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RAPS Sheet, March 2009

Retirement Association of Portland State

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Retirement Association of Portland State

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Cathy (Bostwick) Williams, Bill Walker, and W. T. "Bill" Lemman at the Feb. 19 Remembering PSU's History event, which was co-sponsored by RAPS and the PSU Alumni Association.

People, events of University's early days recalled at 'Remembering PSU's History'

Portland State's six decades of history were celebrated Feb. 19 when 125 people crowded into the Vanport Room to hear faculty, administrators, and graduates recall the good ol' days—and not-so-good ol' days—of the University's early years.

The program, Remembering PSU's History, featured a panel chaired by Charlie White, professor emeritus of history, and short talks by Steve Brannan, chair of the RAPS History Preservation Committee, and President Wim Wiewel, who dedicated the Vanport Wall Display.

The panel members were Bill Walker '73, MPA '80; Cathy (Bostwick) Williams '56; Richard Halley, professor emeritus of economics; and W. T. "Bill" Lemman, Vanport alumnus and former chancellor of the Oregon University System.

Bill Walker

He was a second-grader living with his father, mother, and brother in Vanport when the railroad dike

failed on Memorial Day 1948, destroying the city and killing at least 15 people.

"The day of the flood, my dad was down at the college, helping load books. My dad's mother and cousin had come to Vanport to start loading [valuables], even though we had been assured that as soon as anything might happen, we would know about it."

Next up:
Cris Paschild
PSU Archivist

Thursday, March 19, 1:00 p.m.
236 SMITH MEMORIAL STUDENT UNION

President's Message

February was a busy month for RAPS.

You will recall the snow in December that forced the postponement of the annual Holiday Dinner to February. This gave us the opportunity to celebrate Valentine's Day, the birthdays of Lincoln and Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of statehood for Oregon. Fifty RAPS members and guests enjoyed dinner at the Multnomah Athletic Club, socialized with old friends and met new ones, and listened to music by vocalist/pianist Laura Curnard and guitarist Ben Graves.

A week later we gathered to remember Portland State's history with a focus on the Vanport years. Alumni from the Vanport campus were invited, and more than 100 people filled the Vanport Room. Charlie White led a panel discussion, with speakers sharing stories of student and faculty life at Vanport; the disastrous flood that destroyed the campus in 1948; and growth of Portland State in the subsequent years. The program concluded with a talk by President Wim Wiewel, who dedicated the Vanport Wall Display. If you haven't yet seen the Vanport poster and collection of photographs on the wall leading to the Vanport Room in Smith Memorial Student Union, I encourage you to do so. For the past five years Steve Brannan has been working with a committee on history preservation. He played a major role in planning this program. We also appreciate the help of Pat Squire, assistant vice president for alumni and constituent relations, who worked with RAPS to make this program such a success.

February also was a time when several of us went to memorial services for recently deceased RAPS members. Dick Sanders, who wrote the text for *Portland State: A History in Pictures*, died just weeks before the book will become available. Ken Butler, who passed away in January, was honored by his twin daughters, who joined us at the Holiday Dinner, to which they had hoped to bring their dad.

I continue to be amazed at the dedication of retired faculty and staff at Portland State. The history preservation committee has put in thousands of hours on this project—and will continue to do so. At our Annual Potluck on March 19 you will have an opportunity to learn more about PSU's history and how each of us can assist in the preservation of archives. Come to the programs not just to learn but also to stay connected with your colleagues and make new friends.

—Marge Terdal



Point of order, Mayor Katz!

Leif Terdal, Maxine Thomas, Bob Tufts, and Marge Terdal ran into former Portland mayor Vera Katz (center) during the Hiking Club's Feb. 20 amble along the east and west side Esplanade in downtown Portland. The group enjoyed a cool but beautiful day, and saw several sculptures, kayakers, and cormorants, but Mayor Katz was uncharacteristically silent. Learn more about the Hiking Club on page 7.

History: 'We survived by showing we mattered . . .' *continued from page 1*

Bill knew that the railroad dike was unstable and trains were no longer permitted to cross it. "Our apartment was on the second floor, and we had a view of the dike. We were loading a few things into the car when I heard what I'd call a typical train rumble—just like a fast-moving train. Knowing that there shouldn't be a train there, I ran to the window to see the train.

"And that's when I saw a section of the dike literally collapse. Water didn't come over it—it just collapsed. There was a little switch station on the railroad dike that came tumbling down. I don't know if there was anyone in it or not."

Cathy (Bostwick) Williams

She started college at the Oregon Shipyard site, where the Vanport Extension Center had moved after the flood. In 1952, the institution moved to the former Lincoln High School building in the Park Blocks.

