



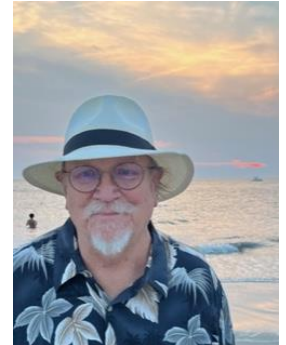
THE ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Towson University Retired Faculty Association

The Advocate - President's Message – Fall 2024

Fall is my favorite time of year. I love the anticipation of the coming cold. Our family begins the fall season by inviting friends over for Pumpkin Stew, a savory beef stew cooked and served inside a large pumpkin (recipe available upon request). The stew picks up the sweet flavor of the pumpkin, especially as we scoop out some of the pumpkin meat as we serve the stew.

Of course, fall has its drawbacks too. We had four large oak trees on our property when we moved to Takoma Park in 1989. The *Washington Post* ran an article shortly after we moved that said that a mature oak has around 700,000 leaves. We figured we had between 2.1 and 2.8 million leaves that had to be raked!



This fall is a season of changes for TURFA too. As we all know, we must make the transition from the state sponsored retiree prescription plan to Medicare Part D prescription plans. There's more on this change in another article in this issue of *The Advocate*. The benefits offered by the university for TURFA members are also changing. Towson University began offering a package of benefits for all TU retirees (faculty and staff) last summer. While this is a good thing, it does change TURFA's relationship with the university because we had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that guaranteed some of these benefits only for TURFA members. The TURFA Executive Committee formed a group to explore and enumerate benefits for TURFA. We expect to reexamine the MOU in the spring.

The Advocate itself is changing as well. The TURFA Executive Committee voted to change the name of this publication to *TURFA Matters* beginning with the spring 2025 edition. We feel that the new name better represents what this publication does for two reasons. First it emphasizes that retired faculty are important to the institution. We do matter. Second, it reports on people and events and information that matter to retired faculty. TURFA will continue to advocate for retired faculty benefits and privileges. We will still represent your interests to the University and to the State. We hope you will embrace the idea that *TURFA Matters*

May you enjoy the beauty of the fall and may all your changes be for the good!
Jim Robert, President of TURFA 2024-2025

You MUST Choose a Medicare Part D Prescription Plan by December 31, 2024

By Jim Roberts

Millions of retirees use Medicare Part D to meet their prescription needs. Part D may not be as good as our state prescription plan, but it will provide you with a way to get the prescriptions you need. But focus on the positives: staying informed, helping TURFA put pressure on the legislature, and shopping wisely. The chart below has important deadlines and will hopefully reduce your worries.



<https://my.viabenefits.com/Maryland>

The Maryland General Assembly eliminated the state prescription plans for Maryland state retirees in a section buried deep within the Budget Reconciliation and Finance Act of 2011. Retirees weren't notified until 2018. An injunction kept our prescription plans in place until July 2023, when it was dissolved by the court. But as you probably know, things have drastically changed.

The state prescription plan for retirees (the Maryland SilverScript Employer plan) will end for all of us on December 31, 2024. You should have heard about these changes in letters and other communications from the Maryland Department of Budget and Management Employee Benefits Division and their contractor, Via Benefits. You must select a new Medicare Part D prescription plan or face having no prescription coverage beginning in 2025. The process of getting a new Medicare Part D prescription plan is straightforward if you follow these steps:

1. Get your information together. Make a list of all your prescriptions (drug name, dosage, and refill amounts) and identify the names and addresses of up to three pharmacies you plan to use. Also have your Medicare card handy.
2. Create an account on the Via Benefits website (<https://my.viabenefits.com/Maryland>) and a personal profile. Via Benefits is the state contractor that will help you review and select a new prescription plan.
3. Enter your prescriptions and pharmacy information into the Via Benefits website.
4. Review the Medicare Part D prescription plans on the Via Benefits website that are available in your Zip Code.
5. Make an appointment with a Via Benefits advisor on the Via Benefits website or by calling 855-556-4419 (TTY: 711) Monday through Friday, 8 am to 7 pm Eastern Time. All appointments will be by phone.
6. Work with your Via Benefits advisor during your appointment to evaluate and select the best plan for you, given the prescriptions you take.

