

# THE GRE A BULLETIN

JOURNAL OF NEWS AND REFLECTIONS FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS OF GEORGIA

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GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

SPRING 2019



## Welcome To Augusta, Georgia

Augusta is the 2nd largest and 2nd oldest city in Georgia. It is the home of the Medical College of Georgia, the legendary James Brown, the world famous Masters' Golf Tournament and for three days in May it will be the home of the 61st annual Georgia Retired Educators Association

convention. As a GRE A member you are invited to enjoy all the activities that have been planned by President Mickey Wendel and the convention chairs Keith and Donna Lee. It will be an exciting convention!

The convention will convene on May 7th at 3 p.m. and adjourn on May 9th at 12 p.m. The host hotel this year is the Marriott Augusta at the Convention Center. You can find a registration form and details on page 4 in this *Bulletin*!



# Message From the President

By Mickey Wendel, GREA President



I am issuing you a special invitation to our GREA "Share the Light" Convention, May 7-9, at the Augusta Marriott. Our convention co-chairs, Keith and Donna Lee, have done a tremendous job planning the convention. They are sharing more specifics about the convention with you in this *Bulletin*.

I am very excited about sharing the accomplishments members have made this year in GREA. I am still enjoying speaking to local units and meeting so many new friends across the state. I am very glad to see many of you are having a special project or event to raise funds for the Music Therapy Program at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. I appreciate the invitation from Jeff Davis County to participate in their Music for the Heart talent show. Marcia and I were excited to participate in the Ben Hill/Irwin unit's silent auction. We thoroughly enjoyed the strawberries from the auction. My local unit chose to have a spaghetti dinner and I am excited to report that the ticket sales should generate over \$1,000 for the project.

Presidents, please check your email for a Share the Light Check-up. I am asking each president to complete the survey and send it back to me by April 15th. You can send it to me via email or you can mail it to me. This will help me measure how well we did with reaching the goals I set at the convention.

I want to thank Dr. and Mrs. Tommie Fuller for coming to the Governing Board meeting to present an update on the GREA Foundation. Opening the lines of communication between these two groups is a step in the right direction. We want to express our thanks to the Foundation for the help they have provided current educators in pursuing higher degrees.

I want to emphasize again what a wonderful Governing Board we currently have. We just completed a work session at Jekyll Island. We made important decisions for GREA and they were made unanimously. It is such a pleasure to work with people who truly care about the future of our GREA. While at Jekyll, members were able to experience the beautiful sunrises and sunsets that were the inspiration for my Share the Light banner. And yes, the sand gnats were bad!

There will be an exciting event Tuesday night at the convention that will reshape GREA and GREM. It was passed unanimously by the board at the Governing Board meeting on Jekyll. You will not want to miss this!

Looking forward to seeing you in Augusta.

## Are You Ready?

By Jo Ann Tomlinson, President-elect



Jo Ann Tomlinson

Spring has Sprung! GREA is ready to have a fantastic 61st Convention at the Marriott Hotel in Augusta, Ga. May 7, 8 and 9, 2019. It is going to be FUN—a Beach Party! Invite as many members as will come to be a part of the excitement!

Last year we were "Running with Champions" and this year we have "Shared the Light"! Two great years for GREA!!!

On the last day of the convention, Thursday, May 9, I will be installed as your President and look forward to another great year for GREA in 2019-2020. With the good Lord's help and guidance, along with yours, we will make GREA the BEST! See you at the State Convention in Augusta. You do not want to miss it!

# Update on Mickey's Humanitarian Projects

## Children's Healthcare Of Atlanta

The money will be used for the Music Therapy program for the children that are hospitalized. I would like to suggest that each unit plan a particular project, maybe a yard sale, or a senior dance, to raise funds for this project.



Contributions should be mailed to:

Melisa Morrow | Development Officer  
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation  
University Office Park—Dartmouth Building  
3395 NE Expressway, Suite 100  
Atlanta, GA 30341

Please make sure to note on your contribution that it is for Georgia Retired Educators Association.

## Jump Rope For Heart

The American Heart Association is excited to partner with the Georgia Retired Educators Association to raise awareness for our nation's number one cause of death—heart disease!

