

The Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff

# Emeritus News

Fall 2022

## ► My Corner

By Barbara Mallette

*"In Mrs. Blackstone's later years, however, the garden had gotten away from her-which appears to every garden when the gardener gets busy or gets old or just stops paying attention Even the most mannerly and well-disciplined plants, left to their own device, grow unkempt and disorderly. They wander off in whatever directions suits them, putting out a stray bud here and an unruly branch there and dropping seeds or poking roots and tubers into their neighbors' beds."*

- Susan Wittig Albert (*The Darling Dahlias and the Red Hot Poker*, 2022, pp. 6-7)



Rain has finally come our way after a much-too-dry July and beginning of August. The ground seemed to protest the aridness with cracks appearing in the soil and with grass browning earlier than usual. I can relate to Mrs. Blackstone and her unruly gardens. Weeds appeared to defy

the dryness. Attempts to pull weeds were unsuccessful as the ground was too hard-packed – like concrete. So, we trim the few weeds that are eyesores and promise that weeding will commence when the ground is softer and more pliable. And we refrained from digging holes until the rain arrived. And arrived it has! We've recorded over 2 ½ inches the past two days.



Some folks can't identify with our attraction for work outside. We do seem somewhat hell-bent on growing a variety of plants, so that flowers prevail throughout spring and summer for not only our enjoyment but also as fodder for area birds and insects. The dahlias seem to take forever to break through the soil and form buds. Suddenly, the buds open

and beautiful flowers appear in July. Fortunately, these plants continue to bloom all summer long. The fragility of hibiscus blossoms surprises us each August. A heavy rain bruises the blossoms, resulting in serious wilting. But the

dinner plate pink flowers are just too hard to resist. As September approaches, the sedum buds open to display a purplish flower cluster. About the same time, we find that our car brushes the coleus plants that serve as sentries to the garage. The small plantings in May appeared to have

turned into a gigantic collection of traditional and new cultivars of coleus. Soon we will replace summer planters with an array of fall mums. Trying not to hang onto summer by our fingertips, we are noticing subtle changes that are harbingers of autumn. Goldenrod and some leaf colors capture the onset of fall.



Evening temperatures continue to drop and the heavy evening dews force us to fit any mowing in the early afternoon. Transition to fall can be challenging. We try to attack a long To Do List without getting hurt while enjoying the shift in seasons. And we look forward with glee to our upcoming Emeritus Group fall luncheon.

Hope you can join us!



*"The morning had dawned clear and cold, with a crispness that hinted at the end of summer."*

- George R.R. Martin

Please email Dawn Hunt at [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) or call 716-673-3456 if you are interested in receiving the Emeritus newsletter by email.

## ► Additional Information

- **Homecoming Weekend 2022, October 14-16, 2022**

Homecoming offers a number of events that might interest emeritus faculty and professionals, including the dedication of Houghton Hall. Consult the dedicated website for more information: [https://events.fredonia.edu/event/homecoming\\_weekend\\_1212](https://events.fredonia.edu/event/homecoming_weekend_1212)

- **Events @Fredonia**

The University is open for business, with a full calendar of athletic, arts and academic events. For details, please visit <https://events.fredonia.edu/>

- **Steve and Mary Rees**

In late June, the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation honored Steve and Mary Rees with the prestigious George B. Weaver Footprints Award. Revitalize Dunkirk has been successful because of the efforts of Steve and Mary. Read about their work at <https://www.observertoday.com/opinion/the-observers-view/2022/06/honors-couple-moves-city-forward/>

## ► Newsbit

Are we that famous?

In 1970 the bold concrete forms of I. M. Pei & Partners' design for Maytum Hall was at the forefront of architectural design in America. On a visit to Amman, Jordan, in May 2022, I spotted a downtown landmark building (maybe a couple years old) that looked a bit familiar.... Maytum Hall's surface is enriched by the poured concrete form-boards' textures; in Amman it is also a concrete structure—though surfaced with limestone blocks with a "hammered" finish, common in Jordan. But I suspect Maytum Hall is not the direct ancestor: Pei's style, in the past 50 years, has become well known throughout the world; we were "just" a bellwether!

By: Daniel Reiff



## ► Update Your Contact Information

- ◆ Have you moved, changed your email address or phone number? If so, please let us know so we can update the Emeritus database which is used for the quarterly newsletter and informational mailings. If you could help to reduce mailing costs by receiving the newsletter by email, please let us know. You may email [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) or call 716-673-3456.

**► Emeritus Group October Luncheon**



**Clarion Hotel  
30 Lake Shore Drive East  
Dunkirk, NY  
Thursday, October 13, 2022**

Please reserve **Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>** for our Emeriti Luncheon at the Clarion Hotel.