More details about this process were in the handout distributed during the TURFA Fall Forum.

- Download a copy or watch the Fall Forum video on TURFA's website <https://www.towson.edu/retiredfaculty/> under the **Advocacy** heading.

Remember

- You **MUST** select a new Medicare Part prescription plan by December 31, 2024
- This change does **NOT** affect any state medical, dental, and other benefits you select during the STATE OF MARYLAND open enrollment
- If you currently have a family plan through the state retiree prescription program, you **MUST** get a **separate** Medicare Part D plan for each Medicare-eligible member of your family. Medicare does not offer family plans.

- You MUST get a Medicare Part D plan through Via Benefits and you must maintain a group health insurance policy through the state of Maryland to gain access to the financial assistance programs offered by the state, if you are eligible for these programs.

There is some confusion about the open enrollment periods for obtaining health care benefits this year in Maryland. Here are the different open enrollment periods for different situations:

Special open enrollment period for state retirees moving from the state prescription plan for retirees to Medicare Part D prescription plans. This is the open enrollment period for the transition to Part D.	October 1 – December 31
Regular open enrollment period for selecting Medicare plans if you are not currently on the State prescription plan for retirees. These include Medicare Advantage plans and Medigap supplemental health insurance if you are NOT using state sponsored plans. This is the publicly advertised open enrollment for Medicare.	October 15 – December 7
Open enrollment for Maryland’s state sponsored plans including health insurance, dental insurance, and health care spending accounts. This is the period that applies to current employees and retirees. It does NOT apply to the transition to Part D.	October 15 – November 8

Campus Parking is Now Free for All Retirees

By Janet DeLany

TURFA is pleased that on September 1, 2024, Towson University extended free parking on campus to all TU faculty and staff who are state of Maryland retirees. Parking Services has been very helpful for those who need additional guidance to complete the process.

- Parking Services main website: <https://www.towson.edu/parking>
- To apply for the annual free parking permit: <https://tuflexport0616.t2hosted.com/Account/Portal>
- Contact for further questions: 410-704-7275 (PARK) or upark@towson.edu

Over the next few months, TURFA will work with Towson University administration to request that the free parking benefit be extended to those TURFA members who do not meet the criteria of TU faculty or staff who are state of Maryland retirees. This includes those associate TURFA members who are friends or family of full TURFA members, and those who formerly were adjunct faculty but did not retire as full-time faculty or staff from TU. This is an issue that may be resolved with a new MOU (see below).

Note: Retirees who are **teaching as adjuncts** need to pay for parking at the minimum parking rate for faculty and staff: \$80.00 per year.

Outreach Committee

By Jane Wolfson, Chair

The TU Career Center is interested in working with TURFA members. They are working on developing a Mentoring program that could link students to Alumni, members of the community and potentially TURFA members. They are very aware of the skills we have and our interest in helping students as they make progress in their careers. One way in which

they specifically asked for our help was in donating our 'professional attire' to their "SuiTUp Professional Attire Closet" which provides appropriate attire for students going on interviews, etc. Since clothing is heavy, we were thinking that it might work well if a set day, time and location could be arranged where clothing could be dropped off from a car. Let me know if you would donate professional clothing that way and I will try to make it happen.

As we did last year, a college-by-college list of TURFA members along with emails was shared with the respective Deans who appreciated the information. Don't be surprised if you get emails from your college.

Keep Up with TURFA Events on Our Website

All events listed in email and other communications are also here: <https://www.towson.edu/retiredfaculty/events.html>
Please bookmark for future reference.

