



Amicus Curiae

Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc.

www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org

November 2023

Officers

Judith Starr, President
James Case, Vice President
Benjamin I. Berman, Treasurer
Michael Krasnow, Secretary

Directors

Benjamin I. Berman
James Case
Milly Collins
Joel Helmrich
Michael Krasnow
Christina Schwinn
Judith Starr
Stephen Sturm
Harold M. Zabin

Newsletter Editors

Milly Collins/Joel Helmrich

Association Photographer

Diana Lynn

Administrative Assistant

Frank Sharpe

Table of Contents

Page	
1November Program
2About our Monthly Speaker
2Amicus Personae Richard Meade
3,4What Do Retired Attorneys Do?
5Luncheon Info
5Annual Dues
6Volunteers Needed
6Ideas for Future Programs
6Newsletter Ideas Welcome

NEXT MEETING

Monday, November 27

12 Noon
At Marina Jack

November Program:

Karen Mason, a former ARAS board member is presenting her fourth book club meeting. The subject is **Critical Race Theory** aka cancel culture, stop woke, book bannings, which is all over media and has truly become part of what the right calls the culture wars.

CRT began as a legal theory, introduced after most of us finished law school, but we all know ignorance isn't a legal defense, let's get informed and understand CRT.

Join us in reading a short (160 pages) general work on CRT, aimed at the general public called Critical Race Theory An Introduction (Fourth Edition) by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic.

About Our Speaker - Karen Mason

A graduate of Columbia Law School, Karen Mason worked at a NY law firm in both their NY and London offices, practicing bank finance, securities and general corporate law. She then moved in-house at Chase Manhattan Bank. She is formerly a board member and this is the fourth book she has presented to ARAS.

Amicus Personae – Richard Meade

Member of the Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota

Richard Meade, born in Philadelphia, was educated at Cornell (BA), Columbia (JD), and Cambridge (BA/MA) universities. He spent one year in Paris studying law at the Faculté de Droit, Paris 2, where he met and married a Yorkshire lass. He also studied two summers in France, one at "Sciences Po". After law school in 1963, he worked for a trade law firm in NYC for about 2 years before starting his own law firm with two other young lawyers.

For some reason, unknown to him, he studied French assiduously, mainly by associating professionally and socially with French people. He also joined several French associations and was president of the Association des Anciens Elèves de l'Institut d'Études Politiques à Paris à New York where he gave his introductions to meetings in a fractured French.

Richard's firm opened an office in Paris in 1971 which Richard took over in 1973, moving his young family to Paris. Through his second marriage, he took French nationality. (He is bi-national.)

When he retired from the law in Paris, he took an undergraduate degree in theology at Cambridge University.

Richard now divides his time (with his partner, Louise, of almost 14 years) among Cambridge, UK, and Sarasota, also spending some time in NYC.

What Do Retired Attorneys Do?

If you are Ben Berman, you hit the road for a historic trip down America's Mother Road -- Rte. 66. Here is his story.

Some 20 years ago enthusiasm developed in the car collecting community for tracing the remaining sections of Rt. 66 – the best known of the long-distance highways sponsored and largely paid for by the federal government. It gained its reputation as the path to economic redemption for midwestern families devastated by the 1930s Dust Bowl, symbolizing freedom and adventure in postwar America. Rt. 66 was decommissioned in 1984, the victim of the more modern and efficient Interstate Highway System authorized by Congress in 1956.

One of my brothers and I, both car collectors, were not immune to this craze. We decided about a year or two before the Pandemic to plan our own Rt. 66 trip, seeking the sights and sounds that greeted earlier generations during their journeys when Route 66 opened in 1926. We were blissfully unaware of the effort it would take to achieve that goal.

First, we studied guide books tracing the remaining sections of Rt. 66 and pointing out landmarks to visit and photograph. They are massive and appear to present the route in excruciating detail. Reality, as we later discovered, was different.

