

# MRPEA <sup>THE</sup> Guardian

Mississippi Retired Public Employees Association

## *Officers & Board Members*

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

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Ralph Brewer  
Alton B. Cobb  
Lester Herrington  
Wilma R. King  
Thomas H. Loftin  
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Anita R. Toler  
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Wilma White  
James W. Young

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Mary Bowers  
Joe Johnson  
Ollie Johnson  
Dale Sullivan  
Curt Thompson

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## Immediate Past President

Sam Valentine

## District Directors

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

## *President's Message*

It's hard to believe I'm beginning my second year as president of MRPEA! I've had a great time this year learning more about the retirement system, being able to speak to groups about MRPEA and just getting to meet many people who have a vested interest in our retirement system. I'm excited about the opportunities we will have this next year as we not only look to grow in our membership, but also to have the opportunity to work more closely with the leaders of other organizations to keep our retirement system strong! I'm pleased to be able to work with outstanding officers and Board members of MRPEA as we continue to work on behalf of the state's retirees.

Pat Robertson gave a very positive report about our retirement fund and the fact that it continues to grow, and I'm encouraged by the fact that we continue to elect new members to the PERS Board who are committed to *(see President's Report on page four)*



## *PERS Executive Director Pat Robertson*

In her remarks to the MRPEA Board at the August 11 meeting, **PERS Executive Director Pat Robertson** provided an update on the status of PERS. The really good news was that **PERS unaudited return grew to 18.6% during FY '14, up from last year's return of 13.4%!** The net assets are now at **\$25.3 billion**, after PERS paid out more than \$2 billion to retirees in the system. Mrs. Robertson also related some economic numbers to the Board that were interesting – for every \$1 contributed to PERS by the taxpayers of MS, there is \$4.65 generated in total output to the state; every \$1 paid to retirees leads to \$1.56 in total output to the state! Retiree expenditures from state & local pension plans supported 23,308 jobs in the state in 2012; that represents 1.8 percentage points in the state's labor *(see Robertson on page three)*

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

## Great-West Deferred Comp Administrator

The PERS Board has accepted the bid from **Great-West** to administer the **Deferred Comp services**. At the end of the previous contract with SBA/ING, that company was not able to renew the contract and continue providing the same services at the same cost as in the past. Consequently, the PERS Board accepted bids for these services. Great West provided the best proposal for Deferred Comp services, and their bid was accepted – for a 5 year contract.

The services provided by Great-West are essentially the same as in past years, but, obviously, there will be some differences. Great-West representative Connie Stevens recently visited with Howell Garner & Becky Cade to discuss how MRPEA might assist them in getting out some information about the company and to announce a number of seminars which will be held in Mississippi to allow retirees to have access to company representatives to listen and to ask questions. *A flier provided by Great West was sent out by MRPEA to all members and to the presidents and leaders of other retirement organizations to get word to as many retirees as possible regarding services and the schedule of seminars in MS during the months of August & September.*

Seminars will cover topics ranging from retirement planning to investment options to making a budget. Ron Nichols, the Retiree Advocate for Great-West Financial, will provide practical advice for those who will retire within 10 years. Seminars are typically 2 hours in length.

**Use this opportunity  
to become better  
informed about the  
Deferred Comp  
program!**



## WORTH REPEATING!

*PERS has a prudent and disciplined process that relies on expert actuarial guidance built upon reasonable assumptions and targets for portfolio growth. Continued competent, prudent management gives PEER every indication that PERS is moving toward reducing both the amortization period for the system and reducing the unfunded accrued liability.*

## Required Minimum Distribution from Deferred Comp &/or other TAX SHELTERED SAVINGS

We have had inquiries from MRPEA members about the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) at age 70 ½. The following information may vary just a bit, depending on the individual. **DISCLAIMER** - we are **not experts** on this topic. **We suggest you discuss this issue with your CPA or Accountant who completes your tax return. You may also find RMD information on the internet.**

In general, here's how it works. For those people who have TAX SHELTERED SAVINGS - money in **Deferred Comp or other annuities or savings account(s) for which the person has never paid tax**, there is a requirement that they withdraw a portion of that money each year after they reach the age of 70 ½ and consider that as part of total taxable income. The **"withdrawal factor"** for the first year will be 27.4 or about 3.65% (100/27.4) of total tax sheltered savings. The withdrawal factor changes from year to year as you get older. The amount is calculated on the TOTAL amount of funds in all of your TAX SHELTERED ACCOUNTS. Funds can be drawn from one account or from different accounts. The amount will vary some each year, based on the withdrawal factor. Remember, when you draw out a portion of your tax sheltered savings that amount will then be considered as part of your household income for tax purposes. Each year you will be notified of how much you are required to withdraw and file as a portion of your total income.

