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A Tribute from 1955

As Portland State Extension Center evolved to college status, Marion Paulsen wrote a poem that appeared in the school’s yearbook, the Viking ’55. The poem honors the school’s heritage as integral to its future success and conveys the excitement and enthusiasm of students and faculty during this memorable period of Portland State University’s history.

A TRIBUTE

Where is the ivy that clings to her walls,  And here’s to the dream so newly a-borning;  
Where are her spiraling towers;  Here’s to the men who dreamed it.  
What of her chapel, her sweet sounding bells  A pledge to the hope they cherished so long,  
That ring at the vesper hour?  Grant us the faith to redeem it.  

Where is her campus, her quadrangle walks;  Yet will the ivy cling to her walls,  
(Would that we might sing of this!)  Yet will her chapel bells ring.  
Is there no linden with lowspreading boughs  Hallowed her halls with honor and fame  
To shelter a lover’s kiss?  Her sons and daughters shall bring.  

She is not imbued with legend and lore,  A toast to her noble traditions,  
For her there’s no fanciful stories;  And to those who shall help to build them.  
No quaint wishing well, nor old ox-road,  Here’s to the youth of tomorrow’s day  
No table down at Morrie’s.  And the heritage we shall have willed them.  

But this is she, and laud it well;  Here’s to a whisper that distantly echoes,  
Let your voices ring on high;  The rude winds of time defying.  
Within these humble halls there breathes  Here’s to a grandeur she’s yet to attain;  
A spirit that would not die!  Here’s to her spirit undying.  

A spirit that formed and grew of itself,  Marion Paulsen  
Guided by forces unseen;  
That challenged the minds of thoughtful men,  
That they began to dream.

RAPS is seeking information about Marion Paulsen, author of A Tribute. If you can help, please call Steve Brannan, 503-239-1077 or email him at sabrannan@comcast.net.

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.

Nominations sought for outstanding staff, faculty

The RAPS Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Outstanding Retired Faculty and Staff Awards. The awards will be presented at the annual President’s Luncheon in April.

Awardees are selected based on their achievements since retirement in at least three of the following categories:

- Service to the community
- Service to the University
- Professional/career achievements
- Service to RAPS

Both members and non-members of RAPS are eligible. Nominations will also be accepted for special awards to persons who excel in a single category. Deadline for receipt of nominations is Thursday, March 14.

Forms may be obtained by contacting Sonia Singh, RAPS Office Manager at rapsmail@pdx.edu or 503-725-3447. For questions please contact Awards Committee Chair Brian Lewis at brianlewispdx@gmail.com or 503-590-5890.
In 1948 female faculty members at Vanport College, PSU’s founding institution, formed a Vanport College Faculty Women’s Club. During the decades following the College’s move to the Park Blocks, the club morphed into an organization that eventually became the Portland State University Faculty Women’s Association. Club membership, which initially started with faculty women, soon embraced non-teaching spouses of faculty and eventually was extended to include university women staff.

A copy of the club’s founding constitution surfaced after the 1948 flood of Vanport City and continued to guide the organization’s activities, which included monthly board meetings and general meetings to carry out social and service functions. From the outset, the organization sponsored membership social activities, such as faculty potluck dinners, teas for members and female students, holiday parties, annual picnics, fall mixers for new members, and annual fall coffees and spring luncheons, both often featuring guest speakers.

In the late 1960s, the women’s growing organization launched a very successful gourmet potluck program, an activity that enabled the membership to meet and socialize with new and current faculty members and spouses. This function later expanded in the 1980s to include international potlucks, also hosted at members’ homes.

Closely linked to its social aims, the women’s organization actively pursued various service activities to support the institution and the community. Early on, it sponsored the creation of a Mother’s Club, which became a catalyst in the campaign to make Vanport a four-year college. The Faculty Women’s Association also joined the Federation of Women’s Clubs as a means of putting Vanport’s name (and Portland State’s soon after) before the public.

The service goal most cherished by the women’s organization was to provide financial assistance to students. Various fundraising events were pursued over the years, including rummage sales, food sales, fashion shows, Christmas card sales, and member contributions.

In 1954-55, when the organization changed its name to Portland State College Women’s Faculty Club, it contributed $100 to the college’s Student Loan Fund and $25 to a student scholarship award for the most Outstanding Sophomore Girl. Fundraising evolved to focus on student scholarships and by 1969 one full tuition scholarship was awarded along with several partial tuition awards.

