

THE GUARDIAN

Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association
Quarterly Newsletter

 **MRPEA**
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See page 2 for
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PLEASE VOTE NOV. 5

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is my privilege to serve you as President of the Mississippi Retired Public Employee Retirement Association for 2019-2021. Having served as an agency director for many years which employed thousands of people, I am passionate about protecting your benefits which are promised and earned. Serving as State Employee Representative to the PERS board for 14 years afforded me the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience about how our system works and an understanding of its long-term solvency.

My goals as President are to continue to grow the organization, especially with regard to including current employees; continue to educate our membership as to the need to be involved with your own legislators to keep them informed of our interest in preserving our current benefits with no changes; continuing to further our efforts to develop a strong “grassroots network”; and continuing to develop strong partnerships with other organizations who are PERS members.

The upcoming election is critically important. Those who are elected can have a profound effect on the protection of PERS benefits. MRPEA does not endorse any one candidate, however I would like to share information with you that may help you in deciding which candidates will be most likely to protect your benefits. At the 2019 annual meeting of MRPEA, we invited all candidates running for Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, State Treasurer and Secretary of State to participate in a candidate forum to have the opportunity to share their beliefs and intentions regarding PERS. We also sent out a short survey to all candidates running for elective office. Attorney General Jim Hood rearranged his personal schedule to make it possible to attend this forum and gave assurances that if elected Governor, he would protect PERS benefits. Lt. Governor Tate Reeves did not respond to the invitation to be present nor did he return the survey. Lt. Governor candidate, Rep. Jay Hughes has attended the annual meeting of MRPEA for the past two years and was present for the forum. He is a strong supporter of state retirees. Secretary Delbert Hosemann did return the survey form and answered positively about his support of PERS. He was not present for the forum. He has made a written statement that he will support PERS if elected Lt. Governor. I hope you will make a thoughtful decision about your choices for these statewide leaders.

I look forward to serving you for the next two years and welcome your suggestions and feedback as to how we can make MRPEA a more effective organization.

Ed LeGrand, MRPEA President

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Meet the MRPEA President and Vice-President

President Ed LeGrand

Edwin C. LeGrand III was appointed Executive Director of the MS Department of Mental Health on January 1, 2007. Mr. LeGrand also served the Department of Mental Health as Deputy Director and Director of the Bureau of Mental Retardation. He was the Director of the Hudspeth Regional Center in Rankin County from 1982-1995. Mr. LeGrand began his career with the Department of Mental Health in 1974 at the North Mississippi Regional Center (NMRC) in Oxford, where he served in many capacities, including Personnel Director/Assistant Director and Director of the Education Department. He received his Bachelor and Master's degrees from the University of Mississippi, during which time he also worked as a Direct Care Worker at NMRC.

In addition to his extensive experience at the MS Department of Mental Health, Ed was active in numerous professional organizations, including the Mississippi Certified Public Managers Society, Mississippi Chapter of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and Mississippi Chapter of the Association of Mental Health Administrators. He is also a graduate of the Stennis Executive Development Institute of Government.

Ed was elected by his colleagues in state government three times as the State Agency Representative on the Board of the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System. Ed served on the State Rehabilitation Board and the Advisory Board for Mississippi's Certified Public Managers Program.



Ed retired in 2014 and has been actively involved in MRPEA, since that time including serving as President-Elect for the past two years. He brings a

wealth of experience and knowledge to the position of MRPEA President.

He and his wife, Shelly reside in Rankin County.

Vice-President

Michael Jordan



Michael K. Jordan has been associated with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health since 1989 and recently retired in May of 2018. In his career, he served in various administrative positions at East Mississippi State Hospital, Ellisville State School, Mississippi State Hospital and DMH Central Office. Michael received his MBA from William Carey College, a BBA from Belhaven University and AA degree from Jones Junior College. His day to day responsibilities at the Mississippi Department of Mental Health included federal and state collaboration, working with providers, working with the DMH Legislative Team; Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Services staff on site visit assignment and preparation; handling personnel matters internally for the bureau prior to taking them to HR; writing and gathering information for grants; and assessing and guiding staff and providers in appropriate levels of quality and security in service delivery.

Michael receives a tremendous amount of satisfaction in helping people! Having worked with individuals who suffer from Behavioral Health Disorders in Mississippi for over 28 years, he has seen family situations that most of us could not imagine and has been inspired by those as they struggle to overcome seemingly impossible problems. He does not know if he actually chose his career path, or if it chose him, but was happy to have the kind of job that made him feel as though he has been able to make a difference in peoples' lives.

Out in the Community

STARKVILLE DAILY NEWS

Retirees hear from senator, advocates
By Emma Moffett-Taylor

The Association of Retired Faculty at Mississippi State University hosted a public meeting to hear from representatives from the Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association and state Sen. Hob Bryan about the status of Mississippi's Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS).

Bryan, a Democrat from Amory, claimed it is important for the public to understand the majority of individuals serving in the state Legislature do not support the current retirement system.

"The people running your legislature fundamentally do not believe in the retirement system," Bryan said. "They fundamentally do not believe in a defined benefit plan. They believe in 401(k)." ...

While those opposing the current retirement system consider it beyond repair and unsustainable, Bryan says that sentiment is far from reality and encourages current retirees from the Mississippi public employment system to wake up.

"People are asleep," Bryan said. "They have been lulled into a sense of complacency. It is possible to sustain the system that we have now with the benefits that we have now for future generations. We can have a system that's like we had that all of us had the good fortune to participate in if that's what we want to do and what we are committed to."

With the coming General Election on Nov. 5, Bryan and MRPEA representatives urged voters to set aside party and vote for candidates interested in sustaining the current retirement system.

2019 MRPEA

Annual Meeting Wrap-Up

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