



HURAnews

HARVARD UNIVERSITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

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OCR investigates Harvard's legacy admissions practices

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has opened an investigation into Harvard University's legacy admissions policies after Lawyers for Civil Rights (a Boston-based nonprofit) filed a complaint on July 3, 2023, alleging that the University discriminates on the basis of race by using donor and legacy preferences in its undergraduate admissions process.

The University is subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

The complaint against Harvard was filed on behalf of three organizations.

The **Chica Project**, whose "programs are designed to create a world with doors wide open for young womxn [sic] of color."

African Community Economic Development of New England (ACEDONE), whose "mission is to partner with families to help African refugees and immigrants in Boston develop a self-sufficient and vital community by providing our youth with the education and life experience to thrive socially, professionally, and economically."

Greater Boston Latino Network (GBLN), "a group of Latinx leaders representing various community-based organizations that co-created a network to amplify the Latinx voice, increase Latinx representation and visibility, and center the community's collective impact."

The complaint challenged Harvard's discriminatory practice of giving preferential treatment in the admissions process to applicants with familial ties to wealthy donors and alumni. It alleges that nearly 70% of Harvard's

overwhelmingly white applicants who benefit from Harvard's legacy and donor preferences.

Defenders of the practice, however, point out that applicants from wealthy backgrounds are more likely to pay full tuition, leaving more scholarship and grant money for minority applicants who are less able to do so—albeit for fewer open slots.

In a letter, the department notified Lawyers for Civil Rights that it had launched a probe into Harvard's admissions practices. But it also

included this caution: "Please note that opening the complaint for investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination on the merits of the complaint.

During the investigation,

OCR is a neutral factfinder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence from the Complainant, the University, and other sources, as appropriate.

Speaking for Harvard, Nicole Rura, senior communications officer in the Office of News and Public Affairs, released a statement responding to the allegations, saying the University is actively working to review its admissions practices following the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on race-conscious admissions.

"Our review includes examination of a range of data and information, along

"Please note that opening the complaint for investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination on the merits of the complaint."

donor-related and legacy applicants are white, and they receive a substantial boost based on their status. It says that donor-related applicants are nearly seven times more likely to be admitted than non-donor-related. And legacy applicants are nearly six times more likely to be admitted. It does not cite the source(s) of these data.

It claims that for the Class of 2019, about 28% of the class had a parent or other relative who went to Harvard. Qualified and highly deserving applicants of color are harmed as a result, as the complaint alleges that admissions slots are given instead to the

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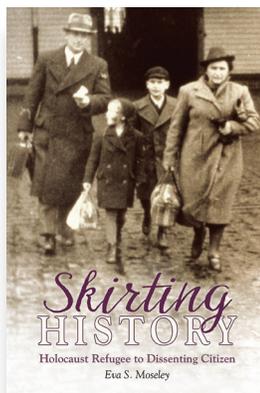
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BOOK REVIEW

BY EVA STEINER MOSELEY, *Skirting History; Holocaust Refugee to Dissenting Citizen*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press, 2022. 430 p. Paperback. Available on Amazon, \$20.

How public events affect private lives is the theme of this moving memoir. Eva and her secular Jewish family managed to evade the Holocaust and lesser public disasters, but not some private ones. They were able to leave Vienna a year after the Nazi annexation of Austria. In New York and



several other places and cultures, she evolved from a shy, often fearful child and adolescent to an increasingly self-confident feminist and outspoken peace activist.

She married George Moseley believing he was the “black sheep” of his right-wing military family. While his political views and attitude toward her Jewishness sometimes wavered, she remained true to her parents’ social-democratic principles and the “Jewish value” of justice for everyone. Family relations and trouble play out in a context of the Cold War and changes in Jewish status with the rise of Israel. After an unamicable

divorce and George’s violent death (an unsolved murder), her attitude toward Jewishness changed because of Israel’s “oppression of the Palestinians.”

Worried about what future her offspring—and everyone else—will face, in retirement she has devoted much of her time as a

dissenting citizen to issues ranging from nuclear weapons and global warming to advocacy for Palestinian rights and opposing unquestioning U.S. support of militarized Israel.