Income-generating activities varied from a giant rummage sale in the 1950s to an annual art show and sale at Washington Square during the 1970s spearheaded by Embry Savage, an active member and artist. These and similar activities enabled the organization to award sizable scholarships to two or three women students at its regular spring luncheons.

With the passage of time, the level of enthusiasm that had characterized the organization’s early decades declined. In 1995, 47 years after its creation, 12 members attended a final association meeting at which they elected a slate of officers in perpetuity, with Beryl Dahl and Barbara Alberty as President and Vice President.

The University’s Financial Aids Office and Foundation were authorized to administer the assets of the Women’s Association — which today amount to more than $121,000 — for scholarship distribution to students. Annually, this endowment makes four $2000 awards. These continuing assets constitute a continuing legacy for a women’s service activity that dates back to the University’s founding years.

— Beryl Dahl and Steve Brannan

Priscilla Blumel, Beryl Dahl and Sylvia Moseley, all members of the PSU Women’s Association, contributed to this article through their recollections of the organization. Photo by Larry Sawyer, taken at the 2012 RAPS Holiday Brunch.
In the early 1960s a group of senior academics at Portland State formed a more-or-less formal organization that came to be known as “the Professors Club.” As these professors retired, they continued to meet to discuss topics of mutual interest. Growing in numbers, they formed a bona fide organization in 1985 titled Emeriti Retired Faculty of Portland State (ERFOPS). In 2001 the organization invited retired staff to join and changed its name to the Retirement Association of Portland State (RAPS).

In its early years RAPS had no regular office space. In 1988 Provost Frank Martino designated furnished office space for ERFOPS in the newly built Ondine Building on SW 6th Avenue. In the 25 years since then, the university’s growth, changing administrations, and shifting priorities have resulted in RAPS moving to other campus locations: the Mill Street Building in 1992, Smith Memorial Student Union in 1997, the Simon Benson House in 2000, and Koinonia House in 2008 (its current location).

THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME. RAPS’s first home, from 1988 to 1992, was the Ondine on SW 6th Avenue (above left). Its second home was in the Mill St. Building (center), demolished to make room for the Urban Center Plaza. In 1997 RAPS moved into an office in Smith Memorial Student Union (right) on SW Broadway.

The newly restored Simon Benson House on Park Avenue (above left) was RAPS’s home base for eight years beginning in 2000. The Board still meets there. In 2008 RAPS moved into its current location, the Koinonia House (right) on SW Montgomery.

The continuing office moves have been challenging but each location has offered unique benefits. As one PSU retiree said, “Such moves provide opportunities for RAPS members and others to see and learn more about the PSU campus as they search for the most recent office location.”

--Steve Brannan, History Preservation Committee Chair

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After Portland State Extension Center became a four-year degree-granting college in 1955, John F. Cramer was appointed by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education as Portland State’s first president. In developing the new college, Cramer oversaw the creation and administration of four academic divisions, complemented by a library with resources to enhance learning.

The early success of Portland State College during these formative years was due in large part to the efforts of seasoned professors who led these important units of the institution.

Willard B. Spalding, EdD
Chair, Division of Education

Hoyt C. Franchere, PhD
Chair, Division of Humanities

Will V. Norris, PhD
Chair, Division of Science/Mathematics

Jean P. Black, PhD
Head, Library

George C. Hoffmann, PhD
Chair, Division of Social Science

--Steve Brannan, History Preservation Committee Chair
The Beginning: Geology at Portland State

SU’s preparation of students in the field of geology traces its roots to the emergence of Vanport Extension Center (VEC) in 1946, when returning World War II veterans helped create demand for an institution of higher education in Portland. At VEC, popularly called Vanport College, various science courses were initially offered in the summer of 1946, with geology soon following in the 1948-49 academic year.

Hollis M. Dole, MS, Instructor of Geology, taught the first undergraduate courses in Geology (G 201, 201, 203). Offered in sequence for three credits per term, each course was titled Geology with the same course description: “Processes of nature by which earth’s surface has been built up, deformed, and torn down; natural history and occurrence of common rocks, and useful minerals; outline of history of earth and life.” Hollis Dole taught this geology sequence at VEC for three years, followed by John O. Dart, MA (later PhD), who arrived to teach geography and geology in 1951-52.