"We used to have noise parades out in St. Johns, and the idea was to see how much noise each of the clubs could make. When we moved downtown, we brought the noise parade with us. So the first year we were down here, we came up Broadway, making noise. Every theater emptied, to look and see what was going on. Then we had a big bonfire in Duniway Park. That was the last noise parade we ever had."

Richard Halley

He joined the Vanport faculty in fall 1946, and is one of two surviving members of the original faculty. He is a professor emeritus of economics.

"We had about 1,800 veterans and about 20 other students. (Vanport) was a very different place from other colleges because these veterans acted differently. We had very serious ones and very lively ones.

"I remember going with Dr. (Stephen) Epler (PSU's founder) to watch a baseball game. And here was the team—at each base they had a jug of whiskey, wine, and so on. Dr. Epler was the son of a minister, and he was a very careful man with his opinions and language. But he said to them, 'I won't say anything about this, but pick up your bats, balls, and liquor, and head back (to campus).' That was part of that Vanport group."

W. T. "Bill" Lemman

A student at Vanport and later a Portland State administrator, he became vice chancellor and chancellor of the Oregon University System.

"Steve (Epler) was a very warm and human person. Many of us came to know him very well, as we did our other professors. Steve was one of the folks who befriended students and called them by their first names.

"Steve used hyperbole to congratulate people for everything he could think of. I know when I left I was given a little card that was cut out with a paper cutter. On it was 'Vanport Alumni Association, No. 1,' and it had my name on it. Well, I thought that was pretty nice—until I ran into Ray (Lokting, Vanport's first student body president) the next year, and he had one just like it. There's probably 40 or 50 people running around with that little card that said 'Vanport Alum No. 1.'"

Steve Brannan

He is a professor emeritus of education and spearheads RAPS' effort to encourage the preservation of the University's history.

"No systematic process is in operation today campus-wide for preserving and celebrating the University's history, but we're getting closer. Achieving this goal will not happen until we have, at the administrative level, a campus-wide policy guiding and directing faculty, staff, and others to preserve and celebrate history within their own units. But we have made progress toward this goal, as demonstrated by this event today."

Wim Wiewel

The president of Portland State dedicated the wall display, Honoring PSU's Heritage.

"The history of how this institution struggled to survive, and the political alliances it had to create with the business community, labor community, government community here in town, in order to become the institution it is, is at the very heart of why we truly are an engaged urban institution. We never had the luxury of being an ivory tower, because we could only survive by showing the community around us that we mattered, that we were relevant, that we took their concerns seriously, that we were real about educating their sons and daughters, training their workforce, and doing research on the issues that matter to them."

In memoriam: Mildred L. Bennett, 1921-2009

Professor Emerita of Mathematical Sciences Mildred L. Bennett, born Sept. 23, 1921, died on Feb. 8, 2009.

Prof. Bennett was born in Portland and earned a B.S. degree in mathematics at Oregon State University in 1942. Subsequently she took employment with the Westinghouse Electronics engineering department and the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn Research Laboratories prior to returning to Oregon in 1956 and joining the newly formed Portland State College's Division of Science as a mathematics instructor. As a pioneering faculty member, Prof. Bennett energetically provided top-level mathematics instruction to large classes. Over the years, a selfless dedication to instructional objectives generated a lasting popularity with students, and earned the highest respect from collaborating colleagues representing various departments throughout the institution.

In consonance with the new college's mission to serve the metropolitan region's higher education needs, Prof. Bennett introduced many on-campus innovations in mathematics education, notably for elementary and secondary teachers. She also participated in teacher training programs sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Office of Education that deployed her expertise on the campus, and sometimes concurrently in public school classrooms. Her ongoing legacy includes a regionally emulated Math Resources Lab that serves the Mathematical Sciences Department as an integral component of classroom teacher training courses, and a very successful student tutorial methods program. As a community outreach effort, she regularly directed in-service training and assisted with the development

and selection of public school teaching materials at state and local levels.

Intellectual and scholarly inquisitiveness motivated her to keep abreast of developments in her discipline. The Mathematical Sciences Department heavily utilized her organizational and managerial skills for devising coursework and preparing class schedules. She willingly assumed advising responsibilities that assisted large numbers of students to navigate through the University's sometimes baffling degree requirements channels.

Prof. Bennett regularly served on University-wide governance units, including the President's Advisory Council, the Faculty Senate, and various academic committees. She was very knowledgeable about many disciplines, and often served on master's degree examinations for other departments. Indeed, Prof. Bennett was well known, respected, and universally liked by her colleagues.

