

The Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff

Emeritus News Spring 2025

- My Corner - by Barbara Mallette

"In February, the overcast sky is not gloomy so much as neutral and vague. It's a good time to get lost in thought, for the outdoor world is not very compelling these days."

Vivian Swift



So far this year, the cold and abundant snow remind us of the characteristics of a true winter in Western New York State. Even with almost daily snow shoveling, we have managed to get outside and play a few times. The joy of entering the house is priceless. Even as a child, I can remember the comforting sensation of stepping inside a warm house after being outside for hours (I can also remember bundling up for the outdoors only to realize that I had to use the bathroom – but that is a different story!). We find ourselves drawn to the sliding glass door where we can watch birds feasting or the occasional red, grey, or black squirrels. Even on a cloudy day, the light seems to chase away any gloominess that sneaks in when least expected. This February we have noticed that the deer are getting braver, coming to clean up the bird seed before late afternoon. By evening, the deer have returned and at least two rabbits have joined them.

The winter night skies are impressive. In the late hours on a cloudless night, the constellations provide a visible feast of sparkles. Orion holds a special place in our viewing area. In February, we were treated to sighting almost all of the seven planets that have been visible in the southern sky. On frigid nights we engage in a family tradition - we throw boiling water outside to create "sea smoke" and seem to do this a number of times. Making instant "steam" is thrilling!

Buffalo Bills Mania was rampant in our area, which ought to come as no surprise. The Bills gave us a memorable season and entertained us into the post season. With Josh Allen's Most Valuable Player award, the end of the playoffs is somewhat easier to accept. One step closer this year, with hope budding for the next season.

As we head south for a few weeks, I am reminded about the joys of winter. Spending time cooking, baking, sewing, and reading feed my soul and provide treasured time in enjoyed activities. And nothing compares to being toasty warm near the wood fire as we complete yet another jigsaw puzzle. Even so, with March looming, thoughts turn to spring and an inevitable thaw. I read that 3 minutes of sunlight are added to our day from now through early May. Taken over time, these minutes give us long days to enjoy the beauty of spring and connect with the folks not seen since fall. The Emeritus Group will be celebrating spring at a luncheon in April in the University Room of the newly remodeled and reopened White Inn. Please join us and usher in spring in style!

NOTE: READ ON! The reservation form for April Emeritus Luncheon is included in this newsletter.

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant."

Anne Bradstreet

• Additonal Information

- **RESERVE YOUR PLACE:** Because of dwindling interest in a March luncheon, Cathe, Sandy and I decided to move our next luncheon to April. We are headed to the newly redecorated and reopened White Inn. Please see the reservation form in this newsletter issue (page 3).
- Fredonia has many activities that may interest you. Check out the variety of events that are offered this semester and beyond: <https://events.fredonia.edu>.
- Volunteers will be needed for Commencement May 17, 2025. Ceremonies take place at 10 am and 3 pm. If you can help, please contact Registrar Scott Saunders at Scott.Saunders@fredonia.edu.

• Update Contact Information

Have you moved, changed your email address or phone number? If so, please let us know so we can update your file. You may email dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu or call 716-673-3456.

Please email dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu to receive the newsletter via email—it would help to reduce mailing costs.

• Save the Date

Wednesday, April 16, 2025
11:45 AM

Emeritus Group April Luncheon
The White Inn, 52 East Main Road
Fredonia, NY 14063
Details on page 3

Thursday, April 24, 2025
11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

**Years of Service and Retiree
Recognition Luncheon**
Williams Center, MPR

President Stephen H. Kolison, Jr. cordially invites faculty, staff and emeriti members to the Years of Service and Retirement Recognition luncheon. Please RSVP by April 10, 2024 by emailing president.office@fredonia.edu or call the office at 716-673-3456.

Hope to see you there!

Friday, May 16, 2025
7:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Commencement Eve POPS:
The Sound of Music

Rockefeller Arts Center
King Concert Hall
More information can be found at
events.fredonia.edu

Saturday, May 17, 2025
10:00 AM and 3:00 PM

Commencement
Steele Hall Field House



• Emeritus Group Luncheon - We're going to the White Inn!



Emeritus Group April Luncheon
The White Inn, 52 East Main Road
Fredonia, NY 14063
Wednesday, April 16, 2025



We will meet and mingle at 11:45 a.m.— lunch will be served at 12:15 pm.

Please send your reservations **and** food choice by **April 9th** (Note: The White Inn needs this lead time to ensure availability of the entrees).

Make your check payable to Emeritus Group. Please note the price for each entrée, which includes tax and tip.

Luncheon Entrée Choices:

- **Reuben** (Shaved corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss, and Thousand Island on grilled marbled rye bread, served with fries)
- or
- **Caprese** (Breaded eggplant, tomato, mozzarella, pesto on an herbed focaccia roll, served with fries)
- or
- **Club Sandwich** (Shaved turkey, bacon, American, Swiss, lettuce, tomato, and mayo on toasted choice of bread, served with fries)

Send your meal reservation to:

Barbara Mallette
PO Box 328
Cassadaga, NY 14718

We look forward to seeing you all.
--Barbara and Doug



Detach here and mail to Barbara.

