

# MRPEA <sup>THE</sup> Guardian

Mississippi Retired Public Employees Association

## *Officers & Board Members*

President Howell C. Garner  
Vice President Becky Cade  
Treasurer Sarajeane Babin  
Secretary Peggy Brewer  
Office Manager Sarajeane Babin

## Life Members

Virgil Belue  
Bill Bost  
Ralph Brewer  
Alton B. Cobb  
Lester Herrington  
Wilma R. King  
Thomas H. Loftin  
Billy B. Thames  
Anita R. Toler  
Fred M. Walker  
Wilma White  
James W. Young

## Directors (2016)

Jane Dykes  
Martha Garrett  
Mike Larson  
Ed LeGrand  
Vacant

## Directors (2015)

James Ables  
Don E. Antrim  
Richard Black  
Lucian Hill  
W. Howard Moon

## Directors (2014)

Mary Bowers  
Herbert Hargett  
Ollie Johnson  
Bill Rieves  
Randolph Strickland

## Immediate Past President

Sam Valentine

## District Directors

1. Wynona Winfield  
2. Tony Byrne  
3. Vacant  
4. Hilda B. Westbrook  
5. Doss Brodnax  
6. Larry Bailey  
7. Robert McNeil  
8. Thomas E. Toney

## *Message from Howell C. Garner, President*



Thanks to our MRPEA Board members for their attendance at our February quarterly meeting. Since our meeting in November, District Directors have been busy meeting with local groups of retirees to discuss MRPEA and sign up new members. I was proud to join Tony Byrne (District Two Director) for a meeting with members and prospective members in Simpson County during the first week of December. District Director Byrne & I discussed the retirement system in general and discussed some potential legislation that would impact PERS. Those in attendance showed a lot of interest in keeping the system healthy. We answered questions from the audience and were able to provide information about making the appropriate contacts at the PERS office. We signed up 18 new members for MRPEA that day.

I appreciate the work of all District Directors as they continue to build trust in MRPEA at the local level and as they continue to provide good information about PERS to their local communities within their districts. This will build strength from the ground up and is so important to the overall health of our organization.

I am pleased that our committees are functioning and are making progress on all fronts. We are just beginning to get the word out that active members of the PERS system are eligible to be a part of the MRPEA family. After all, they will be retiring one day – they have a vested interest in making sure our system stays strong. This is a brand new effort that will strengthen our organization for the future. I'm excited about our plans to partner with other retirement groups which

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Volume XVIII

Number 3

Spring 2014

Web Site [www.mrpea.org](http://www.mrpea.org)

## Report on February 10, 2014 Board of Directors Meeting

### BOARD MEETING NOTES

The meeting was called to order by President Howell Garner, who called on Mr. James Young for the invocation. Dr. Garner asked members to remember Billy Thames, Betty Herrington & Bill Bost in their prayers.

The minutes from the November meeting were approved as presented by Secretary Peggy Brewer, and the agenda was approved as presented.

President Garner welcomed Mrs. Pat Robertson, Bob Rhodes & Shelly Powers of PERS. Mrs. Robertson, Executive Director of PERS, gave an update on the status of PERS (*see separate article on page 3 of this newsletter*).

The Board heard reports from District Directors, Committee Chairmen and from the Officers. **Committee reports** are provided on page 3 of this newsletter.

A special report was presented by The Constitution & By-laws Committee (chaired by Tony Byrne) on recommendations for changes to the Constitution & By-laws. The committee has been working over the past several months to update policies and to make the document easier to read and understand. The recommendations were discussed at length, and minor changes were made to the final report, which was approved by the Board by a unanimous vote. A copy of the Constitution & By-laws as amended will be mailed to all members at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting, when it will be presented as a recommendation from the Board for final approval by the membership.

**Contact a retiree friend today and  
ask them to join MRPEA!**

### CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

A special committee was appointed at the September Board of Directors meeting to look carefully at the Constitution & By-laws for MRPEA. It has been a number of years since this document has been reviewed and amended as needed to meet the current needs of the organization.

