



NEWSWATCH

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November 2023

**Next meeting: Holiday luncheon on Tuesday, December 12
Bloomington Country Club, 3000 S. Rogers St.**

Holiday buffet: It's coming

On Tuesday, Dec. 12, the IURA is sponsoring a festive holiday luncheon at the Bloomington Country Club, 3000 S. Rogers St.

The Hoosier Buffet should appeal to everyone. It features Angus pot roast, fried chicken, buttermilk whipped potatoes, cornbread, and a bistro salad with assorted dressings. Apple, berry, and peach cobbler will be available at the coffee station. Members with dietary restrictions may pre-order a vegetarian (baked ziti primavera) or vegan (roasted vegetable strudel) option.

“Great food, convivial company, and a whole lot of fun: our annual holiday luncheon will have it all,” says IURA board member **John Schilb**. (In January John will become hospitality chair, replacing interim chair **Perry Maull**.) **Beau Vallance**, IURA secretary, adds, “This luncheon is a fine IURA tradition, something I look forward to at the end of each year.”

Please reserve your place by returning the reservation form on Page 3 so that it is received by no later than Nov. 30.

Capshew revisits Herman B Wells

When University Historian **Jim Capshew** was an undergraduate at IU in the late 1970s, the *Arbutus* yearbook ran a photo of him, with the headline that he “Shares home with unique roommate.” That roommate was IU President Herman B Wells. For two years Wells, at his own expense, employed Jim as a house man/boy (“houseboy to older people, house man to younger ones,” Jim explained).

Jim shared memories, along with details from Wells’ life and career, when he spoke to about 50 retirees in person and on Zoom on Nov. 8. The author of *Herman B Wells and the Promise of the American University*, he is an expert on IU’s fabled 12th president. Jim replaced **Brad Cook**, the advertised speaker, who had a family emergency.



In *Being Lucky*, Wells said his official portrait included the “three symbols of my presidency (schoolmaster, beggar, internationalist) as represented by artifacts on my desk: my father’s school bell ... , the antique begging bowl of a Tibetan monk, and a globe indicating that the world is the university’s parish.” Capshew pointed out two more symbols: the open window, representing Wells’ approachability, and the trees behind him, representing his advocacy for the natural beauty of the campus.

Wells was born in Jamestown, Ind., a town of 600 people. When he was a high school sophomore, his family moved to nearby Lebanon, the county seat. There he contracted orchitis, an inflammation of the testes that left him sterile. Wells never dated anyone. Although rumors abound, there is no evidence that he ever had a romantic partner. When he graduated from high school, Wells was named “best all-round boy.”

Because he wanted to major in business and IU had no business school, he enrolled at the University of Illinois. A year later, after IU opened a business school, Wells transferred. “He fell in love with the campus, both the people and the landscape,” Jim said.

Wells became president of Sigma Nu in his senior year. As an only child, he particularly valued his new brothers.

After graduating from IU in 1924, he worked at a bank before returning to IU for a master's degree. Then he became field secretary for the Indiana Bankers Association, visiting many of the state's 1,100 banks. That experience led him to play an important role in championing state legislation to professionalize and strengthen banks.

Wells was, Jim said, an unapologetic New Deal Democrat. He spoke in defense of what he called "fearless experimentation with agencies of social control designed to curb the abuses and the undesirable features of the capitalistic system."

In 1935, at the age of 33, he became dean of IU's School of Business. He promised students, "My door will always be open to you." Wells was known for being personable and approachable, Jim said.

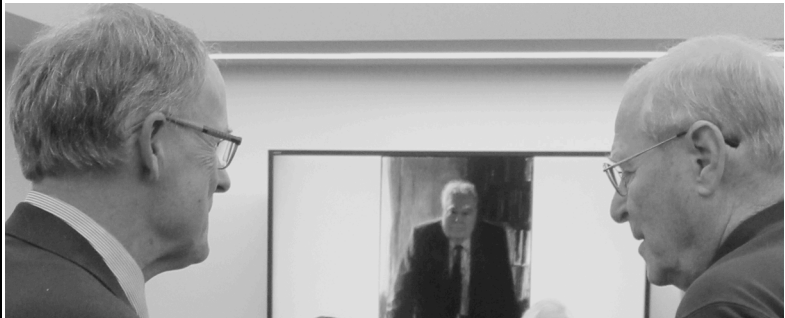
In 1937 Ora Wildermuth, vice president of the IU board of trustees, invited Wells to become acting president upon the retirement of William Lowe Bryan. The acting designation was good, Wildermuth said, because "we know we won't be considering you." Nevertheless, because of his exemplary performance, nine months later Wells was appointed president. In his inauguration address, he emphasized the university's role in a democracy. He quoted John Dewey: "Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is the midwife."

When Wells became president, IU's campus covered 140 acres. When he retired 25 years later, the campus measured 1,800 acres. Sixty years later the Bloomington campus covers about 2,000 acres. "He wanted the campus to have enough space," Jim said.

Wells was an avid supporter of the arts. The IU Auditorium opened in 1941. Jim said the Metropolitan Opera regularly performed in the smallest town on its itinerary because the auditorium provided a large, good venue. When Wells tried to recruit Wilfred Bain to head the music school, Bain said, "I'll come if you create an opera program." Developing that program was key to expanding the music school's offerings. He also kept in close touch with alumni in the arts. Jim recalled, from his time as a houseboy, that Hoagy Carmichael called Wells once a month.