Eva Moseley is well known to many HURA members, as she was curator of manuscripts at Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, part of Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

On October 10, HURA will offer an in-person discussion by Eva as part of its occasional Author Series. Details will be sent to the HURA E-list as soon as they are arranged.

COMING EVENTS

Tuesday, October 10, 2:00-4:00:

Author talk: Eva Moseley, Phillips Brooks House Living Room.

Wednesday, October 18, 3:00-5:00:

HURA Fall Reception, Faculty Club, Reading Room, 1st Floor, left. (Flyer elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Saturday, November 11, 1:00:

Crimson vs. Penn, Senior Day Football game. (Flyer to be sent by email.)

Thursday, December 7, 11:30-2:00:

Holiday Luncheon, Oakley Country Club. (Flyer will be in the Nov/Dec/Jan issue of *HURA News*.)

Saturday, December 16, 3:00: Holiday

Pops (Flyer will be in the Nov/Dec/Jan issue of *HURA News*.)

--- Coming up in 2024 ---

Wednesday, June 5, 2024, 11:30-2:00: Annual Meeting, Loeb House.

Dr. Nguyen Addresses HURA Annual Meeting

HURA was pleased to welcome Dr. Giang Nguyen, executive director of Harvard University Health Services, as its featured speaker at the June 2023 Annual Meeting at Loeb House in Cambridge. He focused his remarks on “Navigating the health and wellbeing of a diverse Harvard community in times of crisis.” He began by talking about Harvard University Health Services, describing how its work has evolved since it was created almost 120 years ago. Originally Health Services was created to keep Harvard’s students healthy. This initial focus, while still central to its work, has expanded to supporting a University-wide community. Dr. Nguyen spoke about what this mission means for HUHS and described Health Services’ wellbeing framework as including eight dimensions: physical, emotional, relational,



HURA president John Collins and Dr. Nguyen.

financial, intellectual, vocational, environmental, and spiritual. He noted further that, at different times in our lives, we may need to focus more on one than on another of them. With such a broad framework, Health Services cannot support the community’s needs alone, he said. It needs the help of the entire University.

Turning to the onset of COVID-19—just a few months after he arrived at Harvard—he spoke about the

University’s efforts to respond to the pandemic. While acknowledging their initial limitations—the lack of knowledge about the disease and the community’s different needs and risks—he stressed that it took a village, in fact many villages, across the schools and units, to keep the campus and its students and workers safe. He marveled at how well people supported one another physically and emotionally. Looking back, he reflected on how much the University has learned since the spring of 2020 and on how it was able to make enduring changes to infrastructure and processes. He ended by saying that people worked together admirably adopting a One-Harvard approach, that much was learned about collaboration amid uncertainty, and that this collaboration by all of the villages will continue.

Tribute to Karen Davis

The untimely death of HURA’s former president Karen Davis at age 72 on April 27, 2023, has left her family, HURA board members, Harvard colleagues, and other friends devastated. Just as she was taking over the role from her HURA predecessor Donna Chiozzi, Karen was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a brain cancer that has taken the lives of many—including prominent figures like Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy and Arizona Senator John McCain.

Karen was well known and respected by many colleagues from her seventeen years at Harvard. She started as associate dean for faculty and staff services at Harvard Medical School and then became director of total rewards and HR services in the

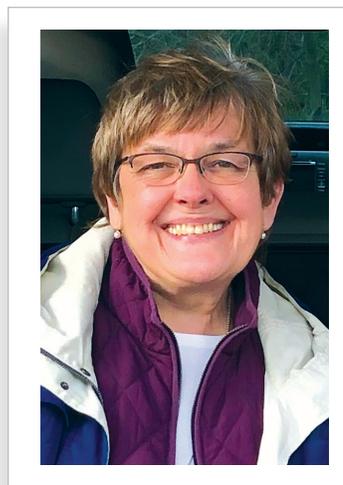
University’s then central office of human resources.

In 2008, she moved to Brown University as vice president for human resources, from which she retired in 2017.

She attended Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, spending her junior year at the University of Glasgow.