The 1952-53 school year began with VEC having moved to the South Park Blocks in Portland to become Portland State Extension Center. Geology and all other fields of study at Portland State were initially taught in Old Main (now Lincoln Hall). Faculty teaching geology courses in the early 1950s included John Dart; Ruth Hopson Keen, PhD, Associate Professor of General Science; and Ralph S. Mason, BS, Instructor of Geology. Geology courses added during these founding years included Geology 204, 205, 206 and an accompanying one-credit laboratory course “for all students desiring a more intimate knowledge of geology.” Upper division courses Geology 350 Rocks & Minerals and 352 Geology of Oregon soon followed.

In 1955 program development in geology was spurred when Portland State Extension Center became Portland State College (PSC), a four-year degree-granting institution. In 1956, Will V. Norris, Chair of the Division of Science-Mathematics, recruited John Eliot Allen, PhD, Professor of Geology, to start a program in geology at PSC. By 1962, fall term enrollment had grown from 89 to 345 students, four faculty were teaching 72 credit hours of geology, the program had graduated 21 students with degrees in General Science, and the Department of Earth Sciences was officially established along with the initial granting of BS and BA degrees in Earth Sciences.

In 1980 John Eliot Allen described the fundamental beliefs of the department: “The educational philosophy to which most of the faculty of the department has subscribed during the past 24 years may be summarized in six short statements: Geology should be enjoyable; Geology starts outdoors; Geology continues in the laboratory; Geology results in talks and publications; Geology is related to all aspects of life; Geology students need to be kept informed.”

More than six decades later, Vanport Extension Center is now Portland State University and the Department of Earth Sciences has become the Department of Geology. The department is over 50 years old, and over 28 tenure track faculty have cycled through the department during that time. Today the department has 10 tenure track faculty teaching 135 undergraduate majors and 35 MS and PhD students. In addition, there are 30 adjunct faculty who help with the teaching and research. Over 500 alumni populate many of the consulting firms, governmental agencies and universities of the Pacific Northwest and are leaders in the field of geology.

--Steve Brannan, History Preservation Committee Co-chair, and Scott Burns, Professor of Geology

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Launching Study Abroad at Portland State

It was 1960. I was in my eighth year at Portland State, teaching history and methods of teaching social science. I was asked to aid Lake Oswego High School in reviewing and modifying its social studies scope and sequence. I worked with Felix Calkins, one of the teachers who earlier had created American Heritage Association, an organization that facilitated taking high school students from the northwest to the East Coast to familiarize them with America’s history and government.

As our American heritage is intimately connected with western Europe, it occurred to Felix and me that expanding the east coast trips to Europe would be educationally sound and rewarding. Two years of planning followed, garnering support from the University of Washington and from Frank Brouillet, chair of the Washington State legislature’s education committee. The result was the formation of NICSA, the Northwest Interinstitutional Council on Study Abroad.

In 1962, under the aegis of NICSA, I accompanied a group of 64 students from Portland State, University of Washington, and Willamette as we bused across the country, spent two weeks on the East Coast, and flew on to Europe for a term in London. That was Portland State’s first official study abroad program.

As these students discovered, studying language and culture in situ is a life-changing experience. Immersing themselves in a new culture, interacting with locals, going on excursions to historical sites they have only read about at home—these are enriching experiences that give students new insights and perspectives on their own lives and culture. Watching this transformation occur is one of the most satisfying aspects of teaching on and leading study abroad programs.

In 1963 a large group journeyed to Europe, taking classes in London and Paris in the spring, and dividing into four groups during summer: language study in Barcelona, Cologne, and Paris, and European politics and history classes in Strasbourg.

Oregon State, Washington State, and Western Washington joined the Council in 1964, and 81 students spent spring and summer in Europe. Instead of the east coast portion of the program, the group took the train across Canada, with morning and afternoon classes held in the dome car. London and The Hague were the principal spring study sites, and all the language sites were continued.

From this modest beginning, study abroad opportunities at Portland State increased over the decades, first with the expansion of programs through regional organizations such as NICSA and increasingly through independent program providers. Today Portland State students have access to more than 130 sites on every continent except Antarctica. In addition, more than 80 sites abroad offer internship opportunities, giving students even greater access to local culture.

--Charlie White, Professor Emeritus of History
We Celebrate A Half Century of RAPS at PSU!

At the President’s Luncheon for Retired Faculty and Staff, PSU President Wim Wivel presented RAPS President Dave Krug with a framed document honoring the fiftieth anniversary of RAPS on the PSU Campus. It seems a good time to look at the accomplishments of RAPS History Preservation Committee during our 50th anniversary year.