Name _____

Name _____

_____ Reuben \$22.00 per person

_____ Reuben \$22.00 per person

_____ Caprese \$21.00 per person

_____ Caprese \$21.00 per person

_____ Club Sandwich \$21.00 per person

_____ Club Sandwich \$21.00 per person

Number attending _____

Enclosed is a check (payable to Emeritus Group) for \$_____

(Please no later than by April 9th).

• Emeritus Spotlight - Neil Feit by Barbara Mallette

"My mother thought my inclinations would do well in Law, but I was too shy and deliberative - slowfooted - for that, so I determined to be an English and German high school teacher. In my first year of university I had one subject to "fill in" and chose philosophy against the advice of my counselor. My university teachers in English and German were totally uninspiring; philosophy was wonderful and my results showed it. I chose it and basically backed into a situation in which only a philosophy career seemed a viable option. I've never regretted it, but there was a lot of serendipity".

John Kleinig



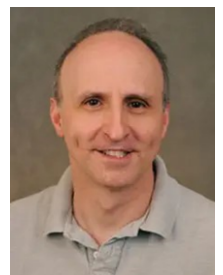
Born in a Manhattan hospital, Neil Feit was raised in the Kingsbridge/Spuyten Duyvil ("Spouting Devil") area of the Bronx. There he attended NYC public elementary school as well as junior and senior high schools. He was a strong student in academics, with particular interest in political science, history, science, and math. Neil remembers enjoying reading, especially the Hardy Boys mysteries and, in high school, Jonathan Swift. He followed New York baseball (Yankees) and football (Giants) teams. Although Neil didn't play these sports in school, he was a member of the Ultimate Frisbee Team and the Dungeons and Dragons Club in high school.

Mr. and Mrs. Feit were both teachers in the NYC Public School System: Neil's father was a business/accounting teacher while his mother was a high school math teacher. They lived on the 5th floor of a ten-story apartment building. Neil recalled their one move as an 11-year-old; the family moved to the next building to a 3-bedroom apartment. Finally, he didn't have to share a bedroom with his younger brother!

Neil loved living in the NYC area, so much that he attended Columbia University as a mechanical engineering major. He also enrolled in many computer courses. And as part of a required core of courses, he completed courses in philosophy, the first of which, a course on the history of social and political philosophy, sparked his interest in philosophy. Upon completing his BA, Neil took a gap year and worked for a software company in Manhattan. His work included a subcontract with Mobil Oil for which he programmed and tested oil trading platforms. This job and the gap year cemented his decision to pursue graduate school. The University of Massachusetts (UMass) offered him a 4-year tuition waiver and fellowship, making the move to Amherst, MA more affordable. At UMass, Neil relished his immersion in philosophical studies. He found teaching introductory courses in philosophy and logic at UMass, Smith College, and North Adams State College a welcome addition to his graduate program and his research.

In 1996, with his newly minted doctorate in hand, Neil accepted a visiting professor line at Western Washington University. For a man who only moved one building during his childhood, the move 2,400 miles across country was an adventure. Neil found that teaching was truly his first love but he wanted the security of a full-time tenure track position. Through the American Philosophical Association, Neil became aware of an opening in philosophy at Fredonia State University. He applied and was hired when Dr. Mort Schagrin was chair of the Philosophy Department.

During his time at Fredonia, Neil's passion for teaching was recognized both at the University Level as well as the SUNY System Level. In 2005, Neil was awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. The accolades continued when he was recognized as the William T. and Charlotte N. Hagan Young Scholar/Artist Award winner in 2009. In another recognition of this excellence in research and scholarship, Neil presented the 2011 Kasling lecture. Neil's courses and studies have focused on the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language, particularly, the mental content of cognitive attitudes. His interests in epistemology, metaphysics, and especially ethics continues to fuel Neil's research agenda.



The SUNY System bestowed one of its highest honors on Neil in 2016 when he was awarded promotion to Distinguished Teaching Professor. Not only has Neil's teaching prowess been recognized, but also his research and publication record. He has produced two books, another edited book, and over 20 articles in prestigious philosophy journals. In addition, Neil has presented at international conferences in Uppsala (Sweden), Liverpool (England), and most recently in Krakow (Poland). Describing his achievements, Neil initially identified the dozens of students he assisted in getting into law school. And he was very proud of being the Faculty Advisor to an active Philosophy Club.

Neil retired from Fredonia after the 2022-2023 academic year. Although his teaching days have ended, Neil remains active in his field, editing the work of colleagues and writing. He is an area editor for *Ergo*, an open access philosophy journal; Neil also referees papers for other journals. Soon to be published is a chapter in a new book. Spending about two hours each day reading and writing professionally has become a highlight of Neil's retirement.