Later she obtained a master’s degree in health policy and management at Harvard School of Public Health.

HURA has lost a brilliant leader with a warm and inviting personality. She was often the voice in the room to be listened to. Her suitability to be HURA’s next leader made it seem as if the job was waiting for her to



return to Harvard. Succeeding her as HURA president, John Collins said, “Karen was beloved by all who knew her. Her passing has left a void in our hearts. We will remember her warm smile, caring demeanor, and

exuberance for life.”

After a period of painful adjustment following their marriage of 42 years, Karen’s husband Randall “Randy” Block has decided to run for a city councilor position in Newton’s ward 4. We all wish him great success in this new phase of his life without his partner Karen.

HUHS Flu Clinics, fall 2023

This year Harvard flu clinics will be a single week-long event from October 16–October 20, daily, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. in the Smith Campus Center’s Harvard Commons space. It is on the first floor of the Smith Center [formerly Holyoke Center] across from Blackbird Donuts. No reservations required. Find more information at www.huhs.harvard.edu.

Everyone in the Harvard community with a Harvard ID or HUGHP card is accepted, regardless of their insurance plans. Spouses and qualified domestic partners who do not have their own cards are not eligible for these clinics. Remember to take your card with you.

The clinics will offer the high-dose flu vaccine to those who are over age 65, as well as the standard vaccine. The CDC does not recommend or advocate for any particular vaccine, so if there are questions, HUHS staff suggest that those over age 65 discuss with their primary care provider whether they should have the high dose vaccine or not.

Clinics will likely be offered at other Harvard locations, including the Law, Business, Medical schools, and the Kresge Cafeteria. Exact dates and times are not yet available. All of the information about clinics will be posted at www.huhs.harvard.edu.

To find other locations to get flu shots go to Vaccines.gov. Initially, it was listing Stop & Shop and Hannaford locations only.

COVID-19 boosters and RSV shots

COVID boosters: COVID boosters: Last fall 71% of seniors aged 65 and older got the annual flu shot, but only

43% chose to get the COVID booster. The 12% bump in new hospitalizations in July and a 24% increase in just a two-week period in August are concerning, even though the number of patients is still far lower than before. Officials expect to see an updated COVID-19 vaccine that contains one version of the new omicron strain called XBB.1.5 available in September from Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax. Someone who has been infected with an earlier COVID omicron variant is likely susceptible to reinfection with XBB.1.5.

RSV: This year a vaccine will also be available for the Respiratory Syncytial Virus, which affects the lower respiratory tract, including the lungs. According to the CDC, this virus leads to as many as 10,000 deaths each year among older adults.

Harvard’s fall flu clinics will not offer COVID boosters or RSV shots. They may be obtained at CVS, Walgreen’s, Stop & Shop pharmacies and other drugstore chains, or from your primary care physician.

Sources: CDC.gov, WebMD, and HUHS website

Open Enrollment

2023 Benefits OE dates are October 24 to November 2. Announcement postcards are scheduled to be mailed in mid-September.

Retiree statements confirming your elections will be mailed in November to your address on file, even if you made no changes. Please open and review this notification immediately and contact Harvard Benefits if there are any errors.

617-496-4001

Benefits@Harvard.edu

Harvard Pilgrim breach and HURA’s role

HURA was aware last April (2023) of a Point32Health cybersecurity ransomware incident affecting Harvard Pilgrim Health Care commercial and New Hampshire Medicare Advantage Stride plans. The information affected by this break in included Social Security numbers, names, addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, health insurance account information, provider taxpayer identification numbers, and medical history, diagnoses, treatment, dates of service, and provider names.

Point32Health’s Tufts plans were not affected.

Several HURA members have asked why HURA was not getting involved by providing information at a time when Point32Health was being criticized for its delay in notifying participants in affected programs.

The questions raised the issue of what HURA’s role might appropriately be in such a situation. HURA is neither a union nor a lobby. For HURA to become involved, we felt, added nothing to the information publicly available in the print and online media and might have served to complicate a situation over which we had neither control nor privileged information.

