

The University of Texas at Austin
RETIRED FACULTY STAFF ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the Spring Membership Meeting – April 22, 2021, 10:00am – via TEAMS

Approximately 62 guests attended the fall meeting, which was held virtually via TEAMS.

Barbara _____	Joyce Harris	Terry Martin	Charles Roeckle
Carole _____	Karen Harrison	L. Merubia	JoAnna Rollings
Marsha _____	Lael Hasty	Linda Millstone	Jennifer Scalora
Mary _____	Mary Kay	Sybil Momii	Beverly Shivers
Pam _____	Hemenway	Keith Momii	John Tongate
Trent _____	Corky Hilliard	Eleanor Moore	James W. Vick
Miles Abernathy	Kay Hopper	Tom Morris	
Tom Barnes	Mary Ann Jacob	Peggy Mueller	<u>Speakers/Guests</u>
Margaret Bienemann	Sharon Justice	Terry Newman	Andree Bober
Jim Crook	Phil Kelton	Tany Norwood	H. W. Brands
S DeMunbrun	Susan Kessler	Helen Oelrich	Lori Threatt –
Dudley Dobie	Karrol A. Kitt	Alba Ortiz	Relaxed Escapes
Robin Fradenburgh	Diane Larson	Nancy Payne	
Barbara Frock	Laraine Lasdon	Virginia Phillips	<u>Staff</u>
George Frock	Bill Lasher	Tere Ramirez	Carol Barrett
Joan Givens	Robert Lawrence	Alice Reinarz	Steve Blackburn
Bretna Hackert	Annela Lopez	M. Jay Riekenberg	Courtney Roehling

Welcome and Introduction

Corky Hilliard, RFSA president, welcomed all members and guests and gave an overview of today's agenda. Hopefully this will be our last virtual membership meeting and we will be able to have a regular luncheon in person in the fall. It has been a challenging time to meet our mission of providing the point of connection, continuity, and communication for the benefit of our members and The University. Our focus for this year has been diversity and inclusion, recruitment of members and leadership, and scholarships. The board has worked hard to keep RFSA in members' lives through opportunities to connect virtually with UT's talents and treasures. Thanks to all who helped make that possible.

Guest Speaker: Dr. H. W. Brands

Sharon Justice introduced Dr. Brands, who holds the Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History and served on the recent committee to look into the history of *The Eyes of Texas*. The RFSA membership heard last spring from Dr. Richard Reddick, who chaired the committee. Dr. Brands gave an excellent overview of the committee's work and findings, noting that nearly all the attention paid to the report has focused on the origin of the song. The committee found that *The Eyes of Texas* was the brainchild of two students in the University's early days. The song, which was premiered at a minstrel show, probably was performed in blackface, likely because the students were already in blackface for other songs in the show. All parties to the discussion agreed on these premises. However, differences arise in the interpretation put on those facts. There are assertions that the song was written to be a minstrel song, meant to ridicule Black people. Another song performed at the same show was written by two Black people, who went on to become the director of NAACP and the composer of the black national anthem. The song is recreated with each person who sings it. Most who have sung it had no idea that there might be any racist issues. The lyrics themselves have no racist implications. After receiving the committee's report, the University's current position is that those who don't want to sing/play the song will not be expected to do

so. A number of questions were raised and discussed. Honest and sincere people can differ on this issue, and this is entirely appropriate in the university setting.

Corky and many participants expressed appreciation to Dr. Brands for bringing us the historical perspective on this sensitive issue.

Announcement of New Officers

Corky introduced officers for 2021, whose term will begin at the end of today's meeting:

President	Tany Norwood
President-Elect	Susan Kessler
Past President	Corky Hilliard
Secretary	Joyce Harris
Treasurer	Bill Lasher
Historian	George and Barbara Frock
Historian Emerita	Martha Boyd
New Member-at-Large	Sharon Justice, Alba Ortiz (new), Charles Roeckle
Member-at-Large	
UT System	Gwen Grigsby

Other officers:

Membership chair	Peggy Mueller
Editor	
Photographer/Web	Miles Abernathy
Sponsorship	Cecil Martinez and Jim Crook
Scholarship	Lael Hasty

Interest Group Chairs

Bridge	Mary Kay Hemenway
Exercise	Carolyn Wiley
Fine Arts	Laraine Lasdon
Foodies	Robert Lawrence
Health	Linda Millstone, Karrol Kitt
Speaker Series	Phil Kelton, Alice Reinarz
Travel	Sybil and Keith Momii

Corky thanked outgoing officers: Past President Eleanor Moore, At-Large Member Jim Vick, Magazine Editor Donna Bellinghausen, Photographer/Website Co-Chair Joyce McClendon, and Travel Co-Chairs Karen and John Harrison and Marcia and Mike Arn.

