January to feature Pizzo’s journey: Bloomington/Hollywood/Bloomington

Retirees will celebrate the new year by traveling from Bloomington to Hollywood and back as screenwriter/director/producer Angelo Pizzo traces his career journey. The meeting will be Jan. 15 at 2 p.m. at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church.

After graduating from IU with a degree in political science in 1971, Pizzo moved to Los Angeles and studied at the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts. In 1986 he and IU fraternity brother David Anspaugh created the film Hoosiers, which has been called the best sports movie ever made. They followed that success in 1993 with Rudy, about a wannabe University of Notre Dame football player.

The two worked together again on the 2005 film The Game of Their Lives, the story of the 1950 U.S. men’s soccer team. In 2015 Angelo wrote and directed My All American, based on the life of Texas football player Freddie Steinmark.

In 2011 the Indiana Historical Society named Pizzo an Indiana Living Legend. In 2013 he was inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame. He is also a member of National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame.

For IU’s bicentennial Pizzo created award-winning 30-second commercials, featuring serial entrepreneur Mark Cuban, international opera star Ailyn Pérez, New York Times crossword puzzle editor Will Shortz, ESPN sports anchor Sage Steele, and Batman producer Michael Uslan (see https://promisesfulfilled.iu.edu).

Hershey looks ahead to 2020 election

Marjorie Hershey was a huge draw. Some people who wanted to attend the luncheon were unable to do so because only the first 120 reservations could be honored. Therefore, the summary below is more comprehensive than usual.

“To a great extent, 2020 is going to be a turnout election,” Marjorie Hershey told a rapt audience at the IURA holiday luncheon Dec. 11. “Each party is going to make sure its base gets to the polls."

Margie discussed three topics during her remarks: the impeachment process, the 2020 election, and the coalitions of the two parties and how they have changed over time.
Impeachment. Impeachment, Margie said, is “a political process, where different groups pursuing different visions try to find some common ground.” With the House in Democratic hands, she put the likelihood of impeachment at 95 percent. But in the Republican-controlled Senate, she said, “the likelihood of conviction is 0 percent.” Not a single Republican will support it. The reason? “A vote against President Trump would mean losing in the Republican primary,” she said.

2020 election. The impact of the impeachment hearings on the 2020 election will probably be more limited than we might think, Margie said. After some initial alarm, “opinions have hardened, the issue has been weaponized, and not a lot of mind-changing is going on.”

Voter turnout among Americans is the lowest of any major democracy, she pointed out. The highest turnout of registered voters in the U.S. is only 62 percent. “That leaves plenty of room for mobilization,” she said. “Turnout elections emphasize anger and fear, not satisfaction and hope.”

As a special gift to her audience, Margie announced, “You don’t have to follow political news. It’s OK not to pay attention.” What’s important, she said, is “to maintain your effectiveness in speaking for your point of view.”

Party coalitions. Party identification has hardened since the mid-1900s, Margie said. “Race was at the heart of this change.”

In the mid-1900s, Democrats and Republicans were not so clearly distinguishable. Democrats were advocates of state rights; Republicans were pariahs in the South. Over the course of three decades, Republicans moved to the other side. “A federal government big enough to enforce civil rights is too big,” they decided.

When parties had mixtures of conservatives and liberals, it was easier to negotiate and compromise, Margie said. But the Republican Party has lost its liberal wing – think Nelson Rockefeller/Jacob Javits. And the Democratic Party has lost its conservative wing – think Herman Talmadge/James Eastland.

With less in common demographically, both sides find it easier to demonize the opposition, calling them “evil, immoral, unpatriotic.” The proportion of independents is much smaller than it used to be, and ticket splitting is at a record low.

Questions. In answer to a question about evangelical Christians and Trump, Margie said, “About 80 percent voted for Trump.” They support his positions on issues important to them – abortion, gay rights, government support for religious institutions. They are able to overlook his moral shortcomings because they believe sinners can be redeemed.

Another question had to do with women voters. “Although the majority of white women voted for Trump in 2016,” Margie said, “the majority was smaller than for men.” Women vote Democratic 10 to 12 percent more than men.

IURA President Doug Porter, reading question cards, said the most frequent questions had to do with who will emerge as the Democratic candidate. “No one has a clue,” Margie said. “After Iowa and New Hampshire, there probably will be three to four candidates still in the race.”

She added, “It will be really interesting to watch
what happens to Pete Buttigieg.” Will the popularity of the first openly gay candidate translate to votes?

The influence of the Electoral College is huge, she said. Trump is assuming Florida as a given, and his strategy will be to target voters in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. She puts the election odds at about 50-50, but she pointed out, “No Democratic candidate has the 25 years of negative coverage that Hillary Clinton brought to the race in 2016.”

If President Trump is re-elected, Margie said, “he may be less right-wing because he may not feel he has to respond to his base.”

The luncheon. Meadowood’s hospitality was unparalleled, diners agreed. The service was solicitous, the food delicious, and the ambiance elegant. Meadowood and other volunteer drivers like Anita Douglas transported people to and from a distant parking lot with alacrity and good cheer. Hats off to Sally Jones, Gail Londergan, Charlie Matson, and Doris Wittenburg for their special contributions.

Ellen and Doug Porter, above, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 22. At right, from top: Betty and Tony Mobley, Phyllis and Terry Clapacs, John Hobson and Vince Mabert, Ruth and Frank DiSilvestro. Additional photos of the festivities, by Allan Edmonds and Judy Schroeder, are posted at https://bit.ly/2YLxbeE
Emeriti House, University Club

For information about the programs of the Emeriti House and the University Club, our partner organizations, see http://www.indiana.edu/~emeriti and http://www.indiana.edu/~uclub.

Put these dates on your 2020 calendar

Here are future dates for IURA meetings:

- Feb. 12, 2 p.m., Perry Metz, retired general manager, WFIU/WTIU
- April 8, 2 p.m., annual meeting, John Hamilton, Bloomington Mayor
- May 13, 5 p.m., dinner, Sylvia McNair

Note that the IURA does not meet in March and there is no newsletter in February.

Here’s your membership directory

Included with the December Newswatch is a membership directory, compiled by Doris Wittenburg, IURA database manager. The directory contains information for the IURA’s 408 members.

Telephone numbers and email addresses appear only for people who included them with their membership form. Couples with different last names are listed under both last names. Because the directory is for members only, it is not being distributed in electronic form. It is being mailed with the newsletter, even to those who have requested email delivery of Newswatch. Email delivery will begin with the January issue. Address corrections should be sent to Doris at dwittenb@indiana.edu.

Editor Judy Schroeder writes Newswatch eight times a year. For comments or corrections, please contact her at jschroed@indiana.edu. As a special holiday treat, the IURA board authorized funds to print this issue in color.

More photos from the luncheon are posted on the IURA website, iura.indiana.edu

Visit our website at http://iura.indiana.edu  Contact us at iura@indiana.edu