In addition to flu shots, COVID-19 vaccines, and pneumococcal shots Medicare Part D now covers more vaccines at no cost to you, including

- Shingles (Shingrix)
- RSV
- Tetanus/diphtheria (Td)
- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) (Tdap)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B, if you’re at low risk for the virus

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Inflation Reduction Act caps insulin cost

Starting on July 1, 2023, people with Medicare Part B or Medicare Advantage coverage, who get their insulin through a traditional pump, saw insulin costs capped at \$35 per month for each covered insulin. Millions of people with Medicare Part D are already benefiting from the Inflation Reduction Act’s monthly cap.

Medicare and Medicaid enrollment as of March 2023

There were 65,748,280 people enrolled in Medicare. That’s 19.6% of the U.S. population.

- 33,948,780 in Original Medicare.
- 31,799, 500 in Medicare Advantage or other health plans.
- 51,591,780 are enrolled in Medicare D in all plans offering prescription drug coverage.
- 86,714,580 are enrolled in Medicaid programs, 25.9 % of the U.S. population. Over 12 million individuals are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, so are counted in the enrollment figures for both programs.

OCR investigates legacy admissions

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with learnings from Harvard’s efforts over the past decade to strengthen our ability to attract and support a diverse intellectual community that is fundamental to our pursuit of academic excellence. As this work continues, and moving forward, Harvard remains dedicated to opening doors to opportunity and to redoubling our efforts to encourage students from many different backgrounds to apply for admission.”

HURA Members Visit Historic Royall House



The property (at left) was purchased in 1908 by the Fulton Chapter of the D.A.R., which continues to maintain the property.

Docent MacDonald (lower left) introduced HURA members to the history of the property.

(Below) HURA Board member Bev Sullivan and Royall House docent Diane MacDonald, who remarked “What an outstanding group, and I loved the dialogue with everyone, especially learning from the retired librarian on the tour about Darby Vassall’s will being at Houghton Library.” *



* When General George Washington approached his revolutionary headquarters at the John Vassal estate on Brattle St. in Cambridge for the first time in July 1775, he encountered a young African American boy swinging on the front gate. That boy, enslaved, six-year-old Darby Vassall, had just returned to his original home after his second master had died at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Washington offered to let the boy work for him upon learning that Vassall “belonged to the place.” But

when Vassall asked what the wage would be, Washington thought compensation would be unreasonable and withdrew his offer. Though it was their only encounter, it may have influenced Darby Vassall later as an adult to work to promote freedom and equality for African Americans.

Social Security solvency

Even with the Trust Fund empty, Social Security would survive.

The last 12 Social Security Trustees Reports have indicated that Social Security's Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Trust Fund reserves would become depleted between 2033 and 2035 under the intermediate set of assumptions provided in each report. But the news isn't as bleak as it may sound. Even if no legislative change is enacted, tax revenues will still be sufficient to pay about three-fourths of the scheduled benefits after trust fund depletion. Recipients would continue to get checks each month—just smaller ones.

Policymakers have developed numerous proposals and options that have financial effects on the OASDI Trust Funds. Many of them have the intent of addressing the long-range solvency problem. Some are even aimed at increasing monthly checks. <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/solvency/index.html>

Social Security COLA 2024

David Payne, staff economist from the *Kiplinger Letter*, forecasts a 3% Social Security COLA in 2024, after this year's 8.7%.

Library Databases

The Harvard Library's HOLLIS databases are not available to retirees unless you are sitting at a library computer in one of the libraries. For retirees doing research, however, that may not be a great disaster. If you establish a free library membership in the Boston Public Library, you will have online access to a vast array of

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HURA Profile: The Three Anns who produce *HURA NEWS*

Among the various people responsible for creating *HURA News*, none are more important to Editor Malcolm Hamilton than Ann Walter, Anne Parker, and Ann Flentje. Ann Walter and Ann Flentje are directors on the HURA Board. They are essential in copy editing everything that goes to Ken Toy at Harvard for printing and distribution.