- Coordinated, edited, and submitted 10 Past Tense articles for publication in the RAPS Sheet. Contributions by Chik Erzurumlu on the early years of Engineering Programs at PSU; Scott Burns on the beginning and growth of PSU’s Geology Program; Charlie White (on the Portland State Study Abroad Program; Steve Brannan, Dave Krug, and Joel Arick on Special Education leadership in autism research; Beryl Dahl on the PSU Women’s Association; Dawn White on PSU’s tradition of holiday giving; and Steve Brannan on Gordon Dodds as the “savior” of PSU’s history. The movement of RAPS’ offices location on campus was traced, and a poem from the 1955 Viking, honored the school’s heritage as integral to its future success.

- The Provost and the President’s Executive Committee Gave RAPS permission to include a Beginning History section in the PSU Bulletin, along with a legacy statement from RAPS’ new book Creating Portland State 1946-55. Both segments will appear in the 2013-2014 PSU Bulletin.

- PSU’s Office of Academic Affairs purchased 100 copies of RAPS’ most recent pictorial history book. PSU Bookstore will handle the two books for sale. PSU’s Alumni Association will also promote book sales.

- The RAPS Board approved creating a Digital Commons module with the Library to provide historical information which will be available to a wide range of users.

- Under the leadership of Chris Paschild, University Archivist, RAPS members piloted a group oral interview of retired faculty member Victor Dahl, Emeritus Professor of History. The process was deemed a success, and plans are to more fully implement a group interview procedure next year.

- RAPS initiated planning to create a President’s Photo Gallery on the 8th floor of the Market center Building. The Dean’s photo gallery of the 6th floor of the Graduate School of Education is being used as a model for the proposed President’s Gallery.

- The RAPS manual and our website were updated and corrected.

--- Mary and Steve Brannan

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The Retirement Association of Portland State (RAPS) was founded in the early 1960s by a group of senior faculty to develop activities for PSU retired emeriti faculty. Later the group expanded its mission to include faculty and University staff. Decades later at PSU’s 2013 annual President’s Luncheon for retired faculty and staff, President Wim Wiewel presented RAPS with a plaque “In Appreciation of 50 years of Contributions to the Portland State University Retirees and Community.” Wiewel’s recognition of the association’s years of “service, enthusiasm, energy, and creativity” is linked to numerous accomplishments of RAPS since its founding.

- A formal partnership has been established within the University for funding and operation of RAPS.
- An action-oriented Board of retired faculty and staff guides the association.
- A part-time Office Manager in our on-campus office handles ongoing business, meetings, and projects.
- Our membership includes more than 400 retired faculty and staff.
- Our monthly newsletter (The RAPS Sheet) is provided to members and to the PSU community.
- Two pictorial history books compiled and published by RAPS have extended the preservation and celebration of PSU’s history campus-wide.
- We offer our members monthly on-campus and/or community-based educational and cultural events.
- A comprehensive website serves the association’s members, PSU, and the public.
- RAPS provides leadership for participation with regional and national retirement organizations representing institutions of higher learning.
- Each year, RAPS awards a scholarship to a PSU student pursing studies in gerontology.

--Steve Brannan and Mary Gordon Brannan
PSU FOOTBALL PLAYERS MAKE THE PROS

It is football season in the National Football League (NFL) and at Portland State. Little known to many sports fans, Portland State has produced excellent football players who continued playing football as professionals. Since 1967, 38 Portland State football players have gone on to play in the NFL, two other Vikings were drafted but did not play, and 27 played professional football in other leagues (e.g., Canadian Football League, World League, arena football). Dave Stief (wide receiver, 1978-1983), Neil Lomax (quarterback, 1981-1988), Clint Didier (tight end, 1982-1989), Tracey Eaton (free safety, 1988-1993), Ted Popson (tight end, 1994-1998), and Darick Holmes (running back, 1995-1999) played five or more years in the NFL. Former PSU wide receiver James Hundon has the distinction of being the first former Viking pictured on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* (Feb. 12, 2001).

The first Viking to play in the NFL was Tom Oberg (pictured left) who played defensive back at Portland State for two years in 1966 and 1967. He intercepted 12 passes which still ranks seventh in PSU history. He was a team leader as a captain and was named the team’s Most Inspirational Player as a senior. Oberg played safety for the Denver Broncos in 1968 and 1969. Following his NFL career, he played in the Canadian Football League and for the Portland Storm and Thunder of the Word Football League. He was inducted into the Portland State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2002. Tom continues to support PSU football as a VIP season ticket holder.