Benefits and Privileges Committee News, Plus a New Member Benefit

By Martha Siegel, Chair

Current TURFA Benefits and Privileges Committee members include Ron Matlon, Maggie Reitz, and (chair) Martha Siegel. Before going deeper into committee activity, let me share some exciting, healthy news:

Through Ron Matlon's work with Campus Recreation, they've offered *all* TURFA members a complimentary membership to Burdick Hall facilities, regardless of whether they retired from state service, are staff or retiree TURFA members, adjuncts, or in a special category like spouses. Email Dave Stewart, assistant director, membership and guest services, at dstewart@towson.edu to set up your account and membership. Learn more about Campus Recreation and facilities here: <https://www.towson.edu/studentlife/activities/recreation/campusrec/>

As for other news from the committee, many of our members may have noticed retiree benefits for all Towson University retirees (not just TURFA members) have been changed substantially over the past year. VP Steve Jones and Associate VP HR Jennifer Stano announced the changes this summer. Many of the new benefits for qualified faculty and staff retirees are similar to those granted to TURFA members (in our 2021 MOU with the University) and granted to Emeriti Faculty (in other documents). You may reference these online at <https://www.towson.edu/hr/retirees.html>

To be sure we have retained the benefits we already had, to make them more precise to enable our members to better access them, and perhaps to request new ones, the Benefits and Privileges Committee has been investigating the full scope of these over the fall semester. As we collect more specific information, we will post the guidelines on our website. For now, members can use the general Retirees Benefits page for information or contact a committee member.

Finally, we have been working with TU Office of Human Resources, Office of Technology Services, and the OneCard office over the past two months to find ways to ensure that all TURFA members (from full retirees from state service, plus adjuncts, spouses, and others) have the maximum benefits the university is allowed to provide.

Our committee welcomes new members. **Please contact Martha Siegel at msiegel@towson.edu**, if you are interested, or with any suggestions, queries, or complaints about benefits and privileges.

Social Security Retirement Changes Coming in 2024

See this link for some information about changes coming to retirement from The Motley Fool:
<https://www.fool.com/retirement/2024/10/26/3-social-security-changes-retirees-need-to-know-ab/>

Travel Tips for 2025: Big Changes Coming

By Michael Bachman, with Assistance from AI



2025 brings notable changes that people should keep in mind when planning trips. From new rules for visiting Europe to updates in travel safety programs, here's what you need to know for a safe and smooth journey. Dig deeper by visiting AARP or other websites that offer travel information.

Changes in Travel to Europe and the UK

Starting in 2025, travelers from the United States will need authorization to enter European Union countries, including most of the Schengen Area, will need an ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System) visa waiver to enter, which is similar to the U.S. ESTA process. While this isn't a visa, it's an online application that requires a fee, and it's best to apply at least 72 hours before your flight. The UK is expected to require similar online authorization by the end of 2025. Quick Tips:

- Apply early for ETIAS and UK travel authorization.
- Make sure your passport has at least six months of validity.
- Check whether your destination requires biometric data; some airports now offer facial recognition options.

For more information on ETIAS, visit [ETIAS for Europe](#) and keep an eye on the UK's [Visit Britain](#) for updates on travel requirements. Changes are also happening in top destinations like Venice, Machu Picchu, Barcelona, and others.

Enroll in the State Department's STEP Program for Country-by-Country Suggestions and Alerts

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) by the U.S. Department of State is now upgraded, and anyone who was previously enrolled must re-register on the new platform. STEP provides safety updates and keeps you connected to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate in case of an emergency. You'll get email alerts of any problems such as demonstrations, crime, disease outbreaks, coups, consular services, and urgent information. You can even register your hotel and contact information. These things are especially important your travels take you to the Middle East, Africa, or Mexico. Quick Tips:

- Re-enroll in the new STEP system before your next trip. Enroll here <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>
- Ensure your profile is up-to-date with trip details, especially for extended stays.

January Educators Summit Welcomes TURFA Members

By Michael Bachman

The annual Educators Summit (aka "January Conference") organized by the TU Faculty Center for Excellence (FACET) is coming up January 15th so mark your calendars. This year's program focuses on artificial intelligence, which will celebrate its second birthday. Released November 30, 2022, by OpenAI, ChatGPT is now one of the most influential and well-know players in the AI revolution. Or evolution. The jury's out, but things look really bright according to an insider source.