**Be sure to discuss  
this with your tax  
Accountant!**



## *Partners for Progress*

One of the Goals set out last year was to develop an ongoing relationship with other retirement groups which have the same interest in protecting the state retirement system in MS. A committee was appointed in July of 2013 to begin the process of pulling such groups together. Mike Larsen chaired that committee. Other committee members were Hilda Westbrook, James Young, Doss Brodnax, Alton Cobb, Ed LeGrand, & Tony Byrne. Much progress has been made over the past several months. Other retirement groups have been very enthusiastic about working with MRPEA to share information & ideas and to bring resources together to keep our state retirement system strong.

The Presidents/CEOs of several retirement groups will meet during the month of August to discuss how we can best work together.



## *Message from Vice President Becky Cade*

Fall - What a special time of year! Not only does Fall bring cooler weather and beautiful colors; but it means FOOTBALL, bon fires, Thanksgiving and Christmas aren't far behind! It is a time of renewal in many areas. Churches and schools welcome vacationing families and students back, the new federal fiscal year begins and state agencies present future plans and budgets to state leaders. Fall also offers us a chance to renew commitments to enhance those things that are important to us. The retirement system is one of those areas that is important to me! Therefore, as a new year with MRPEA begins, I take this time to renew my commitment to MRPEA, its purpose to support PERS, its staff and its Board of Trustees. Join me in learning more about your retirement system and in soliciting members to make MRPEA stronger!

## *Report on August 11, 2014 Board of Directors Meeting*

### **BOARD MEETING NOTES**

The **Minutes** for the May 12 Board meeting and the May 12 Annual Meeting were approved as presented by Secretary Peggy Brewer. The **Financial Report** was approved as presented by Treasurer Sarajean Babin. **District Directors** reported on activities which had taken place in each of their districts since May. President Garner commended the District Directors on a job well done this year. He particularly expressed appreciation for those who had spoken to groups within their districts about MRPEA. The Board heard **reports from various committee chairmen** (*see committee reports in this publication*). The Constitution & By-laws Committee, chaired by Tony Byrne, was commended for their work in amendments which had been approved at the Annual Meeting. A **new committee** was appointed to **study the district lines** and to make recommendations for any needed adjustments in the districts. President Garner commended MRPEA Vice President Becky Cade on her work to keep the **web page** current. **Other items of interest can be found in separate articles within this newsletter.**

*(Robertson - continued from page ONE)*

force. Mrs. Robertson also indicated that PERS would likely put forth some basic technical items during this year's legislative session, which may include reviewing the current 8-year vesting period and its impact on employers' ability to recruit and retain, changing from quarterly to monthly reporting and developing a field audit section, whereby PERS assures that employers throughout the state are all adhering to PERS guidelines.

**Thanks to Pat Robertson & her Staff for keeping MRPEA up to date on our state retirement system!**

## Mississippi Retired Public Employees Association

MRPEA

See the MRPEA Web page  
at

[Mrpea.org](http://Mrpea.org)

### 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!

### *Find the facts*

If you have questions about your retirement system, go to [www.pers.ms.gov](http://www.pers.ms.gov) where you will find the latest facts about PERS!

## Committee Reports

**Membership Committee** - chaired by Ed LeGrand – Membership in MRPEA has been increased by 118 members since August 1, 2013. The GOAL for 2014-15 is 200 new members!

**Constitution & By-Laws Committee** chaired by Tony Byrne – THANKS to Tony Byrne and his committee for their work in putting forth amendments to the MRPEA Constitution & By-laws at the Annual Meeting in May

**Publications Committee** chaired by Jane Dykes – Let us know if you have a topic you want discussed or if you have a special feature you'd like to see in *The Guardian*!

**Legislative Committee** chaired by Lester Herrington – the good news is that it has been a relatively quiet year in the capitol with regard to the retirement system!

**Finance/Audit Committee** – chaired by Sam Valentine. Progress had been made to provide better oversight of the financial matters of the organization. Over the next few weeks the committee will oversee an audit of our financial accounts this past year.

