



NEWSWATCH

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**Next meeting: 2 p.m., Wednesday, February 10
still on Zoom**

Prolific novelist to speak in February



Michael Koryta is going to be busy in February. Feb. 9 marks the release of his novel *Never Far Away*. And on Feb. 10, at 2 p.m., the bestselling author of 14 novels, a novella, and multiple short stories will talk by Zoom with retirees at the February meeting of the IURA. Michael, 38, is no stranger to IU retirees. His father, Jim, retired in 2012 as senior electrical engineer for Physical Plant after 36 years of service.

By age 16 Michael had decided to be a writer. His first novel, the Edgar-nominated *Tonight I Said Goodbye*, was accepted for publication when he was 20. Before he completed his writing requirement at IU, his work had been translated into 10 languages. He graduated with a degree in criminal justice and worked as a private investigator and as a reporter for the Bloomington *Herald-Times* before turning to writing full time.

Nine of his novels have been optioned for film or TV production. Michael has written for both feature film and television. He was a screenwriter for *Those Who Wish Me Dead*, which is scheduled for release in 2021.

Based on his novel of the same name and starring Angelina Jolie, it is set in the Montana wilderness, one of Michael's favorite spots. Last year principal photography was completed for

the horror thriller *So Cold the River*, which was shot primarily on location at West Baden Springs Hotel.

Michael and his wife, Christine, divide their time between Bloomington and Camden, Maine. His newest novel, *Never Far Away*, is set in northern Maine's Allagash Wilderness Waterway but cycles back to a murder in Florida, where Michael lived for eight years. He enjoys hiking, camping, boating, and fishing.

A prolific writer, Michael has adopted a pseudonym, Scott Carson, for books that feature the supernatural. The first, *The Chill*, will be released in paperback in March. Visit michaelkoryta.com for more information.

Nursing dean describes program growth, challenges to profession

Enrollment in IU Bloomington's pre-nursing program nearly doubled since fall 2017. One effect of the COVID pandemic is that the idealism of youth is translating to increased enrollment in health-related programs. "Nursing is a community-minded profession," **Mary Lynn Davis-Ajami** told retirees via Zoom on Jan. 13. "We're in the trenches."

The associate dean of the IU School of Nursing, Mary Lynn talked about the growth of the nursing program on the Bloomington campus. In the fall of 2016, 236 students were enrolled; by the fall of 2018 that number was 300. The number of full-time faculty has increased from 13 in 2016 to 25, and the staff has grown from four to 13.

“It’s one of the most if not the most competitive major on campus,” Mary Lynn said. The general education GPA of students admitted to the program is 3.95. Diversity has also increased, with 21 percent of enrollment from minority populations. The number of students in the honors program has also grown. “Many of these students go on to get graduate degrees,” she pointed out.

The program’s growth is limited by its nature. Baccalaureate nurses must have close to 900 hours of clinical experience. The program places students in a variety of settings, including six different acute care hospitals and three mental health care facilities. Other sites range from hospices and shelters to health departments and clinics/physician practice offices. “We have pretty well saturated clinical sites,” Mary Lynn observed, pointing out that IU shares placements with Ivy Tech. “When you touch and interact with patients, ethical, moral, and regulatory standards enforce our responsibility to do no harm.” For example, she said, “Every time a student gives a shot, a faculty member has to supervise.” In an Indiana clinical setting, one faculty member is required for every 10 students.

COVID intensified the challenges for nursing faculty and students. “We were not able to socially distance in Sycamore Hall, so students had to have full personal protective equipment,” Mary Lynn reported. Clinicals were reintroduced in the fall under very strict guidelines. Initially students were not permitted to come into contact with COVID patients, but the rise in cases required an adaptation. “Now we have policies for n95 mask fitting for all juniors and seniors, and we’ve upped the infection control content we’re teaching,” she said.

According to Mary Lynn, “Everyone should be sending accolades and flowers to the registrar’s and space planning offices.” Starting classes safely “took a boatload of work throughout the university.” Nursing students were highly engaged with pre-arrival COVID testing in the fall and will be again in the spring.

Mary Lynn is thrilled with the facilities the nursing school will have with the opening of when Health Sciences Building, adjacent to the new hospital, all part of the new Regional Academic Health Center complex. For example, the skills lab will expand from 11 to 21 beds.

National media have pointed out the shortage of nurses. The COVID epidemic may make the nursing shortage even more acute, Mary Lynn said, because some nurses in the baby boomer generation may retire. “They are just worn out,” she said. “The patient acuity and deaths make it like being in a war zone. It’s very draining.”

Within 50 miles of Bloomington there are more than 1,369 openings for RNs, with 2,206 openings within 50 miles of Indianapolis. “The southern Indiana area has an acute shortage of RNs compared to Indianapolis,” Mary Lynn said, “but we also have the lowest wages for the same job.” With the mean wage for bedside RNs exceeding \$77,000 nationally, in southern Indiana the mean is \$59,640. Nurse practitioners, who rank first in growth projections, earn in excess of six figures, she said.

Mary Lynn began her presentation by sharing some information about COVID. “There’s been an evolution in the thinking about transmission,” she said. Respiratory aerosol transmission is the most common. Distancing reduces exposure. The countries that have done the best job containing the epidemic have followed public health guidelines, including mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing. “The coronavirus can mutate fairly quickly compared to some other viruses,” she said, “and some mutations matter.” The newest mutation has made the virus even more infectious than the previous strain.