TURFA members can register for the summit here:

<https://www.towson.edu/provost/initiatives/faculty-center/events/educators-summit/>

Information on the **keynote** speaker: <https://eddiewatson.net/>



Focus on Maggie Reitz

By Florence Newman

Maggie Reitz discovered her life's calling early on, when she volunteered as a Candy Striper in the orthopedic unit at Andrews Air Force Base Malcolm Grow Hospital. Here, she observed the treatment of soldiers who had been POWs in the Vietnam War and had sustained a variety of injuries from torture. During this experience, her early interest in solving puzzles merged with interests in human health and justice. Reitz says that she didn't pursue a nursing career because she didn't like the idea of giving people shots. Instead, she chose and majored in occupational therapy, a new undergraduate program at Towson State University (as it was named back then), and became a member of its second graduating class. In OT, Reitz could put her puzzle-solving skills fully to work.



Occupational therapy, as one of Reitz's teachers told her, encompasses "anything you do from when you get up in the morning to when you go to sleep at night." As a field of study, it emerged around the time of the first World War and expanded in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars, when soldiers sometimes returned from the front with serious physical and psychological trauma. The focus was on returning soldiers' abilities to resume their lives at home.

Today, while soldiers are still recipients of occupational therapy, according to Reitz, occupational therapists work with people of all ages in a variety of settings including schools and the community. Occupational therapy also helps people learn the best ways to care for themselves, to organize objects and actions efficiently, and to prepare themselves physically and mentally to return to their previous daily activities. The psychological aspects of OT particularly fascinated Reitz, who observed that giving a patient a puzzle to solve kept them standing at a table longer than they would have otherwise.

Reitz went on to earn her master's in occupational therapy at Towson and later completed her doctorate in Health Education at College Park. She worked her way up the academic hierarchy in TU's College of Health Sciences, first as an adjunct, then as a lecturer, then visiting faculty, then tenure-track, and finally tenured professor. While many of us tend to think of occupational therapy in a clinical setting, such as a hospital or rehabilitation center, Reitz focused her research on the role of OT in the community, an area of study that not only addresses the health issues of individuals in their homes and communities, but also the needs of specific populations in society, including through advocacy.

As much as Dr. Reitz loved teaching and scholarship, her problem-solving talents led to her appointment as chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, a position she held for fifteen years, with brief stints as Acting Chair of Kinesiology, and then Acting Chair of Health Science. In 2014, she was persuaded to "put her hat in the ring" for the position of Vice Provost, the role in which many members of TURFA best know her. Being an administrator allowed Reitz to put to use her skills at solving problems and building teams. She missed seeing students as often, however, so she really enjoyed that aspect of her job as Interim Vice President for Student Affairs. Two years ago, Dr. Reitz joined the ranks of faculty retirees herself, opening up more time for her family and her leisure pursuits.



Dr. Reitz met her husband of over forty years, Fred, whose background is in Computer Science, in 1979, when a high school friend of his, who had also completed her undergraduate internship with Maggie at a psychiatric institution in Washington, DC introduced them. Observing that most computer scientists at the time were male, and that most of her OT coworkers were female, Reitz decided it would be beneficial for the groups to get together. However else that plan worked out, Maggie and Fred got together and now have a daughter, Jessica, and two granddaughters, Lily and Rose.

Like many retirees, Reitz and her husband have been able at last to indulge their wanderlust, taking road trips up and down the East Coast, traveling this fall to both Maine and the Skyline Drive to view the colorful foliage, and this past spring, visiting Portugal. Reitz has also spent more time on two of her favorite pastimes: gardening and cooking. “I’ve been able to plan things out more,” says the inveterate planner, “so I can prepare more sophisticated meals.”



Reflecting on how she had approached the challenges and opportunities of retirement, Reitz noted that while faculty may experience negative pressures of the job that spur them toward retiring—Middle States accreditation, for example, or the prospect of writing innumerable student recommendations every spring—they also need to be thinking ahead, planning for the future on the basis both of things they have always wanted to do and of lifetime pursuits, things they have always loved doing.

