

# Retirees'

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# News

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## The 39th President's Reception for Retirees

The next President's Reception is set for Saturday, April 9, at 2:00 pm in Marshall McLuhan Hall in University Centre on the Fort Garry campus. President David Barnard will be in attendance. He will talk about recent developments and priorities for the university.



*Bruce Johnston and other retirees at 18th President's Reception*

The featured speakers at the reception will be several 3MT graduate students.

### 3MT

Is it possible to compress months, even years, of research into a three-minute presentation?

This is the objective of the Three Minute Thesis (3MT<sup>®</sup>), a research communication competition developed by the University of Queensland in Australia in 2008. It has since spread around the world.

A 3MT competition has been held at the University of Manitoba for the past several years, with the winner going on to compete at regional and, perhaps, national events.

Three-minute presentations from some of the graduate students participating in the 2016 U of M competition will be featured at the Saturday, April 9,

President's Reception.

The 2016 competition started in early February when 36 graduate students participated in one of four elimination rounds. Twelve graduate students were chosen to advance to the final competition event, which was held Thursday, February 25, in St. John's College.

3MT<sup>®</sup> challenges students to consolidate their ideas and research discoveries so they can be presented concisely to a non-specialist audience – which is exactly the kind of audience attending the President's Reception.

The first 3MT was held at Queensland with 160 students competing. Enthusiasm for the 3MT concept grew, first to universities in, and near Australia with a competition that involved graduate students from 33 universities. By 2011 the first 3MT

competitions were held in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K.

Why is the University of Manitoba participating in 3MT? Participation is part of an overall strategy to promote our graduate students, to promote research at the university, and to connect with the wider community. If you are interested in a preview of 3MT presentations from past years, you can go the Faculty of Graduate Studies website and look for a link to the 3MT page, or click on the "Event" button, to find a page of youtube videos.

You are asked to **RSVP** to Lynn Bohonos, Learning and Organizational Development by **Monday, March 28**; you may telephone 204 474 9124, or send her an email: [lynn.bohonos@umanitoba.ca](mailto:lynn.bohonos@umanitoba.ca).

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## From the Editor

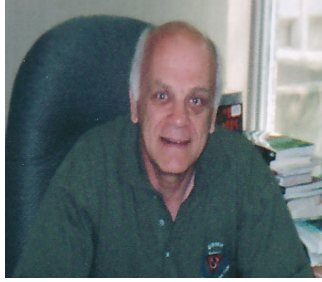
Whew! It was a long wait! Within weeks of my arrival at the University of Manitoba as an assistant professor in the Film Studies Program, I was included at the last minute in a meeting, called by Vice-President Gilson, to “finalize plans for a Performing Arts Centre.” I was asked to provide input on possible spaces for film exhibition and filmmaking. A theatre was already in the plans. The Centre was to be built behind UMSU. We all left the meeting with the feeling that construction would begin soon. This meeting was in September of 1974. Yes, 1974!

Perhaps ten years or so after this I was playing golf in a foursome with UM fundraiser Jim Daly when he announced that the university had just gotten a huge donation from the Conklin family meant to be used for a new campus theatre. To be erected forthwith. That UM theatre, to be called the Conklin Theatre, has finally opened. It is a wonderful space, far superior to The Black Hole Theatre that has somehow sufficed as an acting space for student productions for over forty years. As Professor George Toles has said: it marks the end of “decades of wilting hopes and thwarted expectations.”

Professor Chris Johnson, who came here in the early 1980s, spent his career tirelessly working to get a replacement for The Black Hole. Many plans were advanced by Professor Johnson, some nearly finalized. Among them were the refurbishment of the Great Hall at University College, the construction of a free-standing building in the grassy area between the Law School and UC, and the procurement of The Gas Station Theatre in Osborne Village.

The sensational new Conklin Theatre is located on the third floor of the former Tache Residence. It will officially open with the premier of *Doubtful House*, a new play by award-winning playwright Ian Ross, a graduate of the Theatre Program. Chris Johnson will direct the play – two months after his retirement and forty years after he first dreamed of a legitimate university theatre space. He writes about his experiences on page three: *Retired, Not Entirely*.

Gene Walz, Professor of Film Studies  
(retired, obviously, but not entirely)



## President's Message

The issue of university-sponsored email addresses for retirees has been a hot topic for the past four months. And, by the time you read this most, if not all, of you will have made the transition to the new environment.

In the fall of 2015, the university said that it would be proceeding with the decommissioning of its CC email system for a number of reasons including stability, security and audit requirements. This decommissioning would have the effect altering the environment and status of university-sponsored email addresses for all retirees. In its first iteration, the university appeared to suggest that all retiree email addresses would be terminated for all retirees except those holding post-retirement appointments.

As soon as word of this possibility emerged, I was on the receiving end of emails from retirees potentially affected. In addition, other retirees sent emails directly to senior administration. Accordingly, university administration became well aware that the cancellation of this “perk” had the potential of generating a great deal of ill-will. This was especially impressed upon Gregory Juliano, associate vice-president for human resources at a November meeting of the UMRA executive that he attended; UMRA is part of his portfolio.

This pushback appears to have had some effect in that the university will now continue to provide university-sponsored email addresses for retirees. The degree to which retirees will be affected will be determined by “employment status.” Academic staff with emeritus appointments are least affected by this change because their appointments are lifetime appointments with employment status. At the other end of the spectrum are support staff members who will qualify for a university-sponsored email address but one without a forwarding service.

To some extent, the termination of university-sponsored email addresses for retirees should not be a major issue. A review of the UMRA membership list shows that just over a third of members are using their university email address; that is, a majority of members are already using some other service. However, the retirees who do use their university email address are passionate about retaining this “perk.”