The rapid rollout of vaccinations offers hope. The most common reactions to the vaccine are site soreness and mild flu-like symptoms. “These reactions just mean your immune system has kicked in,” Mary Lynn said.

Joyce Krothe, who preceded her as head of the nursing program on the Bloomington campus,

introduced Mary Lynn. After her presentation IURA Program Chair **Doug Porter** thanked Mary Lynn, as a representative of the nursing profession, “for everything nurses have done for this last year, the sacrifices they’ve made and the help they’ve given.” Mary Lynn agreed: “They have literally put their lives on the line.”

Doug also observed, “You should mandate the red scrubs because your students are walking billboards for your program.” Mary Lynn said a Red Scrubs Scholarship was established in fall 2020 to help with the additional costs required of nursing students. At a time when many part-time jobs have evaporated, these scholarships help socioeconomically challenged students pay for stethoscopes, CPR certification, and testing and licensing fees.



Webmaster **Allan Edmonds** has posted video links to past Zoom meetings on the Events page at iura.indiana.edu. A video link of the January meeting is available at <http://bit.ly/3nAzVXa>.

IURA growth requires additions to printed membership directory

Included with the December *NewsWatch* was the annual directory. Compiled by **Doris Wittenburg**, database manager since 2015, the directory included information for 444 members. Since then membership has grown.

Here is information for our newest members:

David Hart, 1422 Elliston Dr., Bloomington, IN 47401-8745, 812-325-8163, dhart@indiana.edu

Ric Heeter, 4997 E. Cedar Crest Dr., Bloomington, IN 47401-9204

Robert W. & Joan Hongen, 3820 E. Devonshire Court, Bloomington, IN 47408-9698, 812-929-2864, hongenr@indiana.edu

Sally Jones, 1911 E. Wilton Court, Bloomington, IN 47401-6784, 812-322-5548, sejones@indiana.edu

Will Murphy, 3941 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis, IN 46205-2649, wimurphy13@gmail.com

Heidi & Dale Neuburger, 692 Ellsworth St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-6132, 317-755-7010, hneuburg@iu.edu

Taemin Park, 2903 Alderman Lane, Durham, NC 27705-9303, park@indiana.edu

Laurie Sullivan, 2500 W. Reynolds Rd., Bloomington, IN 47404-9329, lsulliv@iu.edu

An addition to the directory is **Tom Hustad**'s email: hustad@indiana.edu. A correction is **Jo Daron**'s telephone number is 812-824-7434.

Copies of the printed directory are available by request: jschroed@indiana.edu.

Who's on the list? Correction to come

In covering Bicentennial events, the December 2020 *NewsWatch* listed 18 IURA members who had received the Bicentennial Medal. As several members who were not included have pointed out, that list was incomplete.

Kelly Kish, director of the IU Office of the Bicentennial, replied to an email inquiry, “There were 2,020 approved recipients,” not the approximately 800 who are listed on the Bicentennial Medal website.

Asked why the list is incomplete, Kelly responded, “The honors and awards website has not been able to accept updates since early fall, but we hope in the next few weeks to launch a new site and add additional medal recipients as soon as possible.” She added, “I would suggest you wait until later in the spring if you want a truly definitive list.”

A corrected list of IURA members receiving Bicentennial Medals will be printed when the information becomes available.

IU Retirees Association
P.O. Box 8393
Bloomington, IN 47407-8393

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Feeling blue? Exercise online!

Joyce Krothe, chair of IURA Benefits, recommends Silver Sneakers online classes. “During COVID I have taken advantage of many of these online classes,” she says. “They offer both fitness and wellness.” Members of the IU Blue Retiree Plan are eligible for free Silver Sneakers membership.

“Once you set up an account with a username and password, it’s easy to register,” Joyce says. “You are able to register for individual classes; you do not need to sign up for a series.” To set up an account, go to [SilverSneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com).



Silver Sneakers offers a wide range of times for online classes Monday through Friday, as well as

weekend options. “I typically receive a Zoom link within a minute of registering for a class,” Joyce reports. The site also advertises on-demand workout and wellness videos.

Anytime Fitness and Twin Lakes Recreation Center also offer Silver Sneakers classes.

Retirees hit it out of ballpark — again

You’ve done it again! IURA retirees surpassed the lofty \$275,000 goal for the 2021 United Way campaign, setting a new record for generosity. As of Jan. 15 retirees had pledged \$290,250.64. Because fewer retiree contributions have been received than for the last several years (everyone has experienced erratic mail service), the news is likely to get even better. **Jim Grandorf** and **Perry Maull** underscore how important retirees are in helping IU meet its goal. To date retiree pledges make up nearly 40 percent of IU’s current total of \$747,180.93

About this newsletter

Newswatch is published eight times each year (nine in 2021), August through April. To correct your address, please contact **Doris Wittenburg**, database manager, at dwittenb@indiana.edu. For comments or corrections, please contact **Judy Schroeder**, editor, at jschroed@indiana.edu.

Founded in 1975 as the IU Annuitants Association, the IURA welcomes all retired faculty and staff and their spouses or partners. It is supported entirely by membership dues. It receives no university funding.