**Strategic Partners** chaired by Mike Larsen – We have made several contacts this year and will meet with several other retirement groups in August to discuss plans for sharing information and working together in the future.

*(President's Report – continued from page one)*

keeping promises made to our retirees.

I look forward to working with the Officers and Board members this next year as we continue to look out for our retirees. I invite our members to take a look at the MRPEA web site at [www.mrpea.org](http://www.mrpea.org) and contact us when we can be of any type assistance to you.

Howell C. Garner

President



## Meet your new MRPEA Board members

We are fortunate to have outstanding members of the highest quality elected to the MRPEA Board. We featured new members of the Board this past year in issues of *The Guardian*. We will feature newly elected Board members in the next several issues of the newsletter! We welcome them to the MRPEA Board!

### *Joe Johnson*

Joe Johnson is a graduate of Starkville High School and received a bachelor's degree from Mississippi State University and a master's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi, with additional graduate courses from the University of Mississippi. He spent over 40 years in education in Mississippi, in positions including classroom teacher, band director, vocational coordinator, and college administrator. He also had experience in educational sales and marketing. Prior to his retirement in 2013, Joe was an administrator at Hinds Community College, having been in that position for 19 years.

Joe is a fourth-generation educator. His father, Charlie Johnson, was a teacher and superintendent and long-time Executive Secretary of the Mississippi Education Association.

Joe and his wife Cindy live in Clinton and have three sons, three daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren. His hobbies include coaching soccer, playing drums in dance bands, and riding his Harley Davidson. He is a lifetime member of CAHRA (Capital Area Human Resource Association) and a member of several committees with the Jackson Chamber of Commerce.

Joe says, "My dad always said, 'PERS is one of the best retirement programs anywhere, and we must do everything we can to preserve its integrity.' And I intend to do my part!"

### *Dale T. Sullivan*

Dale Sullivan was born in Crystal Springs, MS and lived there for 56 years before moving to Wesson in 2001. He graduated from Crystal Springs High School and from Copiah-Lincoln Community College. He graduated from Delta State with a bachelor's degree and from Mississippi College with a master's degree in educational administration. He has done additional study in administration at the University of MS. He taught chemistry at the high school level, served as assistant principal and served 28 years as Superintendent of Copiah County Schools until his retirement in 2001. He has been serving as Deputy Director of the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents since January, 2001.

Dale is married to Nancy Stringer Sullivan. They have four children, Kenneth Dale Sullivan (age 37), Keri Sarone Henley (age 35), Kathy Leigh Montgomery (age 33) and Kamryn Sullivan (age 20). He has eight grandchildren ranging in age from 1 – 12.

Dale and Nancy are members of Wesson Baptist Church. Dale enjoys fishing and being with grandchildren. Nancy was featured in the spring, 2014 issue of *The Guardian* as one who began a new career as an airline stewardess, after her retirement in 2010 from public school education.

Dale says "I look forward to serving this organization and working to maintain and improve the current benefits of PERS."

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*.

*Tell us your story!*  
*We want to hear from you!*

## QUOTES on Retirement!

*“Before you speak, listen. Before you write, think. Before you spend, earn. Before you invest, investigate. Before you criticize, wait. Before you pray, forgive. Before you quit, try. Before you retire, save. Before you retire, give.”*

William A. Ward



“God’s retirement plan is out of this world.”

Source Unknown

## DISTRICT DIRECTORS – CONTACT INFORMATION

The state is divided into eight districts to provide members easy access to individuals who serve on the Board. From time to time, members may wish to contact their District Director to inquire about an issue or to provide important information which may affect their retirement. Consequently, we are providing contact information for the eight District Directors below by county.

**District ONE:** **Wynona Winfield** @ [lcwjr@bellshoth.net](mailto:lcwjr@bellshoth.net) H Phone # **601-268-6118**  
– Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Pearl River, Perry, & Stone.

**District TWO:** **Tony Byrne** @ [annetteb@cableone.net](mailto:annetteb@cableone.net) H Phone # **601-431-2250**  
– Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marion, Pike, Simpson Walthall & Wilkinson.

**District THREE:** **Dr. Rick Young** @ [fryoung@bellsouth.net](mailto:fryoung@bellsouth.net) H Phone # 662-574-1971 - Clarke, Covington, Jasper, Jones, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Neshoba, Newton, Scott, Smith & Wayne.

**District FOUR:** **Hilda Westbrook** @ H Phone # **601-856-6351** – Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Warren & Yazoo.