Spreading the mission of the AHA is important for so many reasons. And Ella is one! Please take moment to view this video of Ella's Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnx4HWXSM8M>.

Our Youth Market Directors are in your schools and counties every day working closely with superintendents, principals and PE instructors to help save lives. We look forward to this great opportunity to work with our retired teachers as well.

We are working on our lists of Most Wanted Schools in each county and can provide that information once you reach out to your local contact below:

Anna Groce—Metro Atlanta West—[anna.groce@heart.org](mailto:anna.groce@heart.org)

Beth Stewart—Coastal Georgia—[beth.stewart@heart.org](mailto:beth.stewart@heart.org)

Catherine-Anne Collins—Northeast Georgia—

[catherine.collins@heart.org](mailto:catherine.collins@heart.org)

Brittany Heath—Middle Georgia—[brittany.heath@heart.org](mailto:brittany.heath@heart.org)

Mandy Couch—Metro Atlanta—[mandy.couch@heart.org](mailto:mandy.couch@heart.org)

Lynn Ziner—Cobb & Paulding Counties—[lynn.ziner@heart.org](mailto:lynn.ziner@heart.org)

Jason Rex—South Georgia—[jason.rex@heart.org](mailto:jason.rex@heart.org)

All the materials will be provided by the American Heart Association. Generally, it is the PE teacher that coordinates this. You would simply offer to help him/her in whatever way is needed. You would not be involved in handling any money. All monies would be contributed through the school or on-line.

Thank you so much for all you do to help shape today's youth and help raise awareness for heart disease this year.



Muscogee REA is involved in matters of the heart! The February program centered around President Mickey Wendell's call to action for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Kids Heart Challenge with Jump for Heart. Students participating in Jump for Heart put on a demonstration of their jump rope skills at our meeting held on February 15, 2019 at the Ministry Center of St. Luke Church. The students challenged us to get jumping and "double dutch" as we raise funds for Children's Healthcare and promote heart health.



# Tis the (Legislative) Season

By L. C. (Buster) Evans, Ed.D



Buster Evans

The 2019 legislative session opened on January 14, 2019 and kicked off the first year of the two-year (2019-2020) biennium session. Retirement bills introduced during previous sessions are no longer valid. Retirement bills that have a fiscal (monetary) impact can be introduced this year, but can only be acted on during the second year, which means the earliest effective date for a fiscal bill would be July 1, 2020.

It has been an eventful session for TRS so far. We have been attending various Committee meetings and speaking to legislators in an effort to stay abreast of the latest news. Trust us when we tell you that this is no easy task, as the introductions of bills and changes taking place are fast and furious.

The House Retirement Committee has convened for four hearings so far this session. On February 5th, HB 109 was heard before Committee and Representative Benton asked for and received comments regarding the bill. On February 12th, a substitute to HB 109 was introduced and amendments to the bill were read before Committee. Another substitute was submitted on February 19th. The bill has been favorably reported and is now in the hands of the Rules Committee.

Also, on February 15th and 19th, HB 320 & HB 336 were read that would allow certain TRS beneficiaries to return to work in certain teaching positions, without affecting their retirement benefits. Both bills remain in Committee. HB 390, which allows certain TRS members to purchase international teaching service, was introduced February 21st and still remains in Committee.

On February 5th, SB 47, a military service bill, was introduced to the Senate Retirement Committee and remains in Committee. SB 129, which would allow ORP members to participate in TRS, was introduced on February 20th and remains in Committee. And SB 175, another return to work bill for TRS retirees, also remains in Committee.

Crossover Day, the day in which a bill must pass its chamber of origin to be considered by the other chamber, will be Thursday, March 7th. Sine Die, the final day of the 2019 Legislative Session, will be Tuesday, April 2nd.

A synopsis of each bill is available in our most recent legislative update available at [www.trsga.com/legislation](http://www.trsga.com/legislation). We will continue to keep you updated on the latest legislative news.

## Nominations and Elections Committee Report

The following GREA members have been approved for their respective positions for 2019-2020. These members were nominated by their local unit and were approved by the GREA Governing Board for next year. These outstanding individuals deserve our thanks for volunteering to take a leadership position in GREA!