Mildred and her late husband, Walter, enjoyed a wide circle of campus and community friends and often participated in RAPS activities. Their daughters, Ruthanne and Edie Bennett, Kathleen Mullen, and Mayche Cech, survive their parents, and to them our organization extends its heartfelt sympathy. On Feb. 15 a memorial service was held at Rose City Park United Methodist Church.

After Prof. Bennett retired as professor emeritus on June 16, 1992, she continued to serve as a campus volunteer and occasionally taught at Portland Community College. The University community owes Mildred a debt of gratitude and admiration for her selfless contributions to its successful development.

—Victor C. Dahl, *Professor Emeritus of History*

UW retirement group hosts regional spring meeting

The University of Washington Retirement Association will host a regional gathering of representatives from higher education retirement associations on April 30 and May 1 in Seattle.

As many as a dozen higher education retirement associations from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and British Columbia will be represented at the meeting. RAPS delegates, designated by President Marge

Terdal, are Bruce Stern, Vic and Beryl Dahl, and Robert Vogelsang.

This is an opportunity to focus on shared organizational issues, program ideas, and future directions for retirees and retirement associations.

Participating associations will determine interest in future such gatherings and the possibility of hosting at various locations.

In memoriam: Thomas Charles Burgess, 1920-2009

Professor Emeritus Thomas Charles Burgess, born July 13, 1920, in Bismarck, N. D., died Jan. 29, 2009. Family and friends gathered for a memorial service held on Feb. 20 at the Lake Oswego Adult Community Center.

After graduating from Sidney, Mont., high school in 1938, Prof. Burgess majored in psychology and sociology at the University of Montana, earning an honors B.A. degree in 1942. From 1942 to 1945, he served as an assignments officer in the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps. In 1946 he began graduate studies in educational psychology at the University of Minnesota, earning a Ph.D. degree in 1954.

Before coming to Portland State, Prof. Burgess gained extensive university-level counseling, guidance, teaching, and research experience through holding various psychology and education positions at the University of Minnesota (1946-50); University of Missouri (1950-53), Oregon State University (1953-55); and the University of Alberta. From 1959 to 1963 he held an appointment at the University of Montana—his alma mater—where he taught psychology courses and participated in planning and directing significant guidance and counseling programs.

Prof. Burgess joined the PSU Counseling Center in 1963 and retired in 1981. His service coincided with the institution's emergence as a comprehensive university responding to the urban area's instructional needs. Like universities throughout the nation, PSU encountered problems stemming from heightened student activism, civil rights issues, anti-war protests, and unique educational advising needs of an increasingly diverse student population, which, ironically, began to include many military service veterans. In many ways, PSU's conditions in the 1960s resembled the Vanport experience of the 1940s.

Prof. Burgess's faculty colleagues universally adjudged him to be helpful and respected his professionalism. For example, when PSU mounted new international education programs, such as training Peace Corps volunteers for service in Middle Eastern countries and offering instruction in English as a second language, he assisted by devising processes for measuring and assessing special training outcomes. Likewise, students found him to be a willing listener who would help them resolve academic and personal

problems.

Tom thoroughly enjoyed outdoor activities, including fly fishing and spending time with his family at their lakeside summer cabin in western Montana. We shared interests in genealogy, Montana history, and the fate of the "United Empire Loyalists"—those American colonists who maintained their loyalty to King George III.

Tom married Merle Oliva Strand of Sidney, Mont., on Nov. 11, 1944. She and their daughters, Dr. Jeanne Olmstead, Barbara Armentrout, Mary Burgess, and Helen Brown; six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren; and his brother, Jim Burgess of Hamilton, Mont., survive him.

Tom Brokaw wrote about the "Greatest Generation" of Americans who came of age during the Great Depression, selflessly served in wartime, and then contributed energetically to our nation's growth. Thomas C. Burgess fully fits that description.

Remembrances may be made to the Portland Audubon Society or the Scandinavian Heritage Society of Oregon.

—Victor C. Dahl, Professor Emeritus of History

RAPS Directory update form coming next month

There will be a little something extra in your mailing from RAPS next month. In addition to the April issue of the *RAPS Sheet*, you'll find a form that will enable you to update your listing in the *RAPS Directory*.

If your listing in the *RAPS Directory* has changed since its publication last September, was wrong to begin with, or just didn't appear at all, this will be your chance to right the record. On the other hand, if your listing in the *Directory* was correct, there is no need to do anything except recycle the form.

If you do need to fill out the form, be sure to sign it. RAPS cannot print your listing without having a signed form on record.