Thinking ahead also involves an acknowledgment of inevitable change. “I have watched friends and family—people eight to ten years older than I am—go through this. All had a plan,” and have modified their activities, when needed, as they aged. Occupational therapy, says Reitz, is all about abilities and adaptation, a perspective that can make the stages of life after retirement a “positive transition.”

As for Maggie Reitz herself, her plan includes making the most of the present with traveling, gardening, and cooking while she still can, knowing that one day those activities may need to be scaled back. Nor has she abandoned her life-long love of problem-solving: “I have,” she says with satisfaction, “gotten my grandchildren interested in jigsaw puzzles.”



From the TU Newsroom in Case You Missed It



Towson University

**TU recognized as No. 15
public university in
America**

Wall Street Journal names TU Maryland's No. 1
public university, national leader in social mobility
and value

SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

<https://www.towson.edu/news/articles/2024/wsj-washingtonmonthly-rankings.html>

And No. 1 in Maryland!

See more TU Newsroom articles here: <https://www.towson.edu/news/>

Suggestions for Future TURFA Activities and Events?

Contact Tom Maronick at maronick@verizon.net with your ideas. He's also our esteemed Thirsty Thursdays organizer—the next one will be January 23, so come on by. Specifics to follow in other emailings.

TURFA's Oral History Project Adds Four More!

By Ron Matlon and Peg Benner

On July 11, 2024, Co-chairs Ron Matlon and Peg Benner met with five retired faculty members from the College of Health Professions to conduct four interviews for the growing collection: Charlotte Exner and Marcie Weinstein – Occupational Therapy; Ray Stinar - Kinesiology; Liz Keenan - Nursing; and Jack Osman – Health Science.

The interviews were conducted in a conference-room-turned-studio in the TU ADMIN building. Faithful professional videographers Penny Forester and John Dean set up, operated, and monitored an amazing array of lighting and sound equipment, while Ron Matlon conducted the interviews, and Peg Benner took notes for any further research needed from the Cook Library Archives. The work began at 8:30 a.m. and concluded at 6:00 p.m., with a scheduled short break for lunch.



Peg Benner and Ron Matlon

One interesting fact from the July 11 taping: When each interviewee was asked why he or she decided to come to Towson University, all replied that it felt like they were becoming party of “a family.”

Penny and John are now in the process of editing the raw video footage and adding pictures and other visual material that will enhance the references made in the videos and blend them into a thorough professional product.

Editing should be completed by early fall, and these four video interviews should be ready for posting on the Cook Library Special Collections website. These four new interviews will bring the total number of Oral History Project video interviews to a total of fifteen completed so far!



Videographers Penny Forster and John Dean

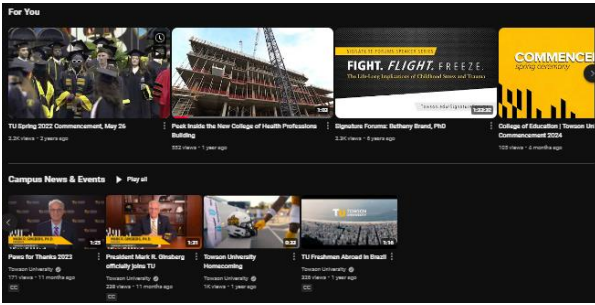
Many thanks to Don Forester, who imagined and started the Oral History Project in 2017, and to Dean Lisa Plowfield of CHP for her generous contribution to this year's interviews. It would be an understatement to say that the fifteen video interviews conducted so far create an invaluable addition to both Towson University's history and a unique opportunity for TU to build an exciting future with the full perspective that the past can provide. Stay tuned for the next OHP videos to begin this fall!