President—Jo Ann Tomlinson—Climch Co. REA—Area 4

President-elect—Dr. Henrietta Gray (new)—

Chatham/Savannah REA—Area 6

Area 1—Jewell Howard (new)—Mitchell/Baker REA

Area 3—Brenda Moore—Cook County REA

Area 5—Marcia Wendel (new)—Golden Isles REA

Area 6—Dr. Connie Cooper (new)—Chatham/Savannah

Area 7—Coleen McIver (new)—Telfair/Wheeler REA

Area 9—Donna Kemp (new)—Muscogee REA

Area 11—Dr. Janet Lee—Bibb REA

Area 13—Alice Moore—Atlanta REA

Area 15—Liz Bouis (new)—Cobb/Marietta REA

Area 17—Suellen Jones (new)—Hart County REA

# Georgia Retired Educators Museum

## "The 'Champ' Is Retiring"

By Myrtice C. Johnson, GREM President



Myrtice C. Johnson

My tenure as serving on the GREA and GREM Executive Boards is swiftly coming to an end. I feel complete gratitude and thanksgiving that you have allowed me the opportunity to serve these mighty organizations: Georgia Retired Educators Association and Georgia Retired Educators Museum for seven years. My four years as GREA Area 8 Director and three years as GREA President-Elect, GREA President and GREM President have been most rewarding and inspiring. We've run a great race in GREA and GREM while we as Champions were "Sharing the Light" all over Georgia, making dreams come true.

One of my proudest decisions as GREM President is the creation and the accomplishments of the GREM Curator's Committee. Presently, this committee is working to establish a time line for the four periods in Georgia's History of Education to be displayed around the walls of the Museum. The committee meets, once monthly, at the Museum in Flowery Branch to collaborate on members' reports of the periods of Georgia's Education for the timeline. These periods of the History of Georgia Education are as follows:

- **The Developmental Period (Early 1800's-1865)** when education was available only to those who could afford it.

- **The Established School Period (1866-1963)** where during the era of Reconstruction, the state assumed a role of responsibility for public schools.

- **The Equalization Period (1964-1973)** when the state began to struggle with integration and equal educational opportunities for all Georgia students.

- **The Accountability Period (1974-Present)** where the Adequate Program for Education in Georgia (APEG) began with its purpose to increase state funding and state responsibility for public education.

It is the committee's goal to have the timeline arranged on the walls in the very near future. A special thanks goes to the committee's chairperson, Marcia Wendell and committee members: Louis Frank Tompkins, Jesse Hunter, Becky Upchurch, and Marilyn Werner.

Another proud decision was the hiring of a Museum Building and Grounds supervisor, Past-President Jesse Hunter. Mr. Hunter has been maintaining the up-keep and beautification of the Museum's grounds by placing new shrubbery along the sidewalks and overseeing the placement of the new bricks. He has kept a running record of all brick orders and sent cards of acknowledgment to individuals who have purchased bricks.

*The greatest of all of my accomplishments as your GREM President is the proposed "pay-off" of our Museum by May 7, 2019. This pay-off is due to your efforts in our "all time" membership growth and brick sales. You will be able to help celebrate your efforts at the mortgage burning ceremony at the convention on Tuesday night, May 7, 2019. Thank you for being a CHAMPION in SHARING the LIGHT with others.*

## Obituary

### Frances E. McBride

Former GREA President (1988-89) Frances McBride passed away on October 30, 2018. Mrs. McBride was 94 and lived in McDonough, Ga. She is survived by her son Reginald, daughter-in-law Donna and two grandchildren, Reginald and Adonna, and a host of cousins, nieces and nephews. The GREA family sends its condolences to her family.

# Convention Overview

By Keith and Donna Lee, Convention Chairs

Come "Share the Light" at the Annual GREA Convention, May 7-9, 2019, at the Augusta Marriott in Augusta, Georgia. Below are a few highlights and some helpful hints.

The **First General Session** will begin at 3:00 p.m. **Tuesday** afternoon.

- The Top 10 Spotlight Ad Awards will be given.
  - Tuesday night will be our *Lighthouse Beach Party* banquet.
  - You are invited to wear your GREA t-shirts or anything 'beachy'.
  - Here will be dancing at the beach party following the meeting.
- Wednesday** will begin with our *Memorial Service* at 8:00 a.m.
- Our *"I'm Gonna' Let It Shine"* Local Units Awards Brunch will follow at 9:00 a.m.

