

THE GUARDIAN

Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association
Quarterly Newsletter

 **MRPEA**
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See page 2 for
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STAY ALERT, STAY INFORMED, BE INVOLVED!

MRPEA continues to make progress as we strive to develop an active grassroots network. As president, it is my goal to see our membership increase and to include members who are currently employed. This group is most vulnerable to any proposed changes to PERS. Please help me encourage current employees to become a part of our group so that they will have a voice.

Another goal is the educating and training of the district directors to keep the members in their districts informed. Communications Committee Chair and District Director Wynona Winfield is developing a guide for district directors which will be in place soon. We had our third Legislative Day at the Capitol in February, which is helping to increase awareness of MRPEA with the legislature. Next year's event is already scheduled for Thursday, January 17, 2019, from 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM, and we encourage as many of you to attend as possible.

While there was no negative legislation introduced this session involving PERS, the legislature continues to erode state government with budget cuts and fewer employees while continuing to support large tax breaks for big business. It is our understanding that if another employer contribution is required by PERS in the coming year, the legislature does not intend to fund it even though it is their responsibility, further burden agencies. The legislature is also on record as saying that, unlike the monthly benefit, the annual Cost of Living Adjustment is NOT an entitlement. Discussions have been held in regard to making changes to it, including suspending the COLA for several years.

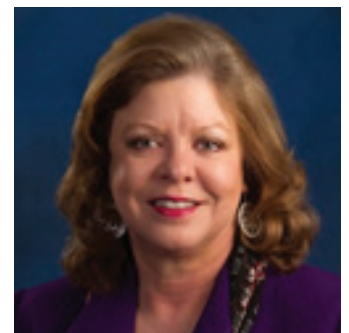
Mike Larsen continues to do an outstanding job as networking chair. We have a very good group of partner organizations whose members are also members of PERS. These groups are well-organized and established in working with the legislature and committed to working with MRPEA to advocate against any changes to PERS benefits.

MRPEA is very fortunate to have employed Emily Pote as our executive director. Emily is energetic, enthusiastic, already very knowledgeable about the mission of PERS, and is a tremendous asset to our organization. Judy Clark has recently accepted the position of Secretary following the resignation of Bob Rhoads citing other commitments. Bob did an outstanding job for two years, and we appreciate his service.

Finally, the new executive director of PERS has been announced. Ray Higgins will take over for Pat Robertson effective July 1. We will be watching this transition and hope to have more information soon.

Thank you for your support of MRPEA. Each and every one of you is important to our organization in fighting to protect our PERS benefits. If you have thoughts or suggestions for me, please be in touch. I would be glad to hear from you.

MRPEA President, Ann Thames



MRPEA DISTRICT DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1

*Forrest, George, Greene,
Hancock, Harrison,
Jackson, Lamar, Pearl
River, Perry, Stone*

Wynona Winfield

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DISTRICT 2

*Adams, Amite, Claiborne,
Copiah, Franklin,
Jefferson, Jefferson Davis,
Lawrence, Lincoln,
Marion, Pike, Simpson,
Walthall, Wilkinson*

Tony Byrne

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DISTRICT 3

*Clarke, Covington, Jasper,
Jones, Kemper,
Lauderdale, Leake,
Neshoba, Newton, Scott,
Smith, Wayne*

James Cushman

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DISTRICT 4

Hinds, Madison, Rankin

Joe Johnson

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MRPEA *Around the State*



From Starkville to Biloxi, MRPEA members and executive director have been out and about getting the word out about MRPEA membership and PERS. MRPEA President Ann Thames and several board members presented to MS State University's Association of Retired Faculty (ARF) in September. The presentation was well-received and garnered an article in the local paper.

Past-President Becky Cade led the way and exhibited at St. Dominic's Wellness Fest and presented with Wynona Winfield at the MS Library Commission this fall.

