



April 2024  
Volume 18, Issue 7

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### **Presentation by Susan Warrener Smith and Ann Wallingford on April 4 “Walking Each Other Home: Ram Dass, Psychedelics and the Trip of a Lifetime”**

Susan Warrener Smith and her daughter, Ann Wallingford, will jointly present an intriguing Torch paper recounting a spiritual quest that grew from the study of psychedelic drugs in the 1960s and the current research on the medical uses of these drugs today. They will deliver the paper, “Walking Each Other Home: Ram Dass, Psychedelics and the Trip of a Lifetime,” on Thursday, April 4, at The Ohio State University Faculty Club.

Harvard University psychology professors Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary were famously fired in 1963 as controversy arose from their direction of the Harvard Psychedelic Project. “The reasons for the firing were complicated, as was the aftermath,” Susan said. Her part of the Torch paper will focus primarily on the subsequent spiritual quest of Alpert, how he became known as Ram Dass, his career as a writer and motivational speaker, and how she and her daughter Ann attended a retreat with him on the island of Maui 12 years ago.



**Susan Warrener Smith (left) and her daughter Ann Wallingford.**

“His story will be the springboard for further discussion about psychedelics, their history, and their uses and abuses,” Susan explained. “Ann will present the second part of the paper which focuses on psychedelics, current research, and new discoveries of their effectiveness.”

Susan is a retired Presbyterian pastor, having served 13 years at Indianola Presbyterian Church. She has a Ph.D. in theological and religious studies from Drew University with a specialty in 12th century monastic spirituality. She has been a Torch member since 2003 and was club president in 2020-21. This will be her 5th Torch paper.

Ann Wallingford is a licensed clinical mental health counselor, practicing in the state of Vermont. Her

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## **Presentation by Susan Warrener Smith and Ann Wallingford**

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specialties include trauma and PTSD, chronic pain, and LGBTQ. She and her husband Jeff Melin live on 15 acres in East Montpelier with their Bernese Mountain dog Jovie and cats Milo and Ollie. Ann joined Susan on the pilgrimage, El Camino de Santiago de Compostela, in Spain, which was the topic of Susan's previous Torch paper in October 2022.

## **President's message: Invite potential members**

I regret that I was unable to attend the meeting in March. While returning from Egypt, I contracted a virus on one of my flights. Still, touring Egypt was a wonderful experience. Especially impressive were the massive tombs carved into mountains, the Valley of the Kings. These are elaborately illustrated and very colorful. People who say that the ancient Egyptians were obsessed with death are wrong. They were obsessed with life eternal. Pyramids and tombs were a preparation for continuing life in another dimension.

Every message from the president should say something about your Torch club. At the meeting in February, I mentioned that our club has fallen to second in the number of members. Dorothy Driskell has done heroic work in recruiting new members, but our membership is aging and falling. I call on "younger" members, those who joined in the last five years, to invite friends and colleagues as potential members.

They are likely to have a larger circle of associations than older members, whose social network typically shrinks as we age. So please think about helping your club. If you have any questions, please contact Dorothy Driskell or me.



**Rai Goerler in Egypt.**

## **Former Torch Club President George L. Smith died February 12**

George L. Smith, died February 12 at the age of 88 with family by his side. He was a Torch Club member from 2007 to 2022 and was president in 2009-10. Visitation will be April 5 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Schoedinger Northwest Funeral Home. A funeral mass will be celebrated on April 6 at 10 a.m. at St. Agatha Church. George is survived by his wife Patricia, two daughters and three grandsons.

George joined the faculty in Ohio State University's Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering in 1968. He was department chair from 1982 to 1994 and concurrently was interim associate dean for academic affairs from 1991 to 1993. He received the Everett D. Reese Medal, Ohio State's highest recognition for exceptional service in private philanthropy, in 1995. He retired as professor emeritus in 1995. For 58 years, George was a labor arbitrator for the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. He was named a fellow of three academic associations and was president of four engineering organizations.

He delivered the last of his three Torch papers in January 2015. The paper's title was "Functions of the Executive: The Enduring Legacy of Chester Barnard."



**George L. Smith**

## Member's Moment: Gene Gilliom

Presented by Gregor Gilliom on March 7, 2024

I am honored to introduce my dad, long-time Torch member Dr. Gene Gilliom.

When Diane Selby asked me to write this introduction, it was hard to know where to start! By now, many of you have probably heard about Gene's decades in the classroom, his travels around the world, and his love of Ohio State sports.

Of course, there's much more to the man than that. But how do you frame it in a way that does him justice? And in just three minutes? Then it occurred to me: you do it with *numbers*.

Yes, Dad, you heard me right. Numbers. It's time to get a little ironic.