RFSA Activities

Scholarship Report – Lael Hasty

RFSA gave 19 scholarship of \$2500 each for 2020-21. We have received \$6,500 in donations since October, and \$1200 from 11 donors during UT's recent 40 for 40 Campaign. Lael encouraged donations through the RFSA website or by check. She introduced three scholarship recipients who made pre-recorded video remarks:

- Felipe Gonzalez-Gutierrez
- Allen Wen
- Harrison Jin

Financial Report – Tany Norwood, co-Treasurer

Tany shared a budget summary for the year and actual year-to-date figures. Any excess over \$25,000 will be moved to a reserve fund, as prescribed by policy. The projected year-end balance is \$26,523; balance on 3/31/2021 is \$26,182.

Magazine Report – Tany Norwood

Tany was the magazine editor for several years. Current editor Donna Bellinghausen has moved and can no longer serve, but did agree to help with the spring issue with the help of a small committee of RFSA members. Tany encouraged anyone who might be interested in the editor position to contact her. The position might be reconfigured to co-editor.

Travel Report – Karen Harrison

RFSA has had a very successful travel program, which has provided good income for RFSA's scholarship program. Last fall's scheduled "Rails and Trails" trip to New England had to be rescheduled due to the pandemic. It is now scheduled to begin in Boston on October 9, ending in Portland, Maine, October 16. Karen gave details about reservations and encouraged members to join the tour.

Entertainment: UT Harp Ensemble

George Frock introduced today's entertainment, noting that the Butler School of Music is especially challenged during the pandemic. Delaines Leonard, Professor of Harp, introduced the Harp Ensemble and explained that all rehearsals were done on Zoom; today's presentation by the trio was done in one performance. The two students in the trio told about the experience and challenges of rehearsing via Zoom. Students recorded by themselves in their personal practice space, learning to deal with camera angles, external noise, and how to edit.

The trio performed Claude-Michel Schönberg's *Bring Him Home* from "Les Miserables"

Guest Speaker: Dr. Andrée Bober

Charles Roeckle introduced Dr. Bober, Director of UT Austin's Landmarks Public Arts Program. The program is a legacy of retiring Dean of Fine Arts, Doug Dempster. Dr. Bober explained that Landmarks, one of the top three university art programs in the nation, was created 2008 to enrich the University experience by placing works of contemporary art into the UT campus landscape. Inaugural pieces were borrowed from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The program benefits every person who walks on the campus, and is viewed 160,000 times every day. The program provides a threshold for students to engage with and develop a relationship with art. Dr. Bober shared a video and explained that each project stands on its own, and that a small amount of every new construction project on the campus will go toward acquiring pieces of art. She told about the process of proposals and acquisition, and said that every college on the campus has used Landmarks in their curricula. The Landmarks Preservation Guild is made up of students who are trained on preservation of art. They check on the artworks every week and report on any needs for cleaning, etc. Many tours are available, including mobile tours. The program is currently raising funds for an endowment for preservation. RFSA's new Fine Arts chair, Laraine Lasdon, expressed interest in scheduling tours for RFSA members when we are able to be back on the campus.

Remarks from Incoming RFSA President: Tany Norwood

Corky thanked everyone for the opportunity to lead RFSA in this challenging year. She thanked all who have supported RFSA and served on the board, and encouraged others to contact Tany if they are interested in serving on the board. She also acknowledged Carol Barrett and The Texas Exes for her experience, expertise, and support. Special thanks to outgoing president Eleanor Moore and incoming president Tany Norwood.

Tany retired as Assistant Dean of Students. She has received numerous awards, and the Friars named their award for her. In 2012, the UT Board of Regents established the Tany Norwood Staff Appreciation Award Endowment. She has been a member of RFSA since 2006, and has previously served as president, magazine editor, and treasurer.

Tany shared that she is excited and honored to serve as RFSA president again. She thanked Corky for her strong and flexible leadership during the pandemic. When many organizations shut down, RFSA will emerge from the pandemic stronger than ever, thanks to Corky's leadership. Tany thanked members for attending today's meeting and encouraged their future participation.

Closing: UT Harp Ensemble Video: Marcel Grandjany's *Aria in Classic Style*

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kessler
RFSA Secretary