And don't worry—these directions will be repeated next month, when you receive the form in the mail with the April edition of the *RAPS Sheet*.

Questions? Call or email the RAPS office at 503-724-3447 or rapspdx@pdx.edu.

In memoriam: Alfred Levinson

Alfred “Al” Levinson, professor emeritus of chemistry, died of congestive heart failure on Dec. 10, 2008, after a long series of illnesses. Prof. Levinson was a valued and productive colleague for 31 years until his retirement in 1994.

During his professional life Prof. Levinson authored or co-authored at least a dozen refereed articles, mostly in the area of terpenoids and other natural products. He was a preeminent teacher who received the Millar Award for teaching excellence in the 1980s. Reflective of the broadness of his interests, he was a great believer in interdisciplinary science and was a key participant in two major projects which helped gain recognition of PSU as an incubator of new approaches to education. The first of these projects, which came to be known as the Core Course, was to develop a college course at the introductory science-major level combining material from chemistry, physics, and biology. The second project, the Portland Project, brought together science educators, high school teachers, and science faculty during summers over a number of years to put together a high school program incorporating elements from the major sciences. Supported by the NSF, it was in use at one time in at least 90 high schools.

It was in this context of the team-taught Core Course that some of his colleagues were privileged to see him as a teacher, attending his clear, illuminating, and often hilariously funny lectures. His office was open to his students, his patience with their learning problems unending. He had a knack for remembering his students’ names, even years later. With respect to the Portland Project, Prof. Levinson exemplified an attitude of openness and tolerance that was required to bring a coherent and effective result from a diverse mix of talents and disciplines. He was always critical in a kindly way and forever ready with a witticism when needed.

Born in Portland in 1932, Prof. Levinson graduated from Lincoln High (1950) and Reed College on a scholarship (B.A., 1954). He intended to major in biology but, he later asserted, the smell of formaldehyde drove him into chemistry. For a while he worked for a firm in Berkeley, Calif., on a project to develop a glue formula. “It didn’t stick,” Al would remark about his departure. He joined the graduate program at

Wesleyan University in Connecticut, during which time he began to correspond with Amy Perlstein, a graduate student in Rochester, N.Y., whom he had known vaguely at Reed. By the time he received an M.A. in 1958 they were engaged. While on the way from Connecticut to begin his Ph.D. studies at Indiana University, he stopped in Rochester and decided that as Amy’s family was also visiting at the time, this called for a wedding. He finished his doctoral work in 1963.

With remarkable inner strength Prof. Levinson maintained his impish wit and broadly ranging curiosity despite personal tragedies and debilitating illnesses. As a boy he contracted rheumatic fever, beginning a lifelong battle with heart disease. He was a survivor of three heart valve operations and required a pacemaker. In 1980 he suffered a massive stroke. When Mount St. Helens blew, “so did I,” he would quip. Al re-learned how to use a blackboard with his left hand and continued to teach. The same year his beloved brother Robert, a University of Oregon Ph.D., died in an automobile accident. In 1983 his eldest daughter Becky, a student at PSU, also died in an automobile-related accident. In 2001 his dear wife, Amy, died unexpectedly.

In his retirement Al continued to read and tell stories, many involving his colorful extended family and his Lithuanian Jewish heritage. He is survived by his daughter, Ellen, of Colorado and his son, Mark, of Pennsylvania.

—Arnold Pickar, *Professor Emeritus of Physics, and Nathan Cogan, Professor Emeritus of English*

Mark your calendar

Cris Paschild, PSU Archivist

Thursday, March 19, 1 p.m.

236 Smith Memorial Student Union

This is RAPS’s annual potluck—see story on page 8

President’s Luncheon

Thursday, April 16

University Place

Ice Cream Social

Wednesday, May 20

Alpenrose Dairy

RAPS club reports

Book Club: 'People of the Book' on March 17
The RAPS Book Club will meet on Tuesday, March 17, at 1:30 p.m. to discuss *People of the Book*, a novel by Geraldine Brooks. The meeting will be at the Brannans' house, 6901 SE Oaks Park Way, Slip No. 13, Portland. Please call Mary Brannan at 503-239-1077 or e-mail brannanmg@comcast.net to RSVP and for directions.

People of the Book is described on the slip cover:

In 1996, a rare book expert is offered the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of a mysterious, beautifully illuminated Hebrew manuscript created in fifteenth-century Spain and recently saved from destruction during the shelling of Sarajevo's libraries. When Hanna Heath, a caustic Aussie loner with a passion for her work, discovers a series of tiny artifacts in the book's ancient binding—an insect-wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, a white hair—she begins to unlock the mysteries of the book's eventful past and to uncover the dramatic stories of those who created it and those who risked everything to protect it.