Our new executive director, Emily Pote started with

a bang and began exhibiting on her second day with MRPEA at the MS Association of Personnel Administrators (MAPA). In the new year, Pote has spoken to Canton Municipal Utilities (CMU), as well as presented to the MS Association of School Administrators (MASA) Board with Thames.

In February, Pote spoke at the MASA spring conference in Biloxi about the legislative session and engaging new PERS members. While on the coast, she also exhibited at the Creating Futures through Technology Conference (CFTTC) with Board Member Dr. Evelyn Webb.

This year's MRPEA Day at the Capitol was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who came out to support the association and its mission. We were encouraged to see many legislators and to have a strong presence at the Capitol.



MRPEA *Day at the Capitol*



Mark your calendars to join us next year on **Thursday, January 17, 2019, from 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM**

2018 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The 2018 Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association annual membership meeting has been set for Monday, July 9, 2018.

This year will be a departure in location as we move to the Embassy Suites Jackson - North/Ridgeland (200 Township Ave, Ridgeland, MS 39157).

We are excited about a change of scenery and hope that you will join us for an afternoon of informative speakers, engaging exhibitors, and fellowship with your fellow PERS members.

We will have more information as the meeting grows near, but for now make sure to note the date and location on your calendar!

And, if you have an opinion about what you would like to see at our annual meeting or a topic you would like to discuss, email us at mrpea@bellsouth.net or call at (601) 919-0670.

Applications for exhibitors are now open. You can request your application or send your suggestions to us as well.

MRPEA MEMBERSHIP MEETING SET FOR

*Monday, July 9 at
Embassy Suites
Jackson - North/
Ridgeland*



MRPEA Highlights

MEET

Wynona Winfield

Wynona serves as District Director for District 1 (Southeast Mississippi). Before retiring in June of 2011, Wynona served as director of South MS State Hospital, and she held management and administrative positions with DMH for more than 25 years.. She holds a MS in Communications and a BA in Communicative Arts from Mississippi College. She is a Certified Public Manager and a graduate of the Stennis Institute of Government. She now holds her most prestigious position of "Nonna" to 3 adorable grandchildren. She and her husband reside in Hattiesburg.



MEET

Emily Pote

Emily came on board as MRPEA's new Executive Director in October. She has been hard at work getting to know the organization. She is the owner of Pote Management and has a MBA from the University of Mississippi. She lives in Jackson with her husband, who is



a member of PERS, and one-year-old son. She is active in her community and enjoys volunteering with several groups in the area.

DISTRICT 5

*Attala, Calhoun,
Chickasaw, Choctaw,
Clay, Lowndes, Monroe,
Montgomery, Noxubee,
Oktibbeha, Webster,
Winston*

Marty Wiseman

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wmm3@msstate.edu

DISTRICT 6

*Bolivar, Carroll, Grenada,
Holmes, Humphreys,
Issaquena, Leflore,
Sharkey, Sunflower,
Warren, Washington,
Yazoo*

Preston Ratliff

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Itawamba, Lee, Pontotoc,
Prentiss, Tippah,
Tishomingo, Union*

Robert McNeil

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DISTRICT 8

*Coahoma, DeSoto,
Lafayette, Marshall,
Panola, Quitman,
Tallahatchie, Tate,
Tunica, Yalobusha*

Keith Shaffer

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INTHISISSUE:

**PRESIDENT LETTER: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
MRPEA ABOUT TOWN
NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

MRPEA Membership Form

Register or renew online at www.mrpea.org
or return form below with payment

_____ \$20 Annual Rate (August 1 – July 31) _____ \$250 Life Rate

_____ I want to support MRPEA with the enclosed donation

Check One: ___ Miss ___ Ms. ___ Mrs. ___ Mr. ___ Dr. ___ Other: _____

Name _____ County _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____ Date of Birth _____

Signature _____ Date _____

**Mail this form with a check payable to:
MRPEA, P.O. Box 5580, Brandon, MS 39047-5580**