It is also very important that the document be easy to read and understand by members as well as by Board members. District Two Director Tony Byrne was appointed to chair the Constitution & By-laws Committee. That Committee has met and presented amendments to the document to the Board of Directors at the February meeting. There was very good discussion by Board members leading to a few minor changes to the recommendations; it was unanimously approved at that Board meeting. It is now under final review.



## ANNUAL MEETING

### MAY 12, 2014

### @ 1 PM

### Hilton Hotel on County Line Road

## *Pat Robertson speaks to MRPEA Board*



The Board heard a report from Mrs. Pat Robertson, Executive Director of PERS. Her remarks were very positive regarding the status of the system.

### **Some of the major points made:**

- There are 386,321 members in the system
- Total Investment Assets = \$22 billion.
- Average benefit for retirees = \$20,800 (including COLA)
- PERS paid out \$1.5 billion in retiree benefits last fiscal year.
- Last year's investment growth was @ 13.37%

Probably the most important point that Mrs. Robertson made was that recent changes made by the PERS Board have put the retirement system on track to reach a funded status of over 90% by 2042. She also mentioned that although the current funded status is about 58% on an actuarial basis, it is 61% on a market basis.

\*Facts presented above are included in the annual **PERS Facts & Figures**

Thanks to the PERS Board and to Mrs. Robertson and her staff for their leadership in keeping our state retirement system strong!

## *Committee Reports*

**Membership Committee** - chaired by Ed LeGrand – we have 48 NEW MEMBERS since the November Board meeting – District Directors and committee members have attended several meetings around the state to talk to prospective members. That effort will continue. Ed LeGrand stressed that we are looking for ways to reach current employees who are not yet retired. They are eligible to join MRPEA.

**Constitution & By-Laws Committee** chaired by Tony Byrne – Members of the committee met in October to begin the work on preparing recommendations for Board consideration – the goal is to have those recommendations ready for the February meeting and to have final draft ready for the Annual Meeting on May 12, 2014.

**Publications Committee** chaired by Jane Dykes – Mrs. Dykes invited members of the Board to let her know of any news that should be included in future newsletters. The next Guardian will be published in late February or early March. It will once again feature new members of the Board and will provide information to the membership regarding the status of legislation affecting PERS. A retiree will be featured again in this issue.

**Legislative Committee** chaired by Lester Herrington – President Garner reported in the absence of Lester Herrington. The Legislative Committee is keeping abreast of bills which have been introduced this session. President Garner reported on three bills which would have had a negative impact on the PERS system. All three have died in committee. The Legislative Committee will keep watch on anything new which might need our attention.

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*President's Message* continued from page 1

share our interests! We have made progress in that area, and I look forward to sharing information and working with those other organizations which have the same interest in keeping the PERS system as strong as possible!

We consider it our responsibility to let our members know about any pending legislation that will have an impact on PERS – we will let you know when there's a need to make contact with your legislator!

As I close this message, let me urge you to put Monday, May 12, 2014, at 1:00 PM. on your calendar to attend the Annual Meeting. Pat Robertson will be a featured speaker at the meeting.

*Annual Election of Board Members for 2014-2017:*

Current Officers will serve the second year of a two year term of office in 2014-2015.

A Nominating Committee will be appointed prior to the next quarterly Board meeting to be held at 10 AM on May 12. The nominees who are approved at that meeting will then be presented to those attending the Annual Meeting at 1:00 PM that same day. Those elected will serve a three year term (2014-2017).

If you are interested in serving as a member of the Board of Directors, you should contact the MRPEA office at [mrpea@bellsouth.net](mailto:mrpea@bellsouth.net) so that your interest may be passed on to the Nominating Committee.

*Committee Reports* continued from page 3

**Strategic Partners** chaired by Mike Larsen – Committee members are continuing to look at ways to join efforts with other groups which are part of the PERS system. The goal is to have a network of groups working together by the end of this year.

**Finance/Audit Committee** – this is a new committee appointed by President Garner since the November meeting of the Board. The purpose of the committee is to oversee the financial matters of the organization and to perform an internal audit at the end of each year. Their duties will include making certain that expenses are kept within the budget. This committee is chaired by Sam Valentine; other members are Mike Larsen and Robert McNeil. The committee held its first meeting following the Board meeting on Feb. 10.