This will be held in three separate venues:

- Areas 1-6
- Areas 7-12
- Areas 13-18
- Following the Brunch, breakout sessions will be at 11 a.m. and 12 noon.

*Breakout Sessions* include:

Veterans Remembrance/Normandy, Technology Today, Senior Safety, Silver Sneakers, AMBA-New Website, AMBA—Products, Unit Leadership Meeting

**Wednesday afternoon**—free time. See some possibilities below.

**Wednesday afternoon**—As an alternative to sight-seeing, you may select one of two options for a special afternoon session which will occur from 2:30-3:30 p.m.—Best Practices to Grow Your Unit or Humorous Teacher Stories

**Wednesday night** will be our "Share the Light" banquet.

- The Membership Awards and Units of Distinction Awards will be given during this banquet.
- Dress will be business casual.

**Thursday morning**—We will end the convention with the **Second General Session** starting at 8:30 a.m.

## Suggestions for Wednesday Afternoon

**Patriot Riverboat Tours**—Scenic one hour tour along the beautiful Savannah River in a covered platoon boat equipped with restrooms. View wildlife, beautiful homes, the fall line, the marina and the downtown area. Call 803-730-9739 for reservations. Cost is \$12. See [www.patriotboatour.com](http://www.patriotboatour.com) for more information.

**Petersburg Boat Tours on the Augusta Canal**—Cost is \$12 (senior rate) and includes discovery center and boat tour. Call 706-823-0440 for reservations. See [www.augustacanal.com](http://www.augustacanal.com) for more information.

**Lucy Laney Museum of Black History**—\$5 (senior rate) 706-724-3576

**Boll Weevil Cake Decorating Class**—across the street from the Marriott. Participants will decorate their own six-inch cake. Call 706-828-7470 for pricing and reservations.

Space is limited in each of these. Please call early for reservations.

There will be a handout with more options for shopping, dining and tourist attractions in your conference packet.

# 2019 Convention Registration Information

The 2019 State GREA convention will be held this year at the Augusta Marriott in Augusta, Ga. The convention committee chaired by Keith and Donna Lee has been planning for months! It will be an exciting convention!

Registration fee is \$45. The Hotel rate is \$132+ taxes per night. **Room reservations can be made at 1-800-228-9290 or 706-722-8900—please be sure to tell them you are with the GREA convention.**

## REGISTRATION FORM GREA 61st Annual Convention Augusta Marriott May 7, 8, and 9, 2019

Please do a separate form for each person registering!

**REGULAR REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 26TH**

Name on convention badge	_____
Local Unit Name and Area	_____
Office Held	_____
Address	_____ Phone _____
City	_____ State _____ Zip _____
Registration for the Convention	\$45 Amt. \$ _____
Tuesday Night Banquet May 7th—6:30 p.m.	\$45 Amt. \$ _____
Wednesday Brunch May 8th—10:00 a.m.	\$40 Amt. \$ _____
Wednesday Night Banquet May 8th—6:30 p.m.	\$50 Amt. \$ _____
Total Due	Amt. \$ _____
Your check should be for the total amount shown above. Please do not include any other types of payment/donations in your Registration check. No refunds after April 26. <b>A reminder that meal tickets must be bought before the convention and they will not be sold at the convention. Everyone taking part in any convention activities, including meals, must register for the convention.</b>	
Mail to: GREA Convention Registration P. O. Box 1379 • Flowery Branch, Ga. 30542	
Deadline to register is April 26, 2019. After that registration will be at the convention!	

## Georgia CASA Needs Your Help!

Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. (Georgia CASA) is a nonprofit organization, with 47 affiliate CASA programs throughout the state, currently serving 151 of Georgia's 159 counties. Our affiliate CASA programs provide trained and supervised volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in juvenile court proceedings. Last year, over 2,700 CASA volunteers served 11,460 children in Georgia.

Local foster children need someone in their lives speaking to their best interests. Neglected and/or abused by their parents/caregivers, moved from place to place without any stability in their lives, often behind in school—a Court

Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) can be their lifeline.