**District FIVE:** **Dr. Doss Brodnax** @ [dossmar@bellsouth.net](mailto:dossmar@bellsouth.net) H Phone # **662-323-9543** – Attala, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Lowndes, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Webster & Winston.

**District SIX:** **Dr. Larry Bailey** @ [meast27@yahoo.com](mailto:meast27@yahoo.com) H Phone # **662-756-2435** – Bolivar, Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Sharkey, Sunflower & Washington.

**District SEVEN:** **Robert A. McNeil** @ [ramcneil@comcast.net](mailto:ramcneil@comcast.net) H Phone # **662-680-9024** – Alcorn, Benton, Itawamba, Lee, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo & Union.

**District Eight:** **Thomas E. Toney** @ [thomasetoney@bellsouth.net](mailto:thomasetoney@bellsouth.net) H Phone # 662-563-3744 – Coahoma, Desoto, Lafayette, Marshall, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica & Yalobusha.

*Your District Director would like to hear from you with any questions or concerns or if you have information to share about the PERS system.*

## Following our retirees!

### *Mike & Virginia Montgomery enjoy life after retirement!*



Mike & Virginia Montgomery met in 1972 as special education teachers for Jackson County Schools and were married in 1975. They have two children, both of whom are married and live in the Ocean Springs/Biloxi area. Last year their son's wife gave birth to their first grandchild.

**Mike:** In 1973 Mike took a job with Singing River Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services (now known as Singing River Services) as director of adult services for persons with disabilities. During his years there, they proved that people with disabilities could make excellent workers. Their initial work was to bring in contracts from local businesses, but by 1977 they began to get people out of their workshop setting to become employed in community jobs. Mike worked for that agency until he retired in November of 1995 with 25 years of service in PERS. Upon his retirement, the very next day he became an employee of **The Arc of Mississippi**, a private, nonprofit agency, supporting statewide advocacy for persons with disabilities. Over the years he has been involved with projects that promote person-centered planning, school transition, housing, transportation, and employment. He says, *"There is much work needed across our state to have all people working, living, and recreating in communities along side of people without disabilities. I have been very fortunate to have had a role in making some of these ideas become reality."*

Mike's role in community services has continued since he retired. In 1985 he was inducted into the Pascagoula Rotary Club. He has served on the vestry for St. John's Episcopal Church in Ocean Springs and the Windsor Park Civic Association. He currently serves as a board member for **United Way for Jackson and George Counties**, the **Fort Bayou Volunteer Fire Department**, **United Christian Outreach**, the West

### **Jackson County Utility District and Mississippi ASPE.**

Mike has a collection of antique motor scooters/cycles and Lionel trains. He hopes to restart a hobby of flying radio controlled model planes – a hobby that he stopped when his children were born many years ago. Mike states, *"Anything that involves connecting to people is something that I enjoy doing in a variety of ways."*

**Virginia:** Retirement for Virginia is a recent event, June, 2014. After 26 years in public school special education services and 14 years as a preschool teacher, she can now choose where and when she wishes to be involved. Virginia says, *"Volunteering at the **Samaritan Ministry of Jackson County's Food Pantry** is something new on my schedule. Having the time to visit and care for my parents in north Mississippi is a welcome change to my former routine. I continue to participate in the altar guild at St. John's and walk 2-3 miles through our neighborhood several times a week."* Spontaneous visits with her grandson, Scout, is a bonus! Also having the opportunity to travel is a source of pleasure for her; in the fall she plans to cruise down the Danube River with friends. She says, *"Every day offers new opportunities to enjoy family, friends, and community service."*

**It's quite evident that Mike and Virginia enjoy working in retirement to help other people and to make life better not only for their community, but for the state of Mississippi!**

**Thanks to Mike and Virginia Montgomery for letting us feature them in this issue of *The Guardian* and best wishes to them as they enjoy retirement while serving others!**

*Aren't we 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 and opportunities which bring joy to our lives and to the lives of those we love!*





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Brandon, MS 39047

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## **MRPEA Membership Application**

MRPEA welcomes both retirees and active employees who are members of PERS into our membership.

- Annual Rate, \$15 (August 1 - July 31)
- Life Rate \$250

Willing to serve on a MRPEA Committee

**Please print clearly.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: 601-919-0670 E-mail: [mrpea@bellsouth.net](mailto:mrpea@bellsouth.net) [www.mrpea.org](http://www.mrpea.org)