Four PSU Vikings play in the NFL today: Julius Thomas, tight end for the Denver Broncos; Jordon Senn, linebacker for the Carolina Panthers; Adam Hayward, linebacker for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers; and DeShawn Sneed, defensive back for the Seattle Seahawks. Julius Thomas (pictured right) has received lots of press lately, receiving passes from Bronco quarterback Peyton Manning. His performance is amazing because Thomas played only one football season at Portland State and was named on the first-team All-Big Sky Conference in 2010. His professional football accomplishments are better understood knowing that Thomas was a multi-sport athlete. Before transitioning to Viking football, Thomas was a four-year basketball player, setting PSU records for career games played, career wins, and career field goals percentage (.671). He also helped the Viking basketball team win the 2008 Big Sky regular season championship as well as the 2008 and 2009 Big Sky tournament basketball championships and played in two NCAA tournaments.

-- Mary Brannan
PSU’s Chamber Choir Has Been Singing Since 1975

In 1975, David Wilson founded the Portland State Chamber Choir, a “unique ensemble dedicated to performing complex choral literature at the highest musical levels.” Under Wilson’s direction, the Choir grew to become one of the finest in Portland. In 1978, Bruce Browne assumed directorship of the Choir, leading it to national prominence from 1985-2006. “His personal work ethic and dedication to the students helped him raise the level of singing in the program to international recognition.” Browne received the Lifetime Award for Leadership and Service from the American Choral Directors Association in 2012.

Photos above: Director Bruce Brown; two photos of the Chamber Choir; Director Ethan Sperry

Browne described a chamber choir as a small (36 or fewer voices) choir that sings a wide variety of music ranging from international and classical to folk and gospel music, singing a capella. PSU’s Chamber Choir has sung in many languages, including French, Estonian, German, and Greek. Bruce’s goal was to bring in the best choral experts from around the world to work with the choir. Eric Ericson, a renowned and influential Swedish choral teacher, came to campus in 1984 and 1985. Other noteworthy choral guests include American Robert Shaw, German Frieder Bernius, and Englishman Andrew Parrott.

PSU’s Choir has traveled internationally, providing the opportunity to hear and learn from other choral groups. Notably, the choir has been selected to perform three times (1985, 1997, 2003) before an audience of approximately 6,000 at the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). The Choir students were guests of the Greek government in the late 1980s, guests of the Spanish government twice in the early 1990s, toured in England, Finland, and Estonia in the late 1990s, and were the only American choir invited to participate in the Estonian Song Festival in 1991. The Choir has also performed in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Canada, as well as locally and across the US. They have received some grants for travel expenses but have needed to raise funds to help defray expenses, usually doing home stays to cut costs. For four years in the mid-1990s, the chamber choir (along with the Disciples of Song, a gospel choir) and other musical groups performed Handel’s “Messiah” to sold-out audiences during the holiday season.

The tradition of music excellence continues today under the expert direction of Ethan Sperry, a nationally known choral arranger who came to PSU in 2010. Ethan’s choice of PSU was related, in part, to seeing PSU’s Chamber Choir perform in New York City at the ACDA national conference in 2003; he said that it was the best concert he had ever heard. In July of 2013 the Choir led by conductor Sperry became the first US choir in the 52-year history of Italy’s Seghizzi International Choral Competition to win the Grand Prix. Sperry believes that PSU students have what it takes to be “great” rather than “good”: a willingness to be vulnerable on stage and to focus. Ethan believes that the choral program is poised to become a school destination for students from around the country. Both Bruce Brown and Ethan Sperry attribute much of the Chamber Choir’s success to the age diversity of PSU students, which is unique in college and university choirs. Looking ahead, there are many events scheduled, beginning in December and going forward to 2015 when PSU will host the National Collegiate Choral Organization Conference (www.music.pdx.edu/musicnews). For a treat, listen to the Chamber Choir: http://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv%3DlMcLils4gds.

Note: a Bruce Brown Scholarship has been established through the PSU Foundation.

--Mary Brannan, from interviews with Bruce Brown and Ethan Sperry; A Short History of the Department of Music at Portland State University, Bryan Johanson, 2013