Ed Unrah,  
UMRA President

# Retired? Not Entirely

## The Long Goodbye

By Chris Johnson

Like many of my colleagues, I retired at the end of December, taking advantage of the Voluntary Early Retirement Plan (VERP), in my case after 35 years working with the Theatre Program in the Department of English, Film, and Theatre.

After decades of lobbying, campaigning, and generally making a nuisance of myself trying to get the University to build a replacement for the aptly named Black Hole Theatre in the basement of University College, I was damned if I was going to walk away without working at least once in the University's new John J. Conklin Theatre in the Tache Hall arts complex. Hence my current situation, an incompletely retired Senior Scholar directing the premiere production of Ian Ross' new play, *Doubtful House*, with which the Theatre Program will officially open the new space March 15. I'm living a strange mixture of the old and the new, endings and beginnings, and I'm also experiencing that mixture of joy and sadness often attendant on the sort of long goodbye I'm going through.

The play itself is a mixture of beginnings and endings, a mystery love story arising from Ian's experience growing up Metis in Kinostota on the shores of the northern end of Lake Manitoba. Characters from two old cultures come together to try to build a new home, but their attempts to put together a new beginning and to create a place where both can feel at home are haunted by a secret from the past. *Doubtful House* (a real Manitoba place name) is an epic about our collective beginning, its hopes and its ghosts.



Ian Ross

same time, writing the new play which we commissioned with money from Arts Endowment and Creative Works. This is the first

time Ian and I have had the opportunity to work together as playwright and director, and what a joy that is!

Ian is one of our most distinguished alumni; he won the Governor General's Award for Drama in 1997 for his play, *fareWel*, which premiered at the Prairie Theatre Exchange the previous year. He is perhaps even better known for creating and performing Joe from Winnipeg, an aboriginal character whose humorous but wise commentaries were broadcast by CBC Radio over a period of several years early in the 2000s; there are three published "Joe from Winnipeg" books. At the same time that working with Ian as a colleague is new, I have old but vivid memories of Ian as one of that year's "back row boys", with Mike Bell and Angus Kohm, both now also working actors, playwrights, screenwriters, and film-makers. They all kibitzed from the back row in University College 244. Ian likes to tell the story of how I "tricked" him into writing his first play by offering the class a choice of writing projects: a 30 page director's notebook, a 20 page actor's notebook, or 10 pages of dramatic dialogue. Little did he know at the time that the latter option, the one he chose, was by far the most difficult assignment.

As of February 9 when I wrote this piece, we had not yet moved our full rehearsals into the new space, but I had conducted some classes in the new scene-shop during my last academic term, I'd sat in the audience for our "soft opening" (a production of Will Eno's *Middletown* directed by my colleague, George Toles), and I'd used the new stage space and auditorium for coaching sessions with the young aboriginal woman playing Ian's story-telling character in *Doubtful House*. Sitting in the back row of the beautiful, almost empty new space, encouraging the student to project her voice up to me, I was filled with a mixture of elation and sadness, elation that the University had finally taken seriously this aspect of its responsibility and that Theatre had at last achieved the space it had so long awaited and worked for, and sadness that it had taken



Chris Johnson

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The problem for UMRA in defending this “perk” is that there is no paper trail describing how and why it was granted; nor are there any people around with the institutional memory to help out.

Throughout this transition, UMRA’s objective has been to emphasize to administration that retirees are an important constituency within the university community who want to stay in touch and who see their university-sponsored email address as one way to maintain this contact. In addition, UMRA has been working to ensure that the transition is handled generously for both support staff and academic retirees.



### Contact information for UMRA

The University of Manitoba Retirees Association

Box 5, Administration Building, The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2

Phone: (204)474-7175

E-mail: [retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca](mailto:retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca)

Website: <http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/retirees>

### Email contact to Retirees

UMRA is using e-mail to send reminders and notices of events of interest to retirees. To receive these, retirees should forward their e-mail address to **[retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca](mailto:retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca)**

Email address changes may be sent to **[retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca](mailto:retirees@ad.umanitoba.ca)**

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so long to do so, that this had happened only at the very end of my long and often difficult academic career.

The joy of the moment was also darkened by worry, worry about the future of the Theatre Program, and of all such cultural work at the University of Manitoba. I would be much happier about leaving were there some bright and energetic young spark waiting in the wings to replace me. But, alas, there is no prospect for a replacement in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the cost cutting policies currently imposed on the University make it unlikely that the Theatre Program will in the future be able to hire guest artists like Ian Ross. Thus the new theatre’s first premiere of a commissioned new Manitoba play may well be its last. Ironically, just at the point that we have a new theatre in which to work, there’s serious doubt that we will have adequate funding to continue that work.

Still, persistent optimism and determined hard work is what built the Black Hole Theatre Company and the John J. Conklin Theatre both, and we can only hope that the support the University has demonstrated in building the new theatre will translate into continued support for the work itself. We need more Ian Rosses. And, I daresay, we need more Chris Johnsons.

So there it is. The proverbial bittersweet ending. Exit stage left.

Chris Johnson is newly retired from the Department of English, Film and Theatre.



*Retirees enjoying the 18th President's Reception*

## What Do You Want?

The recent kerfuffle over the administration’s decision to eliminate university email addresses for retirees has prompted UMRA to consider other possible benefits for all university retirees.

All UMRA members now have library privileges; databases are not available to non-academic retirees. Some retirees will have new university email addresses.

UMRA executives would like to know what other benefits retirees should expect. If you know of benefits enjoyed by retirees from other universities or other businesses or have specific suggestions about what UMRA can do, please contact UMRA