We will meet and mingle over lemonade at 11:30 a.m.— lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

Please send your reservations **and** food choice **by September 27th** (Note: The Clarion has indicated this much lead time is needed to ensure availability of the entrees).

**Make your check payable to Emeritus Group.** Please note the price for each entrée.

**Choice of Luncheon Entree**

All entrees include small dessert and coffee or lemonade.

**Chicken Caesar Salad**

Char-Broiled Boneless Chicken Breast served on a bed of romaine lettuce, Caesar Dressing, Parmesan Cheese and adorned with Croutons  
\$21.00

**Or**

**Beef on Weck**

Slow roasted choice of sirloin served with au jus  
\$19.00

**Or**

**Vegetable Biryani**

Mixed vegetables, Indian spices cooked with basmati rice with raita served with naan  
\$19.00



Send your meal reservation to:

Barbara Mallette  
PO Box 328  
Cassadaga, NY 14718

We look forward to seeing you.  
—Barbara and Doug

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Chicken Caesar Salad - \$21 per person

\_\_\_ Chicken Caesar Salad - \$21 per person

\_\_\_ Beef on Weck - \$19 per person

\_\_\_ Beef on Weck - \$19 per person

\_\_\_ Vegetable Biryani - \$19 per person

\_\_\_ Vegetable Biryani - \$19 per person

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## ► Spotlight—Dr. Stephen H. Kolison, Jr.

By Barbara Mallette and Dr. Stephen H. Kolison, Jr.



With the investiture of Dr. Stephen H. Kolison, Jr. as Fredonia's fourteenth President on September 9<sup>th</sup>, featuring Dr. Kolison in the "Spotlight" section of this issue of the *Emeritus News* seems fitting. What appears here is a summary of my interview with Dr. Kolison. His official biography appears on the Investiture page of the University's website.

*"There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized peace."*

- Woodrow Wilson

Firestone maintains the largest rubber tree plantation in Liberia consisting of over one million acres. Because Dr. Kolison's father worked for Firestone, the family lived on the plantation. Dr. Kolison was born here. With access to thousands of trees, it should come as no surprise that Dr. Kolison would pursue study of forestry once he grew to appreciate the importance of forests to the environment, ecology, economy, and natural beauty. After completing an initial degree in forestry in his homeland, the draw to deepen his studies was just too great. Because Liberian textbooks covered topics pertaining to the United States, Dr. Kolison was attracted to America and its world-renowned institutions of higher education. He considered several U.S. universities. One of his professors at the University of Liberia had studied at Iowa State University and highly recommended its programs. Attending a university that was known to a professor he trusted was important to Dr. Kolison even though Iowa State University was 5,600 miles from Liberia.

In elementary school in Liberia, Dr. Kolison recalled a lesson about winter's cold temperatures in climates other than those in his nation. An open freezer door with hands gripping ice triggered the children's imagination of what snow was like. This hands-on lesson was no preparation for Iowan winters. His first year in Iowa provided Dr. Kolison with first-hand experience with snow. The cold and snow seemed brutal to a young man from West Africa. Dr. Kolison thought he was prepared for winter but noted that he had to buy a winter coat in Iowa in November 1984. His time in Iowa and subsequent years in Wisconsin laid the groundwork for adaptation to winters in Western New York. Dr. Kolison remarked that Wisconsin's grey skies, bitter cold, and snow accumulations parallel Fredonia winters.

Dr. Kolison fully expected to complete his undergraduate degree at the University of Liberia and then initially pursue a rubber forest estates management position with Firestone before seeking graduate education. However, in his senior year, a research project and observation of the transformational power of higher education opened his eyes to a new option, teaching in higher education. Urged by his father who was an educator, he sought employment with the University of Liberia as a Teaching Assistant. At the end of this first year with the University of Liberia, he was awarded a grant to assist him in pursuing a Master's Degree in forestry. After completing his Master's Degree, he realized that his goal to teach in higher education would be better secured with a doctorate under his belt. He therefore went to Iowa State University to complete his doctorate thinking he would return to Liberia and be appointed as an Assistant Professor at the University of Liberia. That was not to be. About a year before completing his doctorate, Liberia was plunged deeply into one of the bloodiest civil wars the African continent had seen. He realized that he would not be able to return home. He says "I felt deep sadness and I now had no home to which I would return. And, fortunately, America gave me a home". Dr. Kolison pursued his goal of teaching in higher education passionately, and secured a teaching position at Tuskegee University in Alabama. Here he coordinated the Forest Resources Program while achieving Full Professorship. The hot weather in Montgomery was a welcomed change and more closely resembled that of Dr. Kolison's homeland. His move to Montgomery changed his life.