Our second step was to look for a period-appropriate car to purchase for the trip. After three years of looking and going through several classic cars, the post-pandemic reality of labor and parts shortages left us with a stark choice of either continuing to postpone our trip, or renting a luxury car. We chose the latter and settled on a Genesis G70, a compact product of an upstart Korean luxury brand.

We were attending the Cadillac Club national meet in Albuquerque in late June, and the Buick Club national meet in Spokane in mid-July. We'd head to Chicago, where Rt. 66 began, and drive Rt. 66 to Albuquerque. We'd then return to Sarasota for a week, and leave again for Spokane. After the Buick Club meet in Spokane we'd drive south to Santa Barbara, the western terminus of Rt. 66, and head east to Albuquerque, having completed our journey on the fabled highway.

We picked up the car and started out on the two-day trip to center city Chicago and the beginning of Rt. 66. In downtown Chicago we learned The First Hard Truth About Rt. 66: it still exists, but not as originally laid out. In 1926 the streets in downtown Chicago carried traffic in two directions; today, most are one way. Thus, the place currently marked as the beginning of the journey west on Rt. 66 is actually one block south of the point at which the highway originally started – the real origination point for Rt.66 is found on a street that is now east-bound only.

Before leaving Chicago for the suburbs, we were treated to the sight of the first landmark touted by the guide book: the only White Castle restaurant on old Rt. 66 that remains unchanged from its original form and in its original location. Surprisingly it looks like every other White Castle restaurant ever built, whether in 1923 or 2023. The Second Hard Truth About Rt. 66: not every must-see attraction touted in the guide books is worth seeing.

Undaunted, we continued through the Illinois countryside, and discovered that, while it's possible to trace Rt. 66, almost every inch has been repaved countless times over the decades. So travelers can follow the route, but the original feel of the pavement is long gone (see The First Hard Truth About Rt. 66, *supra*). There are several spots where small segments of the 1920s and 1930s cement pavement can be glimpsed off to the side, but today's traveler drives mostly

on a state highway covered with modern asphalt. The one exception is an 11-mile stretch of original pavement west of Oklahoma City. It consists of two narrow lanes of cement pavement with no shoulders but cement curbs on each side of the road. No road would be built to that specification today, without an escape route for cars that break down or an access for emergency vehicles.

Rt. 66 connected many small towns in its journey from the Great Lakes to the West Coast. One such town is Pontiac, IL (pop. about 600). After snaking through several such towns, The Third Hard Truth About Rt. 66 became apparent: there is no single Rt. 66. Over its lifetime the route was altered many times. There are five different routes through Pontiac, for example, which were designated Rt. 66 at one time or another. The traveler must make a choice in each town, or spend an unfathomable amount of time exploring the variations.

Pontiac also serves as additional proof of the Second Hard Truth About Rt. 66. The town has a Rt. 66 museum, a single large room that most likely housed a retail store in bygone years. The museum contains countless examples of Rt. 66 ephemera, such as a can that once contained beer drunk by a construction worker who helped build the highway. There is a Rt. 66 museum, including a gift shop and Rt. 66 themed diner, about every 50 miles along the way. Only one museum was worth the visit: a museum in Clinton, OK does an excellent job of explaining the highway from conception and construction through the heyday of service until the end of the route as a federal highway. (As a postscript, there is a museum dedicated to the Pontiac automobile marque in Pontiac that's well worth seeing.)

Need more proof of The Second Hard Truth about Rt. 66? Current guide books point out a series of attractions that actually postdate Rt. 66 as a US highway. They consist mostly of outsized figures in odd locations. These include what is reputed to be the largest statue of Abraham Lincoln in existence, sitting on the buckboard of an equally large Conestoga wagon, a huge plaster whale (exact species unspecified) atop a car repair shop, and the world's largest rocking chair.