Bridge Group: Meets on March 10
The RAPS Bridge Group meets at 1:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. For information about the group or this month's meeting, please call Colin Dunkeld, 503-292-0838.

—Colin Dunkeld

Hikers: Welcoming new members
The hiking group is open to everyone. With a few exceptions, our core is mostly present or past board members, but this is by happenstance, not intention. Our hikes are social events, usually involving lunch afterwards. Our pace and distance are adjusted for the slowest hiker. If you are interested in joining, please contact the hikers' coordinator, Larry Sawyer, at 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net. The RAPS Web site has a photo section containing several pictures of our past hikes. View them at www.raps.pdx.edu/photo_gallery.ndx.php.

The March hike will be Friday, March 20. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. in West Linn's new Fields Bridge Park, which in-

cludes a paved interpretive trail on the Ice Age floods and Willamette Meteorite. This will be a suburban ramble along Willamette Falls Drive, using sidewalks and a few short shoulder walks, into the historic Willamette district, down to the confluence of the Willamette and Tualatin Rivers, and return. It is about four miles with 150 feet of elevation change. Lunch will be in the historic district. Please confirm by March 19 with Bob Tufts at 503-657-7216 or bobtufts@comcast.net.

Directions: Take I-205 to Exit 6 (Tenth Street in West Linn), turn south to Willamette Falls Drive, and turn right for 1.2 miles. Turn left into the parking lot before the baseball fields.

—Larry Sawyer

PAST TENSE

'The Portland Review' is founded in 1956

In the spring of 1956, Richard Sanders (center) was a founder and the first editor of the student literary quarterly, *The Portland State Review of Student Writing*, which evolved into *The Portland*



Review. Prof. James Lill, English, served as faculty adviser. The other *Review* founders were Don Carpenter (left), who became a successful novelist and screenwriter, and Richard J. Kennedy (right), author of the award-winning children's novel *Amy's Eyes*.

In 2006—a half century later—Sanders was the spark behind another literary endeavor, a book chronicling the growth and development of Portland State. Over the next three years, he researched and wrote the text for *Portland State: A History in Pictures*, which celebrates the institution's transformation from extension center to the largest university in the state. The book is currently in press, with delivery expected this spring.

In the five decades between *The Portland State Review* and *Portland State: A History in Pictures*, Sanders taught high school English, journalism, and speech, wrote and edited textbooks, worked in public affairs for the California Department of Social Welfare, and became a speechwriter for governors in California and Oregon. He died Feb. 9 in Portland at the age of 77.

—Dawn White

Past Tense features glimpses into Portland State's history. To submit a story (or an idea for one), email the RAPS History Preservation Committee at raps@pdx.edu.

University archivist to speak at Annual Potluck on March 19

Portland State's archivist will give RAPS members a look at the nuts and bolts of preserving the University's history at the Annual Potluck on Thursday, March 19.

The potluck gets under way at 1:00 p.m. in 236 Smith Memorial Student Union.

Cris Paschild, who joined the University last August, will give RAPSters an introduction to the University archives, will explain her role and responsibilities, and compare what she hopes to accomplish at PSU to the efforts being undertaken at the University of Oregon and Oregon State.

Paschild came to Portland State from the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. She

holds M.L.I.S. and M.A. degrees from the University of Michigan and a B.A. from the University of Oregon.

Potluck pointers

RAPS' Annual Potluck offers members an opportunity to show off their culinary skills—or at least prove they know the location of their neighborhood bakery or deli. Here's the drill:

- ◆ Bring sandwich makings, salad, or dessert
- ◆ Plates, utensils, coffee and tea are provided
- ◆ RSVP to the RAPS Office by March 12 and tell us what you plan to bring. Call MiMi Bernal-Graves at 503-725-3447 or e-mail raps@pdx.edu.

Portland State: A History in Pictures

Three years in the making, this project of the Retired Association of Portland State contains more than 300 color and black-and-white photos that document PSU's history, events, and people. At 180 pages and in a big, 8-1/2 x 11 format, *Portland State: A History in Pictures* is a great addition to your personal library and makes a terrific gift. Fill out the form below and mail it today!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Method of payment:

My check is enclosed in the amount of \$34.95 payable to PSU Foundation.

Please charge my credit card:

Visa MasterCard AmEx Discover

Card number

Exp. date Name as it appears on card _____

Signature of cardholder _____

Return this form to:

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Koinonia House
Portland State University
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Portland OR 97207-0751