Join an affiliate CASA program in the state and you will receive all the training you need (for free!) and you will be part of the life of a child that may have no one else in his corner. As a CASA, you will focus solely on the children in your case(s).

Trainings are held on a regular basis at each affiliate CASA program. In addition to the classroom training, you will have the opportunity to do courtroom observations. The entire training consists of 30 hours of classroom sessions and 10 hours of court observations. If you are interested in learning more, visit

<https://www.gacasa.org/get-involved/#become-a-volunteer>.

Please note that volunteers must be 21 years of age or older and pass criminal background checks as well as additional screenings. Volunteers are asked to remain involved until the case is permanently resolved to keep the focus on the child.

You may call or email for more information! Arden Bakarich, CASA Advocacy Coordinator [www.arden@athensoconeeecasa.org](mailto:www.arden@athensoconeeecasa.org) Children First (Athens-Oconee CASA) 693 N. Pope St., Athens, GA 30601 706-596-8697 (c) 706-613-1922 ext 6 (office)

# GRE Foundation, Inc. Profiles Scholarship Winners

The Board of Directors of the GRE Foundation, Inc. is proud to announce the final set of grant/scholarship winners. These outstanding educators are dedicated to the same high ideals in education and life-long learning that retired educators appreciate. Local units of GREA have been faithful contributors and supporters of educators who are working on an additional degree. Each recipient has received a check to use in the expenses incurred in the pursuit of academic excellence. Anyone may become a scholarship contributor, or leave a legacy, as has been demonstrated in this issue of the GREA Bulletin.

**Ashley Gayle Crisler** serves as an English teacher at Cass High School in Bartow School System. For the past three years she has been the co-sponsor of the BETA Club, and she travels with the students in the national BETA Club conventions to compete that have been held in Atlanta and Savannah. Ms. Crisler recently complete the gifted endorsement program and learned approaches to enrichment for her students. Finally, she is looking forward to getting a Master's Degree in professional writing.



**Regina Lynn Mahoney** is a Special Education teacher in the Charlton County School System. She has been teaching for over seven years. Ms. Mahoney serves on the Bethune Middle School Leadership Team. She has decided to enter the ESOL Program to acquire the necessary certification to enhance her ESOL students. During the present time, Ms. Mahoney is in the second semester of a specialist program at Valdosta State University. Her supervisor states that she has become one of the most dependable teachers and always strives to improve the outcome of her students.



**Joanna Marie Roberts** serves as the theatre teacher at Fayette County High School. She is the director of FCHS Tiger Troupe, and the director of their International Thespian Society. She also serves as faculty advisor of the Drama Club, school auditorium coordinator, and teaches six theatre courses. Furthermore, she produces four productions per year. She represents Fayette County High School at the county STEM training program. Ms. Roberts is entering the Theatre Educational Graduate Program at Columbus State University.



**Jeremy Daniel Tucker** is an English teacher at Cook County High School in Adel, Ga. He constantly seeks to better himself as an educator: first, by acquiring a Master's Degree in Education and second through his pursuit of an Educational Specialist Degree. Mr. Tucker states that, as an educator, he has provided for students in a variety of roles: by being an educator and confidante, their counselor and friend, and their authority figure and advocate. Mr. Tucker states that he has filled a variety of educators' shoes by serving on the PAWS Student Behavioral Committee, part of the RTI Team, a coach, counselor, teacher, club sponsor, chaperone for field trips and school dances. Finally, Mr. Tucker is looking forward to receiving an Educational Specialist Degree at Valdosta State University.



**Rosalie Mason White** is an Elementary teacher at Southside Elementary School in Cairo, Ga. She graduated from the University of Georgia in December, 2016 and began teaching in January, 2017. She enrolled in Valdosta State University Program in Early Childhood Education with an endorsement for English Speakers of Other Languages. Ms. White's co-worker states that Ms. White shows up earlier than asked, works hard, and carries herself in polite and professional manner. She fosters a love of learning within herself and instills the same quality within her students. Presently, she is pursuing a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education with an endorsement for ESOL.



# The Honor Roll Plaza at GREM

By Jesse Hunter

One of the appealing aspects of the Georgia Retired Educators Museum is the Honor Roll Plaza on which bricks are placed to memorialize or honor individuals as well as emphasizing many of the local units from across the state.