In the nearly **60** years you were married to Bonnie, SHE was the numbers person, poring over family finances and calendars, making sure all those details were covered so you could...let's be honest...avoid as much math as possible. And yet, numbers are a great way to talk about your life, your career, and your milestones.

Let's start with the number **80**. That's how many study tours Gene led as a professor of social studies and global education at Ohio State, where he was an innovator of student travel for credit. Those trips took him to a total of **50** countries. Doing the math, that much travel equates to roughly **5** full years of his life spent overseas.

Let's try another number, **54**. That's the number of years he was an Ohio State football season ticket holder. Again doing the calculations, at an average of 5 games per year, and four hours per game, that's about eleven hundred hours – or **45** days – he spent sitting in Ohio Stadium, rain or shine, rooting on the Buckeyes.

**Two** is the number of years he coached the JV basketball team at John Marshall High School in Cleveland. Before he was the globe-trotting social studies professor you all know, Gene was a high school teacher with coaching aspirations. Of course, being Gene, he coached that JV team to a city championship.

**Fourteen** — that's the number of months Gene served with the U.S. Army's counter-intelligence core, or CIC, in Bavaria, Germany, where he was assigned for his service to our country during the Cold War.

**Three**, the number of career-changing offers he received in one pivotal day in 1960. One was to become John Marshall's *varsity* basketball coach. The second was to move back to Germany and teach in a high school there. And the third was an offer to pursue his Ph.D. at Ohio State. He went with door number 3.

**Two** is the number of kids he raised – I'm happy to say we're both here tonight – and **three** is the number of grandkids he has.

All these numbers – 80, 60, 50, 45, 14, 5, 3 and 2 – add up to something I think we can all agree on: Gene, you are one in a million.



**Gregor Gilliom (left) and Gene Gilliom.**

## Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach

Club secretary Thom Seelbach will send you via electronic mail an Evite to attend the Torch Club meeting on April 4. Respond promptly to the Evite so he will have an accurate count of meals needed. You also may respond to him at tseelbach@gmail.com or (614) 499-3090.

The directions for responding to the Evite are:

1. After you click on the email from Evite, it will bring up a new window on the Evite website. You must click your response in this new window for Evite to register your response.
2. The guest count is the actual number of attendees. If only you are attending, the count will be 1. The cost for a guest is \$35. A potential member may attend one dinner meeting without charge.

If you need a ride to a Torch meeting or are willing to provide transportation, please contact the club's Fellowship Committee through its chair, Diane Selby, at (614) 571-4226 and Dianeselby@gmail.com.

## Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2023-24

October 5, 2023: **"Morocco: Expectations and Surprises"** by Mary Beth Wise, associate professor emeritus, Department of Internal Medicine, Ohio State

November 2, 2023: **"Land Grant Contributions to Foreign Policy"** by David Hansen, professor emeritus, International Program in Agriculture, Ohio State

December 7, 2023: **Holiday Music** with The Grandview Singers

January 4, 2024: Meeting postponed to June 6.

February 1, 2024: **"Recent Advances in Medicine Part II - Focused on Selected Specific Disease Treatments"** by Gary Hinzman, M.D.

March 7, 2024: **"Buckeye Tailgate Party"** by Trevor Zahara, author of *Buckeye Tailgate* and *Confessions of an OSU Usher*

April 4, 2024: **"Walking Each Other Home: Ram Dass, Psychedelics and the Trip of a Lifetime"** by the Rev. Dr. Susan Warrener Smith, PCUSA clergy (retired), and Ann Wallingford, LCMHC

May 2, 2024: **"How does Psychotherapy Work? Clearing the Way for Success"** by Anne Croskey, Ph.D. and LCDC-III

June 6, 2024: **"Cemeteries, Genealogy...Gone but not Forgotten"** by Kent Bermingham, CPA

### **Torch Club's monthly meeting agenda**

4:30-5:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting  
5:30-6:15 p.m. Cocktails and conversation  
6:15-6:35 p.m. Business matters  
6:35-7:30 p.m. Speaker  
7:30-8:45 p.m. Dinner and table discussion

Meetings are conducted in The Ohio State University Faculty Club, 181 S. Oval Drive.

## Board of Directors for Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2023-24

President – Rai Goerler

President-elect – Donald Larson

Immediate Past President – Susan Tilgner

Secretary – Thom Seelbach

Assistant Secretary – Diane Selby

Treasurer – David Lenz

Assistant Treasurer – vacant

Fellowship Chair – Diane Selby

Membership Chair – Dorothy Driskell

Nominating Chair – Susan Tilgner

Region 5 Director – Nancy Wardwell

Newsletter Editor – Steve Sterrett

Website Editor – Rai Goerler

Director-at-Large – Christina Atzberger (2024)

Director-at-Large – David Hansen (2024)

Director-at-Large – Paul Niswander (2025)

Director-at-Large – Dorothy Driskell (2025)