Anne Parker is the design, layout, and production professional who has been working with HURA on its print publications since the early 2000s. Anne is the daughter of former HURA president Herb Collins (now deceased). He served from 2000-2004, when she stepped in to produce the publications. As a member of the team, over the years Anne has developed a fine sense for the HURA look that has survived a number of redesigns—and now her fifth president.

In 2000 Anne, married and a mother of two, was working at *MetroWest Daily News* in Framingham as a layout and production artist in the news room. At that time her father, Herb Collins, was president of HURA. One day he asked her if she would fill in temporarily to create the monthly newsletter until a new person was found for the job. Another HURA member had been doing the job, but he was unable to continue, and had to step back from the role. Anne has been “filling in” ever since.

The HURA newsletter has gone through several changes since she started. Originally, it was printed in black and white. In 2009 it went to two colors, still with black and white photos. In 2013, it was redesigned into a full four-color publication. The front page got a newer look in 2022 with a new masthead. Anne guided all of these changes.

She works with editors Ann Flentje and Ann Walter. Malcolm is managing

editor and her main point person. He writes most of the stories and sends them and the photos for each issue to Anne. She is talented in creating appropriate graphics and finding stock images

when the staff is unable to provide them.

“I have a great working relationship with Malcolm,” Anne says. “He is a true professional, an excellent writer and editor. He is a master of organizing the articles, the schedule, and handling many moving parts.” She adds: “I love working with Ann and Ann. They are outstanding editors and very detailed in their work. We have worked from our home offices—long before the pandemic. We work well as a team. I can email or talk with any of the editors at any time.”

“As evidence of our successful collaboration,” says Malcolm, “we offer you this Sept/Oct. issue of *HURA News*.”



Ann Walter, Anne Parker, and Ann Flentje.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

invites you to the

2023 Annual Fall Reception

for HURA Members and Guests

Join your friends and colleagues for a relaxed gathering featuring hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and sweets.

Wednesday, October 18

3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

HARVARD FACULTY CLUB

Reading Room, 1st Floor • 20 Quincy Street, Cambridge

\$10 per person

Please, one guest only

Make checks payable to HURA

Mail to Diantha Brown, 257 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

978-465-2262 • dianthabrown@verizon.net

There are no refunds after the registration deadline when checks are deposited.

RSVP by October 11

Limited parking at Broadway Garage, 7 Felton Street, Cambridge

----- ANNUAL FALL RECEPTION -----

HURA member _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Guest name _____

Make your check payable to HURA at \$10 per person. Total enclosed \$ _____

Parking? Yes _____ No _____

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY
RETIRES ASSOCIATION**

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IN BRIEF

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resources similar to those on HOLLIS. Go to www.bpl.org or to <https://www.bpl.org/ecard/> and request your e-card number.

FBI launches stolen art app

The FBI is urging the public to help them find missing art, including Claude Monet paintings, Stradivarius violins, Tiffany lamps, and art from the Gardner heist.

Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and around the world have submitted these to the FBI's National Stolen Art File, a database of stolen

pieces of art and culturally significant property. The NSAF assists in law enforcement's efforts to close cases and return pieces of art and property to their rightful owners. Now you can access that database in the palm of your hand using the FBI's new National Stolen Art File app.

"One of the biggest evolutions for NSAF was making it publicly available," said Colleen Childers of the FBI's Art Crime Program. "Now, with the new mobile upgrade that we've undergone, we want to continue to push to make it a more user-friendly platform."

While the app was primarily created with law enforcement and art-industry partners in mind, anyone can

use it to verify that art or antiquities they own or are looking to buy aren't actually stolen property. And just for fun, keep your eye on items on Antiques Roadshow.

Users of the app can do the following:

- Search and filter** stolen art by location, description, and type of art,
- Display** the information most relevant to you,
- Save** pieces of art to a favorites page and easily access them later,
- Share** stolen art entries via text, email, or social media, and
- Submit tips** to the FBI directly from the app.

Download the free app from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

HURA is a tax-exempt 501 (c) 7 all-volunteer organization. Membership is open to benefits-eligible retirees of Harvard University and is complimentary until the renewal period the following June 30. Thereafter dues are \$20 annually. Visit HURA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HUretirees or at www.HURA.harvard.edu.