older vast sugar maple also had to come down, a thing I loved and hugged and spoke to as the spirit and real owner of "my" property – same crew, same preservationist and Joop will, I hope, be on hand– maybe I can arrange for a "slice" for a supper table for eight or more. It was surely the greatest sugar maple anywhere around here and featured in Glenn What's-his-name's book, *Notable Trees of Connecticut*.

All this has intimately, if by indirection, to do with who I am and what I do these days. I find talking about myself rather weird now. Yet I do it. I stop now before I wander too far afield.



Wesleyan faculty, staff, students, and members of the community gathered on Foss Hill on Monday, August 21, 2017 to witness a partial solar eclipse.



NEW LEADERSHIP AT THE WASCH CENTER

New Leadership began July 1, 2017 the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty. **Alex Dupuy**, Professor of Sociology, Emeritus and **David Beveridge**, Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus are now Co-Directors of the Wasch Center. Karl Scheibe serves as Director Emeritus. In addition, Jessie Steele is our Administrative Assistant and the following are **Advisory Board Members:**



Richard Adelstein
Herbert Arnold
Allan Berlind
David Beveridge
Alex Dupuy
Rick Elphick
Peter M. Frenzel
Mike Lovell

Joyce Lowrie
Paula Paige
Pete Pringle
Richard Friswell
Andy Szegedy-Maszak
William K. Wasch
Jerry Wensinger
Duffy White

BROWN BAG SEMINARS

Inspired by Mike Lovell's sessions in the PAC some years ago, these are themed lunchtime sessions meeting bi-weekly. Participants must sign up, attend the seminars, and read a short paper. For more information please call Duffy White at 860-685-3126.

FALL 2017 LECTURE SERIES

Sept. 6, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Philip Pomper

"Putin's Rearview Mirror"

Sept. 20, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Susan Fusso

"Editing Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy: Mikhail Katkov and the Great Russian Novel"

Oct. 4, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Paula Paige

"An Older New Writer"

Oct. 19, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Ernest Lowrie

"Lord Chief Justice Mansfield: Dark Horse of the American Revolution"

Nov. 1, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Rob Rosenthal

"On the work of the Albritton Center"

Nov. 15, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Tony Infante

"A Biologist's Perspective on the Question: 'What is Life?'"

Nov. 29, 4:30 pm Butterfield Room

Alex Dupuy

"Haiti: a Critical Retrospective"

ELEVEN FACULTY MEMBERS ATTAIN EMERITUS STATUS

There were eleven retirements in 2016-2017. The following seven retirees attained emeritus status in 2017. These as well as those retired in 2016 were honored at a ceremony May 27, 2017 at the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty.

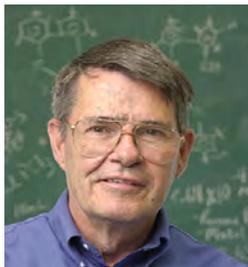
In 2017:



David Beveridge
*Joshua Boger University
Professor of the Sciences and
Mathematics, Professor of
Chemistry*



John Finn
Professor of Government



Albert Fry
*E.B. Nye Professor of
Chemistry*



Peter Patton
*Alan M. Dachs Professor of
Science and Professor of
Earth and Environmental
Sciences*



Rex Pratt
Beach Professor of Chemistry



Michael Roberts
*Robert Rich Professor of
Latin and Professor of
Classical Studies*



Ruth Striegel Weissman
*Walter A. Crowell University
Professor of the Social Sciences*

In 2016:

Abraham Adzenyah
Adjunct Professor of Music

Philip Bolton
Professor of Chemistry

Alex Dupuy
Professor of Sociology

Mark Slobin
Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music

FALL 2017 FILM SERIES

Theme: Friendship/Bonding

Tuesday, September 12, 3:00 pm

THE CHOSEN (1981); directed by Jeremy Kagan, based on Chaim Potok's bestselling book of the same title (1967)

Set in Brooklyn toward the end of the World War II, this movie introduces the lives of a modern orthodox Jewish teenager, the son of a Zionist, and another teenager who is the eldest son of a Hasidic Rebbe. They overcome their initial animosity toward each other and learn much about diverse aspects of Jewish culture, as well as their own cultural heritage. Maxmilian Schell, Rod Steiger, Robby Benson. 108 minutes.

Tuesday, October 10, 3:00 pm

THE THIRD MAN (1949); directed by Carol Reed and written by Graham Greene.

A British film noir, this movie takes place in post post-WWII Vienna. It focuses on an American (Joseph Cotton) who is offered a job in Vienna by his friend (Orson Welles). When the former arrives in Vienna, however, he is told that his friend is dead, and an investigation into what seems a suspicious death begins. 108 minutes.

Tuesday, November 14, 3:00 pm

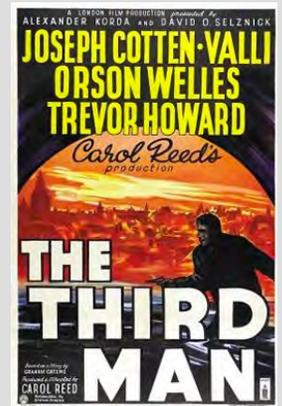
DRIVING MISS DAISY (1989); directed by Bruce Beresford, a film rendition of Alfred Uhry's play of the same title (1987)

An American comedy drama, this film captures the gradually developing relationship of a wealthy, independent-minded Jewish widow (Jessica Tandy) and her African American chauffeur (Morgan Freeman) against the shifting social climate of Atlanta, Georgia in 1948-1973. 100 minutes.

Tuesday, December 5, 3:00 pm

THE HELP (2011); directed, and screen play, by Tate Taylor

A period drama set in 1963 Mississippi, this movie tells a story of an aspiring writer (Emma Stone) who interviews "the help," black women who work for prominent white families in town. Beginning with only one woman (Viola Davis) who would agree to be her interviewee, she gradually bonds with other women, who have a lot to tell about their lives. 146 minutes.



WASCH CENTER ENDOWMENT

Since its beginnings the Wasch Center has received 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 contributions, in full or in part, to be credited to the Wasch Center. One-time gifts in any amount are, of course, always welcome. If you have questions, you can contact Mark Davis (ext. 3660), Director of Planned Giving for the University.



Wasch Center for Retired Faculty
Wesleyan University
51 Lawn Avenue
Middletown CT 06459
jsteele@wesleyan.edu
(860) 685-3005

Editorial Board of the Wasch Center Newsletter

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