Jesse Hunter

Generally, when local unit members make a visit to the museum, the first thing they want to do is look for their bricks. To facilitate locating their bricks, there is a computer in the lobby to accomplish this task. Additionally, GREA get inquiries from members about the status of their brick, or did someone purchase a brick for them? Linda Wright, one of our secretaries, does a great job of addressing this, but, sometimes she can't determine the answer. So, she emails the inquiry to me and I handle it. I enjoy calling the member to resolve the issue and at the same time, take the opportunity to make a new GREA friend. In the end, we get to know each other and resolve the question.

Since the opening of the Museum/GREA Offices in April 2015, approximately 2,500 bricks have been placed in the plaza. Space for 1,100 new bricks was added in March 2018 and about a third of those slots are already filled. In 2016-2017, 412 bricks were installed and this year we have placed 420 bricks with the expectation of installing 100 more bricks by the convention.

The brick-ordering process generally takes three to four months to complete—from the time the GREA/GREM bookkeeper receives the brick card and the time when the bricks are placed in the plaza. During this time, I verify the brick proof sheets to be correct (based on the wording on the brick cards) and make corrections on the few that have an error. A few weeks after the proof sheets are verified and the bricks have been imprinted, the bricks are delivered and installed. After the installation, I make a trip to the Honor Roll Plaza to determine their location (Section and Row) and then input their name and location in the Brick Directory.

The most time consuming part of the brick job is sending acknowledgment cards to the recipients of the bricks and tax letters to the purchasers. In most cases, this involves multiple mailings. If the purchaser is getting the brick for themselves, then one card and tax letter is required. The most common example is purchasing a brick for someone else which requires an acknowledgment card to the recipient or their family or families and a tax letter to the purchaser. Please remember that tax letters do not go to members who write a check to their local unit for a brick purchase. To get IRS credit, the check must be written to Georgia Retired Educators Museum or GREM.

Most of our members are aware that credit is given to local units for brick purchases and a \$50 donation to the museum. Either of these methods gives credit to the local unit for Unit of Distinction. Please use the latest edition of the brick card (which can be found on the GREA website) which has a space at the top right to indicate the name of the unit. Please do not use initials or numbers for the name. For example, write Pickens County REA—not PCREA or Unit 15. This assists us in giving credit to units when purchasing bricks.

On behalf of the GREA/GREM Governing Boards and Dr. Bill Sloan, Executive Director, thanks to all purchasers of bricks. Your participation is serving a dual purpose: Honoring individuals or groups and hastening the depletion of the museum mortgage.

Thanks again and keep buying the bricks!

**Erica D. Williams** is a Special Education teacher in Twiggs County School System. She exposes her student to many aspects of careers through conversations and field trips. Ms. Williams states that she has worked with children for many years. She teaches Sunday School for ages four to seventeen years. She has also taught Vacation Bible School. Not only that, she works on the scholarship committee at her church. Ms. Williams started classes this summer at Georgia Southwestern University to obtain an autism endorsement.



## What a great day for GREM!

On November 5, 2018, GREA President Mickey Wendel presented a check of \$203,765.13 to GREM President Myrtice Johnson. The check was then given to Mr. Chris Gooch of the BB&T Bank in Gainesville for an additional payment on the principal of the State Office/Museum building. GREA has been really blessed with increased membership and people buying bricks in our Honor Plaza. It was a thrill for all involved to make this outstanding payment. Thank so much to all of you who helped make this possible.



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[myambabenefits.info/grea](http://myambabenefits.info/grea)



## Ramblin' Around With the Executive Director



William Sloan

By Bill Sloan, Executive Director

The last few months have brought severe hurricanes and tornadoes to many areas of Georgia and it had a devastating effect on many of our members. Our thoughts and prayers are with the many people in Southwest and Middle Georgia who have experienced loss.

The GREA brick sales to help pay off our mortgage have been outstanding! The special rate we offered in December and January was well received by our members. There is a special article in this *Bulletin* about the brick sales. Jesse Hunter is now the organizer for the brick plaza and he is doing an outstanding job. This is a great time-consuming activity to send out tax forms and notification notes to recipients. He just about has all the bricks organized by location and in a new computer for easy access to the location of a brick. Jesse has already overseen the development of a new section as we sold all of the old space. A good thing is the new section is almost already full. He is already planning for the next addition to the Plaza.