• Emeritus Spotlight *continued* - Neil Feit

When asked about the highlights of his career at Fredonia, certainly, Neil listed his accolades. But first on his list was meeting his wife, Julia Wilson, an Associate Professor at Fredonia in Mathematical Sciences! Neil and Julia live in a 120-year-old house in Fredonia. Neil added that retirement means he can spend more time working on the house and spending time with family. Julia and Neil have one son, Ben, a senior at Fredonia High School. Neil recalled with fondness a family trip to France in Spring 2024, visiting D-Day beaches and Paris, as well as family trips to the NYC area.

A big-city boy has grown to love living in a small village. Neil has found that he loves his family's house and feels secure in the friendships formed during his stay in Fredonia. He hopes to return to alpine skiing with his wife and son this winter.

When asked "How do you want to be remembered?", Neil had no difficulty responding "As a good husband and father, a good friend, a decent scholar with some good ideas and a bit of impact." I think the readers will agree...Goal achieved!

"I like old people when they have aged well. And old houses with an accumulation of sweet honest living in them are good. And the timelessness that only the passing of Time itself can give to objects both inside and outside the spirit is a continuing reassurance."

M. F. K. Fisher

• In Memoriam

Dr. Frank Pullano passed away on November 8, 2024.

Dr. Pullano joined the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1960 as an Assistant Professor in Music and was later promoted to Associate Professor in 1970 and Professor in 1972. Dr. Pullano was awarded Emeritus status upon his retirement in 1991.

Memorials may be made to The Parkinson's Foundation or to a charity of your choice.

A Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date. Arrangements have been made by Greene Funeral Home, Ebenezer Road, Rock Hill, SC.

Condolences/memories can be posted here:

<https://www.greenefuneralhome.net/obituary/frank-louis-pullano/>

Dr. John Stinson passed away on November 23, 2024.

In 1965, Dr. Stinson joined the State University of New York at Fredonia as an Instructor in the English Department. He was then promoted to Assistant Professor in 1971, Associate Professor in 1974, and Professor in 1978. He served as Associate Chair for the English Department from 2002-2003 and Interim Chair from 2004-2005. After 45 years of service in the English Department, Dr. Stinson retired as Emeritus Professor in September of 2010.

It is suggested to send memorials to the Theatre Arts Department, c/o The Fredonia College Foundation, 272 Central Avenue, Fredonia, NY 14063,

<https://www.fredonia.edu/give-now> or the 1891 Fredonia Opera House, 9 Church Street, Fredonia, NY 14063, <https://fredopera.org/>.

Please visit Larson Timko Funeral Home, <https://www.larsontimkofuneralhome.com/>, for visitation and service details.

Mr. Henry B. "Bernie" Gerling passed away on November 30, 2024.

Mr. Gerling joined the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1975 as an Instructor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. In 1985, he was promoted to Personnel Associate and in 1997 was promoted to Director of Personnel in the Human Resources Department. In 2001 Mr. Gerling transferred to SUNY Plattsburgh as the Labor Relations Associate and then returned to SUNY Fredonia in 2004 as a part-time Immigration Specialist and held this position until 2008.

Online condolences may be made at <https://www.amigone.com/obituaries/Henry-B-Bernie-Gerling?obId=33950307>.

One of SUNY Fredonia's distinguished alumni and friends, Mrs. Helen Louise (Tinch) Williams, passed away on December 28, 2024, while visiting her daughter in London, where she had planned to celebrate her 85th birthday.

Mrs. Williams demonstrated unwavering support to SUNY Fredonia and its endeavors in music education. The Hillman Memorial Music Association and SUNY Fredonia awarded her the Jessie Hillman Award for Excellence in Education in 2010, and she was recognized with the Fredonia Alumni Association's Outstanding Achievement Award in 2017. She established the Helen Tinch Williams Scholarship, which benefits the Richard Sheil Memorial Music Scholarship Fund. In 2022, her children, Vanessa and Chris, established The Helen Tinch Williams Vocal Performance Fund through the Fredonia College Foundation.

Mrs. Williams distinguished herself as an educator in the Ossining and Manhattanville School Districts and Manhattanville College. She was an unwavering mentor and advocate for arts and other social causes, and this was demonstrated through her work in her community, church, public schools, and with several organizations.

Please consider a donation to The Helen Tinch Williams Vocal Performance Fund through the link, <https://give-to-fredonia.formstack.com/forms/give> or by mailing it to The Helen Tinch Williams Vocal Performance Fund, c/o Fredonia College Foundation, 272 Central Avenue, Fredonia, New York 14063.

Dr. James Shokoff passed away on January 22, 2025.

In 1970, Dr. Shokoff joined the State University of New York at Fredonia as an Assistant Professor in the English Department. He was then promoted to Associate Professor in 1973, and Professor in 1983. He served as Chairperson of the English Department from 1985-1991 and Interim Chairperson from 2002-2004. Dr. Shokoff retired as Emeritus Professor in the English Department in September of 2004.

At a later date, arrangements will be announced by the Larson-Timko Funeral Home, <https://www.larsontimkofuneralhome.com/>.