Wells was a strong proponent of academic freedom. In defending Alfred Kinsey, he said, "This university believes the human race has been able to make progress because individuals have been free to investigate all aspects of life." In 1953, amid the controversy over Kinsey's work, Wells proclaimed, "We have large faith in the value of knowledge, little faith in ignorance."

He was also a champion of equity, diversity, and inclusion. "We must renounce prejudice of color, class, and race in Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana," he said in 1944. "Our renunciation must be personally implemented by words. Our actions will measure the sincerity of our words." The noted contralto Marian Anderson performed twice at IU during the 1940s. Wells hosted receptions for her in his home.



TWO JIMS ADMIRE HERMAN. Jim Capshew and Jim Grandorf share recollections of Herman B Wells. Photo Beau Vallance

Wells retired in 1962, when he became the university's chancellor. An unparalleled maker of friends, he was a tireless fundraiser. He died in 2000 at the age of 97. "Wells drew his prodigious strength from his connection to the university," Jim believes.

In discussion following the presentation, **Jim Grandorf** said that, as an IU student, he knew President Wells. "What impressed me was the way that he always listened," Jim said. "He dominated by being quiet."

In her closing remarks, IURA President **Joyce Krothe** said that, when she, her husband, and their three small children moved to Bloomington, she became Dr. Wells' night nurse. Some 18 years later, one of her sons became his Sunday companion.

IURA program chair **Tony Mescher** introduced the speaker. Thanks to webmaster **Allan Edmonds**, a video recording of the meeting is available on the IURA website.

IURA Holiday Luncheon Reservation

Tuesday, December 12

Doors open at 11:30 a.m.; meal served at noon
Bloomington Country Club,
3000 S. Rogers St.

PLEASE PRINT Name(s) _____

Please initial to order baked ziti primavera _____ or roasted vegetable strudel _____.
All others will have the Hoosier Buffet.

Enclosed is \$33 per person (indicate number) _____
(Price includes 20% gratuity, 7% state tax, and 1% food and beverage tax.)

Please mail this form, together with your check, made payable to IU Retirees Association, to IURA, P.O. Box 8393, Bloomington, IN 47407-8393.

RESERVATIONS with PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 30.

**IU Retirees Association
2023-2024 Membership Form**

Name _____

For couple membership, spouse's/partner's name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ 9-digit ZIP code _____

Telephone 1* _____ Email 1* _____

Telephone 2* _____ Email 2* _____

When it's possible, I wish to receive the newsletter by email rather than in paper form.

*It is important that you include an email address so we can send you meeting notices. Telephone number/s and email address/es will be included in the membership directory unless you check below:

I do not want my telephone number/s _____ or email address/es _____ included in membership directory.

Enclosed is my check, made payable to IU Retirees Association, for

Membership Type: Single (\$30) _____ Couple (\$40) _____

Please mail this form with your check to IU Retirees Association
P.O. Box 8393
Bloomington, IN 47407-8393

You may write one check that includes both membership dues and reservation payment.

visit our website at iura.indiana.edu Contact us at iura@indiana.edu

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

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Permit No. 2

If your mailing label (above) asks you to join rather than thanking you, this is your final complimentary newsletter. Please join today by completing the membership form on Page 3.

Look for your directory in December

The December issue of *Newswatch* will be mailed with the annual membership directory, compiled by database manager **Doris Wittenburg**. The directory is distributed *only* to members.

Special thanks to the 344 people who, as of Nov. 9, have paid their membership dues. They make this newsletter possible. The IURA is entirely self-supporting. Founded in 1975 as the IU Annuitants Association, the IURA welcomes all retired faculty and staff and their spouses or partners.

If you wish to be removed from the list, send a message to dwittenb@indiana.edu with "unsubscribe" in the subject line and your name as it appears on IU records. Send address changes to Doris as well.

Judy Schroeder writes *Newswatch* at least eight times a year, August through April, except for February. However, 2024 may bring a February newsletter because a bonus program is being developed for March. Please send corrections and comments to the editor at jschroed@indiana.edu.

Advocates Office seeks volunteers

The Student Advocates Office (SAO) is looking for highly qualified IU retirees who may be interested in becoming volunteer student advocates. Advocates help students resolve personal and academic problems so that they can progress toward earning a degree. Who better than IU retirees to help students navigate the many complexities of a large academic institution?

The Student Advocates Office, which is part of the Office of Student Life, has been serving students since 1982. Director Darrell Ann Stone invites you to contact her: dastone@indiana.edu, (812) 855-0761. For more information, go to <https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-support/advocates>.

Dates to add to your 2024 calendar

IURA program chair **Tony Mescher** has announced the first two meetings for 2024:

Wednesday, Jan. 10 – **Catherine Pilachowski**, Daniel Kirkwood Chair of astronomy, on preparing for the April solar eclipse

Wednesday, Feb. 14 – **Chad Priest**, vice president, American Red Cross Southeast and Rocky Mountain Division, on disaster preparedness and emergency management

Tony is hoping to add a special March attraction. Look for details of this and the April and May programs in the December newsletter.