Mississippi Retired Public Employees Association

*MRPEA*

*See the MRPEA Web page at*

*[www.mrpea.org](http://www.mrpea.org)*



*It is exciting to follow our fellow retirees to see how they stay busy after a life of service in state employment. This issue features Nancy Sullivan.*



Nancy Sullivan of Wesson, Mississippi retired in 2010 after serving as a school teacher and elementary school principal in the Copiah county area. She had looked forward to completing her required years of service and finally having some free time to spend with her grandchildren. She and her husband Dale have four children and eight wonderful grandchildren and are happy to spend their retirement years in the same community she served as an educator.

After a couple of years in retirement Nancy felt the call to pursue a different career path of service to people around her. Nancy is a person of strong faith; she sought divine guidance in her effort to find the right job that would allow her to use her years of experience and knowledge to serve her fellow man.

One day while reviewing the job announcement in a local paper she saw an advertisement announcing airline stewardess vacancies with American Airlines; almost as an afterthought she filed an application. After a few weeks of

not hearing from them she received a call that lead to a series of interviews and ultimately to a job offer which she accepted in 2012. Nancy soon found herself in Dallas, Texas participating in an intensive training course that lasted almost nine weeks. She has now been trained to work in seven different aircraft that are in the American Airlines fleet, including the new 777 aircraft.

At the end of her training program Nancy was selected by her 33 classmates to serve as the class spokesperson at her graduation. She indicated that, despite the awards and recognitions she received as an educator, she felt that being selected as spokesperson by her fellow classmates in flight school was one of her greatest honors.

She has found this new career to be most rewarding and exciting as she travels about the country serving passengers and meeting people from around the world.

The job has altered her schedule for visiting children and grandchildren, but her entire family has been supportive of her; they structure their schedules to accommodate her schedule and keep them close as they have always been.

She is thankful for this new opportunity of service and thankful that she has been able to build on her knowledge and experience as a teacher and principal in the state of Mississippi.

*We are so blessed to be able to be a part of a country where we have the freedom to pursue our dreams and to pursue new careers which bring joy to our lives and to the lives of those we love. Everybody has a story about how they have found a new energy for life after retirement.*

*Let us hear from you –  
tell us your story!*

Contact us at [mrpea.org](http://mrpea.org) or at [mrpea@bellsouth.net](mailto:mrpea@bellsouth.net) if you have an interesting story to tell in your retirement. We will be featuring a retiree in future publications of *The Guardian*.

**We want to hear from you!**

## *Meet your new MRPEA Board members*

We are fortunate to have outstanding members of the highest quality elected to the MRPEA Board. We featured two of those individuals in the Fall & Winter Issues of The Guardian. We are featuring three members in this issue. Congratulations to these new members on their election! We welcome them to the MRPEA Board!

### *Don E. Antrim*

Don E. Antrim was Born and raised in Memphis Tennessee. He graduated from Trezevant High School where he was part of the first high school team from western Tennessee to win a state championship in any sport when the 1968 team won the Tennessee State High School Cross Country championship. Don attended Memphis State University for 2 ½ years before going to work for Ralston Purina Company in Oklahoma. He worked for them for 9 years and then met the Mississippi girl that he says “has been the best thing to ever happen to me”. He and Margie were married. He earned a BSBA at Mississippi College with a cumulative 3.89 GPA. He worked for Eastern Airlines for 1 year, and then he started his career with the state at Vocational Rehabilitation. Don worked at Vocational Rehabilitation 2 years and then transferred to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and remained there until he retired. He and his wife Margie attend Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson. Don enjoys stock market investing, camping, golf, cruising and watching college football and basketball. Unlike most Mississippians he likes Ms. State, Ole Miss and Southern and only roots against them when they are playing the University of Tennessee!

### *Randy Darrell McCoy*

Randy Darrell McCoy has spent his entire professional life as an educator.