The entire collection of Oral History Project interviews can be accessed at the following link:

<https://archives.towson.edu/collections/towson-university-retired-faculty-association-oral-history-project/towson-university-retired-faculty-association-oral-history-project-collection>

Check Out and Subscribe to Towson University's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@towsonuniversity>



Find More Things to Do—ComeBack@TU

- Master TU Calendar: <https://www.towson.edu/calendars/index.html>
- COFAC Events: <https://www.towson.edu/cofac/departments/music/events/index.html>
- CLA Events: <https://www.towson.edu/cla/events/index.html>
- TU Today: <https://tutoday.towson.edu/%20>
- Osher Institute: <https://www.towson.edu/campus/partnerships-research/osher/index.html>

A Growing Campus: Visit Virtually or In Person with Your New Free Parking Privileges

The New College of Health Professions building highlighted the start of the fall semester's campus facility changes. Check out the video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk2d-bpzgBM&ab_channel=TowsonUniversity

Go inside for a virtual tour:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKHjHd9oxqk&ab_channel=TowsonUniversity

Additional articles on the new CHP building:

<https://www.towson.edu/news/2024/celebrating-new-health-professions-building.html>

<https://www.towson.edu/campus/landmarks/health-professions.html>



For more Fall 2024 campus facilities news, visit <https://www.towson.edu/news/2024/whats-new-2024.html>

Tech Tip

By Michael Bachman

There's often confusion between NetID, TU ID, and Duo. Quick explanation before your Tech Tip:

- **NetID:** Your account with TU and all the services that you get with it. It's the first part of your TU email before the @, e.g., mbachman

- **TU ID:** The numeric digits on your TU OneCard (e.g. 01345678)
- **Duo code:** For added security and to help verify your identity, TU adopted "two-factor authentication" meaning you need two forms of ID (think cashing a check). When you login with your NetID and password, you may be verified by Duo. Most people use their phone. The Duo code is the four-digit code you're asked to enter.

Don't let your TU NetID password expire—especially if you expect to be away from the area where you may not have easy access to help. You'll get an alert every few days starting **14** days before your password expires. Be sure it's from TU, and if in doubt, forward it to phishing@towson.edu for verification.

If you need more help resetting your password or have other questions, call the OTS Faculty/Staff Help Center or Student Computing Services at 410-704-5151 or submit a TechHelp Service Request at <https://techhelp.towson.edu>

TURFA Tidbits, Biking Club News, Film Club, Non-Fiction Book Club, Thirsty Thursdays, Provost's Brunch, and More

Keep your eyes out for more information in the next TURFA Matters and the monthly President's Message and your email for information and events. We've devoted a lot of this issue to prescription drug benefit information and space was tight. These clubs are doing fantastic work and having great times. Join them sometime!

TURFA Executive Committee

- **President:** Jim Roberts, Department of Political Science
- **President-elect:** Michael Bachman, Office of Technology Services and Department of Computer and Information Sciences
- **Past President:** Annette Chappell, College of Liberal Arts
- **Treasurer:** Rodney Stump, Department of Marketing
- **Secretary:** Janet DeLany, Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science
- **Representative-at-Large:** Patricia Alt, Department of Health Sciences
- **Representative-at-Large:** Maggie Reitz, Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science
- **Program and Events Committee Chair:** Thomas Maronick, Department of Marketing
- **Benefits and Privileges Committee Chair:** Martha Siegel, Department of Mathematics
- **Outreach Committee Chair:** Jane Wolfson, Environmental Science and Studies Program
- **Oral History Project Committee Chair:** Ronald Matlon, Mass Communication and Communication Studies, and Margaret 'Peg' Benner, Department of English

Additional Members in Leadership Roles

- **Academic Senate Representative:** Martha Siegel, Department of Mathematics
- **Academic Senate Alternate:** Dietra Wengert, Department of Health Science
- **FACET Advisory Board Representative:** Michael Bachman, Office of Technology Services and Department of Computer and Information Science
- **Online Information Co-Coordinators:** Margaret 'Peg' Benner, Department of English and Howard Kaplon, Department of Mathematics
- **Production team for *TURFA Matters* (formerly *The Advocate*):** Nikki Austin, Department of Nursing, and Meg Algren, Department of Mass Communication and Communication Studies
- **Legislative Affairs:** Tracy Miller, Department of Early Childhood Education and Academic Advising
- **CLA Commemorative Moments Representative:** Jo-Ann Pilardi, Department of Philosophy and Women Studies Program