The Fourth (and Final) Hard Truth About Rt. 66 is that the guide books are incomplete. Much of the old highway exists now as service roads beside new Interstate Highways 44 and 40. Frequently the old highway will follow one side of the Interstate for a few miles and then wander over to the other side, a detail neglected by the guide book we followed. As a result, on one occasion I was following the old road at a comfortable speed of about 40 mph when it suddenly ended. It was an exciting moment, but not one I'd like to repeat.

And so it went. We saw Dead Man's Curve and drove around Dead Man's Corner, both at about a 90-degree angle that no road builder would expose traffic to in modern times. The first few gas stations from the 1920s were interesting, small and quaint by today's standards, but interest flags after the first 70 examples or so. The same is true for motels from that era, although the Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari, NM is an icon of mid-century modern architecture unique in that it provides a garage space next to each unit.

My brother and I arrived in Albuquerque somewhat frazzled but glad we'd made the effort to explore Rt. 66. Would we do it a second time? Absolutely not. In fact, we decided to forego the second part of the trip – from Santa Barbara to Albuquerque.

Tracing the remains of Rt. 66 was an interesting adventure, but not the kind of historic journey I expected. In retrospect, I had thought I'd be recreating the experience of the 1930s and 1940s that old Rt. 66 provided to travelers half a century or more ago. I'd hoped to see the things travelers of that era saw and get a feeling for the times in which they lived. But too much has changed, and only fragments of the past are left in the 21st century. I'd still recommend a Rt. 66 drive for anyone who has the time and an interest in amusement and entertainment.

Luncheon Payments

You may make payments on our website at the bottom of the page:
\$28 for lunch and/or \$55 for dues using PayPal at

www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org

Or you may mail a check for the luncheon payment of \$28 payable to the
Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc.

Please send to: Jim Case, 8156 Collingwood Ct., University Park, FL 34201

We are pleased to accept your payment by check or through our online payment option. Please get your luncheon payment to Ben prior to Wednesday of the luncheon week. After that Wednesday, no refunds can be given since the venue will have been notified of your intention to attend.

Please note the following dates for the next luncheons:

Monday, November 27

Monday, December 18

We look forward to seeing you at Marina Jack at noon on the above dates.

It's Time to Pay 2024 Dues

The Board of Directors has been able to maintain the \$55 annual amount for the past 9 years. Please mail your 2024 dues payment of \$55 and/or your luncheon payment of \$28 payable to the

Association of Retired Attorneys of Sarasota, Inc.

Please send to: Jim Case, 8156 Collingwood Ct., University Park, FL 34201

We are pleased to accept your payment by check or through our online payment option. Please get your luncheon payment in to Ben Berman prior to Wednesday of the luncheon week. After that Wednesday, no refunds can be given since the venue will have been notified of your intention to attend.

Make payments on our website:

\$28 for lunch and/or \$55 for 2024 dues using PayPal at

www.retiredattorneyssarasota.org

Volunteers Needed

Suncoast Community Mediation (SCM) is seeking volunteers to serve on the board of directors of this community mediation center. SCM is an all-volunteer organization that provides mediation, facilitation and training to underserved persons and organizations that serve them in the communities within the 12th Judicial Circuit (Manatee, Sarasota and DeSoto counties). Directors attend a monthly Zoom meeting for about 90 minutes and help on outreach, recruiting and programming. We are seeking individuals with some experience with (or representing) nonprofit entities. For more information about SCM, see www.suncoastmediation.org. Contact Judith Starr, jrstarr@tampabay.rr.com, if you are interested.

Ideas for Future Programs?

The Program Committee is always receptive to ideas for future programs. If any member has a topic or a speaker to suggest, please contact Harold Zabin at hpzabin@aol.com or Jim Case at JamesWCase1968@gmail.com .

Any member interested in participating in the Program Committee should contact Harold Zabin or Jim Case at the addresses above.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

If you have items of interest to the members, please forward them to

Milly Collins at millyc054@gmail.com or

Joel Helmrich at jhelmrich1@gmail.com