Dr. Kolison is married to Valeria (Val) Rose Kolison, a native of Alabama and a woman he first saw while he was a student at Iowa State University. He said he first took a look at her while he was standing at the window of his residence hall room. "What a beautiful woman, I said to myself". They were reunited in Montgomery, Alabama and have been married for over 28 years. They have three adult children. Even with a busy schedule, Dr. Kolison tries to telephone or talk in person, if possible, with each of his children every day.

## ► Spotlight *continued*—Dr. Stephen H. Kolison, Jr.

Dr. Kolison comes to Fredonia with extensive experience in higher education (see <https://www.fredonia.edu/about-offices/president/president-kolison-bio> for details about his teaching and higher education experience). What is most impressive about Dr. Kolison's preparedness for a university presidency is his completion of four postdoctoral certificates from Harvard University: Negotiations and Leadership (Harvard Law School); Crisis Leadership in Higher Education (John F. Kennedy School of Government); Educational Management (Graduate School of Education); and Risk Communication Challenges (Center for Risk Analysis). These certificates helped Dr. Kolison deal with the give-and-take required of a Chief School Officer – hiring, salary adjustments and a number of items. Because Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are more susceptible to crises, the certificate in Crisis Leadership in Higher Education shaped how Dr. Kolison approaches crisis situations. Being anticipatory helps him think differently and be better positioned to respond to challenges. The traditions and shared governance in IHEs become critical in dealing with risk communication. How to navigate communication in a crisis can be difficult. Dr. Kolison views the postdoctoral certificates as tools that are extremely relevant to the roles of higher education leaders. The real case studies employed in these Harvard's postdoctoral certificate programs required him to study the cases, analyze them, and react to the findings. In doing so, Dr. Kolison had a better sense of the responsibilities and challenges faced by administration in IHEs.



Dr. Kolison arrived at Fredonia in August 2020. He has faced a number of challenges since his arrival, one of which is new to Fredonia's long history, namely, COVID-19. Dr. Kolison states that managing the University during the pandemic was a learning experience. How to keep the campus safe while still fulfilling our mission was paramount in his eyes. In retrospect, he notes that Fredonia has enjoyed success in keeping the campus open and operational. Our first on-site graduation ceremony in two years took place in May; in-person classes and activities will resume this fall.

Declining enrollment is another challenge for Fredonia. This decline is at a critical stage; its impact on the economy of the village, county, and area must be considered. The University must address attracting students to our campus and retaining them to program completion. New programs to draw students and programs in areas of high demand should be considered. Dr. Kolison believes that examination of the entire recruitment and retention structures will be necessary to combat declining enrollment.

A third challenge faced by Dr. Kolison's presidency is the structural deficit. Presently, payroll and compensation exceed Fredonia's financial planning revenue (tuition plus operational support funds from the state). Aware that payroll changes affect people and their families, Dr. Kolison is looking for ways to operate the campus differently. He is well aware that these challenges did not appear overnight. Deliberate efforts and patience will be necessary to tackle these challenges. Dr. Kolison acknowledges that he prefers to be transparent about Fredonia's challenges than to be quiet about them. An informed campus is his goal. Dr. Kolison shared that initially he wondered if his investiture should be canceled, considering the fiscal climate and recovery from COVID. But with the help of his team, Dr. Kolison decided to embrace the tradition of formal inauguration with a tempered ceremony that would carry a message of Fredonia's academic power and its importance in students' access to higher education.

Juggling Presidential responsibilities, community commitments, family and self-interests can be a tough balancing act. Dr. Kolison is mindful of the difficulty of this balance and the reality of how much time is needed to be a caring and thoughtful leader. Taking care of himself is an important piece in this process and he credits his "great team" in helping him remember that sometimes he "needs to be gone" (to refuel). Dr. Kolison tries to have dinner each evening with Val to unwind and talk. He likes to cook and has several signature dishes: tomato chicken, collard greens, and a fried bean dish. But his okra dish is a family favorite with Val and the children requesting seconds. Although cooking allows Dr. Kolison to be creative, he has not had much cooking time since coming to Fredonia.

*"Be transparent, share your authority with your team, and include your people in making decisions. I have found that groups of people will work very hard with you when they feel empowered. That is what a leader's chief responsibility is—to empower his or her people."*

- Elsa Núñez President, Eastern Connecticut State University

► **Spotlight *continued***—Dr. Stephen H. Kolison, Jr.

