

THE SENIOR COLLEGE MESSENGER

Issue 2: December, 2021

This is an organ for members of Senior College to submit short articles that share news, opinions, reactions to the program and anything that they feel will be of general interest. Its regular appearance will allow for an exchange of opinion of topics of interest to the members.

There have been many changes at the University of Toronto during the years that we have been its members. We invite you to reminisce and reflect on these and share your observations.

Please submit contributions to the editor, Ed Barbeau at barbeau@math.utoronto.ca

THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE WEBSITE

I did not attend the 16th Annual Senior College Symposium on April 14, 2021. However, this experience was not lost to me. Thanks to the work of Vennese Croasdaile and Jonathan Dostrovsky, a record of the activities of the College – its publications and programs – is accessible on our website www.seniorcollege.utoronto.ca. In particular, I enjoyed listening to the talks of the Symposium on Roots of Violence. The speakers were Richard Tremblay, Marc Tutters, Linda and Michael Hutcheon, Beatrice Jauregui, Steve Reicher and Izzeldin Abuelaish. Many dimensions of the topic were explored, and I was particularly interested in the presentation of Linda and Michael Hutcheon on the staging of Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* in Vienna in 1783 and recently in Toronto by the Canadian Opera Company, where the contrasting productions reflected the sensibilities of the age. (Ed Barbeau)

AN ACADEMIC FREEDOM ISSUE IN FLORIDA

The recent controversy in the United States about recent voting legislation passed by Republican state legislatures has turned up a troubling academic situation in Florida. A coalition of groups in that state are suing the government over legislation alleged to limit the ability of Black and Hispanic voters to cast ballots. When they engaged expert witnesses, Daniel Smith, Michael McDonald and Sharon Wright Austin, the University of Florida refused permission for these professors to testify. It cited a possible “conflict of interest to the executive branch of the State of Florida”. Was the university administration under pressure from the state?

I was surprised that the professors seemed to require permission from their university to testify within the area of their expertise, let alone that the university could refuse permission. This is a recent development; it seems that the university wants to avoid an accusation of conflict of interest (presumably because of public funding it might receive). Searching the names of the three professors on the web will take you, in particular, to a text of the civil action suit launched by the professors against the University of Florida Board of Trustees on November 5; in

particular, it notes that the university has similarly refused permission on other occasions.

There are many justifications for public funding of universities. One is to ensure that those who design and execute public policy have access to informed, disinterested, professional advice. Accordingly, universities should welcome opportunities for their faculty members to contribute to the public debate, and leave the sort of questions that trouble the University of Florida to the courts to adjudicate.

To a Canadian mind, this whiff of government interference brings up memories of Frank Underhill, Eugene Forsey and Leopold Infeld, all of whom in their day found administrations unwilling to stand as a bulwark for their academic freedom. (Ed Barbeau)

REFLECTIONS ON SENIOR COLLEGE

A year ago, to celebrate ten years of Senior College, its Founding Fellows were invited to reflect on what the College has meant to them. The plan was to insert their essays in an issue of the Bulletin that never appeared. We will present them in the next few issues of the Messenger, in part as an introduction to some of our senior colleagues.

Mary Jane Ashley, Dalla Lana School of Public Health: *Ten years and counting.* In making an investment, the investor hopes for at least a modest return and is pleased if yields are better than expected. As a founding Fellow, I am a delighted investor in Senior College. The rewards I have realized in the College's first ten years have far exceeded my initial expectations. It is among the best investments I have ever made.

Senior College offers a rich array of academic programs – weekly lectures, colloquia with lists of readings, book club and an annual symposium. I have been able to regularly access most or parts of all offerings. I have been stimulated, challenged, provoked, and entertained, and I look forward with anticipation to each week's events. Although the possibility of social benefits was not among my reasons for joining, the opportunities provided for personal interactions with both long-standing and new acquaintances have been a pleasant bonus.

I owe a deep vote of gratitude to the founding Principal, Peter Russell, and those founding Fellows who assisted him in making Senior College a reality. Thank you also to colleagues who step up to the plate and continue to make everything happen. After thirty years as a faculty member and administrator, my participation in Senior College in retirement helps me continue to feel meaningfully engaged in the University. Good wishes to all for the next ten years and counting!