He did undergraduate work at Belhaven College, Itawamba Community College, and graduated with a BS from the College of Business and

Industry from Mississippi State University. Randy’s postgraduate work was done at the University of Mississippi where he received his M.Ed. Degree in Educational Administration. He received his doctorate from George Peabody College, Vanderbilt University.

Upon graduating from Mississippi State University in 1972, Dr. McCoy started a long and successful career in the field of education. His teaching experience began as a teacher/coach at Patterson High School in Patterson, Louisiana. From 1973-1981 he was a teacher/coach/assistant principal at Tupelo High School. From assistant principal at Tupelo High School, he moved to the position of principal where he served until 1987. After serving for two years as assistant superintendent in Tupelo, he moved into the roll of superintendent serving the Brookhaven School District; Clinton Public School District; Oak Ridge Schools, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and then back to the Tupelo School District. From 2010-2011 Randy was interim superintendent for Meridian Public Schools.

Dr. McCoy was a member of several professional educational associations. These include the American Association of School Administrators, Mississippi Association of School Administrators, and the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents. He also served as a commissioner on the Commission on Colleges of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

His interest in his community is exhibited through his service as a member of the Board of Directors for the Community Development Foundation and the Family Resource Center. Dr. McCoy also served on the Advisory Board of the Yocona Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America and on the Teen Awareness Subcommittee of the North Mississippi Health Services.

In 2013 he was elected to PERS Board of Trustees. Dr. McCoy stated that in his years as an administrator hiring prospective teachers, he always emphasized the benefits of the state retirement system as a means of convincing them to accept a position in his school system. As a

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member of the PERS Board, he feels that he can carry out his fiduciary duty and keep that commitment he made to those employees.

Randy McCoy and his wife, Janice have one son and three grandchildren. He enjoys sports, flying, golf, SCUBA diving, singing and photography. He is a current member of Rotary International and Phi Delta Kappa.

## *Larry Bailey*

Larry Bailey completed his high school training at Bayou Academy and entered Delta State University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration. Later, he completed the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers' Training Academy in Pearl, MS. Bailey completed his Master of Business Administration from Delta State University before entering a doctoral program at the University of Mississippi where he received his Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration.

Dr. Bailey became president of Mississippi Delta Community College (MDCC) in 2001. During his leadership at Mississippi Delta Community College, the college experienced much success: an expansion of curriculum, increased access and enrollment, continuous accreditation in SACS, and advancements in technology with over 2,000 computers added across the MDCC district. MDCC partnered with Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University to offer classes at the MDCC campus of the Greenville Higher Education Center. The college also partnered with Sunflower County Schools and the city of Moorhead to offer enrichment programs for elementary and middle school students. The college collaborated on numerous leadership programs and secondary licensure programs for quality teachers and administrators. A second chapter of PTK was added at the Greenville Center

Dr. Bailey serves on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Public Employees Retirement Asso-

ciation. Through the years he has used his expertise to benefit many educational, workforce and economic development, and prison boards. Married for thirty-two years to his wife, the former Gail Benton of Cleveland, they now reside in Cleveland and attend St. Luke United Methodist Church where they both serve as lay Servants.

Dr. Bailey, a native of the Mississippi Delta, retired in 2012 after an illustrious career serving the young people of Mississippi. He served as a college instructor at Delta State University and Mississippi State University and as Dean of Academic Affairs and later President of Mississippi Delta Community College.

### **MRPEA Website & Facebook Site**

MRPEA members are encouraged to access information online through the MRPEA Website and/or on Facebook.

The website address is [www.mrpea.org](http://www.mrpea.org).

In order to access MRPEA on Facebook log into Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) and type in Mississippi Retired Public Employees Association.

Both sites allow members to access current MRPEA information. We hope members will find this to be useful. Examples of information on the sites include, but are not limited to, the following: PERS Facts; legislative activity in relation to your retirement; who your MRPEA officers and directors are; more about the organization itself; how to join; how to update your contact information; etc.

Let us know if you have suggestions on how to make the site more useful.

Just use the Contact MRPEA link on the website.

**Let us hear from you!**



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The logo for MRPEA Membership Application, featuring the same stylized green leaf icon as the main MRPEA logo, followed by the text "MRPEA Membership Application" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

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