Dr. Kolison enjoys hiking. Although he has less time to hike now, he recalls former hikes in Liberia, Wisconsin and Tennessee where he experienced a variety of landscapes from tropical rain forests to tall grasslands. Dr. Kolison finds observing nature as relaxing. Therefore, one shouldn't be surprised that Dr. Kolison also likes to bike. Someday he would love to bike the Hawaiian Islands with his sons who also are fond of bicycling. In the meantime, Dr. Kolison has been working with Dunkirk and Fredonia mayors to establish a slow roll bike ride between the two communities that will showcase our campus.

Being involved in the community is important in his role as University President. He is a member of the Brooks-TLC Hospital Board and is fully committed to attracting medical personnel to our area and to the continuation of quality medical care to area residents as well as our students.

Looking ahead seems to be second nature to Dr. Kolison. In 2026, Fredonia will be celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. He views this milestone to be a significant cause to celebrate, as the University has had an enormous impact on the area, state, and world. That is, the quality of life has improved for the people in our region and beyond. Folks are better today because of their Fredonia experience. He recommends that we look beyond 200 years to gauge Fredonia's continued impact and draw attention to long-term commitments. Dr. Kolison will be working with the College Foundation on bicentennial funding that will involve investments to renew Fredonia's achievement of its mission.

On December 16, 1826, Benjamin W. Edwards rode into Mexican controlled Nacogdoches, Texas and declared himself ruler of the Republic of Fredonia. Know as the Fredonian Rebellion, Edwards and others were premature in their attempts to free Texas from Mexico which caused their efforts to fail. Dr. Kolison is much more worldly than the Edwards brothers and their band of renegades. He has no plans for a Fredonia Republic as we celebrate our bicentennial. However, he does aspire to rekindle the flame that makes Fredonia a jewel in SUNY's crown – Adelante (onward)!

*"I often have said that to be a college president, you need a thick skin, a good sense of humor, and nerves like sewer pipes."*

- Gordon Gee, President, Western Virginia University



## ► In Memoriam of Campus Employees

Dr. Robert "Bob" Dean Klassen passed away on May 21, 2022.

Dr. Klassen served as Chair of Theatre and Dance from 1984 until 1999, and he was a Professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance until his retirement in 2000.

All funeral arrangements were held privately and have been provided for by the Morse Funeral Home, 51 Highland Avenue, Brocton, NY

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Dr. Charles Spiro Vishnia Telly passed away on May 30, 2022.

Dr. Telly earned a doctorate from the University of Arizona, and joined the State University of New York at Fredonia to teach law and business for more than 27 years until he retired in 2017.

A ceremony of life service was held in late June.

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Dr. Christine (Chris) Givner passed away on June 6, 2022.

Dr. Givner joined the State University of New York at Fredonia in 2004 and was the Founding Dean of the College of Education, where she served until her retirement in 2020. Her work led to SUNY Fredonia's College of Education being the first institution in NYS to be fully accredited under the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), having met or exceeded all six standards. As a long-serving Dean in Education, her voice and guidance was well respected across NYS and beyond with accrediting bodies, SUNY Central Administration and the Deans and Directors of Colleges of Education across the SUNY system.

A celebration of Dr. Givner's life will be held September 24, 2022 at 10:00 AM at SUNY Fredonia, Science Center or virtually. Please RSVP to Lani Delallo at [Delallofamily@gmail.com](mailto:Delallofamily@gmail.com) or (585)507-0010.

Mr. Gilbert "Gil" Seekings passed away on June 29, 2022.

Mr. Seekings joined the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1986. He was a Plant Utilities Engineer in Facilities Services, HVAC until his retirement in 2010.

Memorial contributions can be made in honor of Gil to Westfield Cat Rescue, 59 East Main Street, Westfield, NY 14787; Fellowship Church, 148 West Main Street, Brocton, NY 14716; or to the Lake Shore Humane Society, 431 Chestnut Street, Dunkirk, NY 14048.

To leave a note for the family or share a story, log on to <https://themorsefuneralhome.com/>

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Dr. Bruce Klonsky passed away on July 6, 2022.

Dr. Klonsky joined the State University of New York at Fredonia as a faculty member in 1979 and was promoted to Professor in 1992. As a Professor in the Department of Psychology, his research focused on leadership, social development, attributions in sport, and gender differences in sport. Dr. Klonsky often included his students in his research, and he contributed to the campus and community in countless ways over his 43 years of service.

A celebration of Dr. Klonsky's life is scheduled for September 30, 2022 at SUNY Fredonia, Williams Center, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM., providing time to gather, enjoy light refreshments, and share memories that highlight his unique personality and impactful life. If you wish to attend, please email [Psychology.Department@fredonia.edu](mailto:Psychology.Department@fredonia.edu) to advise if you wish to attend in-person or virtually and please designate in the subject line, "Bruce Klonsky September Tribute".