Trevor Levere, IHPST: Senior College created a community of alert, active and interesting people — it has been a weekly delight. In the days when we could meet really rather than virtually, lunch guaranteed good conversation and new learning. The talks ranged widely over the arts, sciences and social sciences, and they always prove stimulating, as does the discussion afterwards. Organized outings

have been fascinating, and the one tour that I went on, to Haida Gwaii, organized by Joe Whitney, was a rewarding introduction to a land that I knew almost nothing about. I am very grateful to those who created Senior College, with Peter Russell as a prime mover.

Phil Sullivan, Institute for Aerospace Studies: Senior College is not just a social club for retired U of T academic; it contributes to the University of Toronto's primary missions in scholarship and education in a very special way. As such it plays a key role in fostering my post-retirement scholarly interests.

I was privileged to be a member of the faculty of the Institute for Aerospace Studies from 1965 to 2003, but a major limitation was that, being remote from the College Street campus, I was not easily able to pursue academic interests outside my engineering discipline. In my later years I participated in the administration of UTFA as a Councillor and member of its executive. On reflection I think I was largely motivated for the opportunities it provided for learning from academics in other disciplines. Also, at one stage, I seriously contemplated enrolling as a mature student in the B.A. programme focussing on literature and history. But Senior College very effectively provides the opportunity to explore my academic interests through its lecture series, its annual symposium, and the colloquia series.

IN MEMORIAM

The Senior College website maintains an In Memoriam page through which we remember our late colleagues and celebrate their lives.

Ian MacLean Campbell (1928 - November 14, 2021)

Professor of Life Sciences, University of Toronto, Scarborough College

Philip Seeman (February 8, 1934 - January 9, 2021)

Professor of Pharmacology

Louis Siminovitch (May 1, 1920 - April 6, 2021)

University Professor of Molecular Genetics

Calendar of Coming Events

All events are currently held online using Zoom. Unless indicated otherwise, Wednesday speakers are from the University of Toronto. Events marked with **F** are for fellows and external fellows. Registration a few days ahead is necessary for each event. This can be done in response to a weekly email from Senior College to its members that describes the events or by going on line at www.seniorcollege.utoronto.ca.

Weekly Talks: Wednesdays, 2-4 pm

No talks are scheduled for December. They will be resumed on January 5, 2022.

Colloquium: Thursdays, 2-4 pm (F)

December 9: Chair - Daphne Maurer
 Manipulating Gender: Who, Why and When?

Book Club: Mondays, 2-4 pm (F)

December 6: Host - Linda Hutcheon; Chair - Peter Russell
 Young Trudeau, 1919-1944: Son of Quebec, Father of Canada (by Max & Monique Nemni)

The authors will be present as special guests.

Coffee hours: Thursdays, 2-3 pm

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The program will resume in the New Year. Present plans are for a hybrid model, where the talks will be given in person, but can be accessed live through a Zoom link. The dues will be adjusted to reflect this arrangement by Council in December, upon which a notice will be sent out to Fellows.

Summer 2022 Wednesday Lecture Series on ZOOM.

Now that CAUT has formally lifted its censure of the University of Toronto, the Program Committee is considering setting up a summer ZOOM lecture series by offcampus speakers who postponed their talks because of the censure or who cancelled for other reasons. Here are the speakers with their topics.

Brendon Gurd, Kenesiology & Health Studies, Queen's:
 Can exercise be bad for you? The facts about exercise non-responders.

Keith Baer, Molecular Biology, UC Davis:
 Molecular biology and living longer, healthier lives.

Barrington Walker, History, Wilfrid Laurier:
 Blackness, violence and modern Canada.

David Moffett, Criminology, Ottawa:
 Immigration and criminalization in Canada.

Tom Tieku, Political Science, Western:
 The African Union.

Carl James, Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community & Diaspora, York:
 How did we get to now? Systemic inequality, racism and the culture of exclusion in Canada.

We would very much like to have your input. Would you be interested in attending some or all of these talks from early May to Mid June. Please let Linda Hutcheon know at l.hutcheon@utoronto.ca.