The legislative session has been very active for Rod Chatham, GREA legislative liaison, and me. I have traveled more to Atlanta this year than ever before. When you receive this *Bulletin* the session will probably have ended. HB 109 has drawn more attention from all the GREA leadership than any bill I can remember. We still have a few legislators who want to "change" our TRS system to a Defined Contributions method. House Bill 109 has tried to prevent it and hopefully will be successful in its efforts. Thanks to House Retirement Committee Chair Representative Tommy Benton (R-Jefferson) for trying to protect our system from a major change. I hope the session ends well with no surprises.

Our convention is coming soon on May 7, 8 and 9 in Augusta. This will be a memorable and historical convention for GREA and I hope many of you will try to attend. Registration form and hotel info is included in another section of this *Bulletin*.

Thanks so much for your support of GREA!

**GREA  
61st Annual  
Convention  
Augusta Marriott  
May 7, 8, and 9,  
2019**

# News From GREA Local Units

**Atlanta REA** invited our Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent to share APS updates at our October 12th meeting. She was very informative and our members enjoyed her presentation. She shared 1) her objectives for the year, 2) interactions with some of the students, 3) what is working and how we as retired educators can help our school system.

**Banbridge/Decatur REA** went to the State Convention, we received Unit of Excellence. We attended several cookouts. In December we gave out 15 Holiday Baskets to the elders and rang the bell for the Salvation Army and bought toys for Toys for Tots.

**Berrien County REA** held their December meeting at the AG Center in Nashville. The Strummers provided the entertainment with ukuleles and Christmas Carols. We had a cake raffle and donations collected for local charities. At our February meeting, we held a memorial service for our deceased members. A Valentine theme was used for decorations. Plans were made to support "Jump Rope for Heart."

**Burke County REA** enjoyed Christmas Luncheon at Doubletree Hotel. We contributed \$100 to CSRA EOA, Inc. Burke Co. Head Start, "Adopt-A-Child." Our speaker for January was Sheriff Alphonso Williams. He shared information on the Crime Status, tips for Citizens and Fraud and Scams Prevention. Our unit celebrated a Brother Heart Fund Luncheon. Members donated \$740 for The American Heart Association.

**Calhoun/Gordon REA** met in February with speaker Anne Pitts from Gordon County Juvenile Court, sharing how volunteers are needed for the CASA program. The Presidents Checklist was discussed and finalized during the business session.

**Cherokee County REA** has had an exciting year. We have a new meeting location at Reinhardt University. We adopted ACE Academy to provide support for teachers. Our members actively involved in community activities.

**Clayton County REA** was pleased to hear the singing group, "Eternity", in December. In March we will sponsor a table at the Pillars Luncheon, a fund-raiser for the Good Shepard Clinic. Judy Hester will be honored as the Education Pillar.

**Coweta REA** has a renewed spirit this year, building membership, increasing public awareness, engaging with the community as volunteers and aligning our local goals with those of GREA. To achieve these objectives, our monthly programs have featured speakers from Coweta County Schools, GREA District 10, University of West Georgia, TRS, Piedmont Health and Backpack Buddies. Two highly successful fund-raisers—Holiday Bazaar/Silent Auction and Valentine BBQ—are supporting college scholarships planning for careers in education. We haven't neglected the fun side of retirement with food and fellowship preceding each meeting, gathering to observe Retired Educators Day and enjoying a field trip to Ellijay Apple Festival. Keeping up this pace, CARE looks forward to an equally busy Spring—no winding down the year for the group of retirees.

**DWM REA** held its annual Christmas luncheon/auction in December—featuring a silent/live auction—with 150 in attendance. Whitfield County Sheriff, Scott Chitwood was the auctioneer. Approximately 200 items were auctioned, and \$10,393 was raised for the scholarship fund—surpassing the goal of \$10,000 set by the late Faye Fox and the auction committee. The scholarship endowment is now approximately \$25,000. Unwrapped toys were also provided by members—which were donated to local agencies.

**Effingham REA** met in January and began the new year with 33 attending. Our unit was busy during Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. We held fund-raising dessert silent auction. The proceeds will be used toward the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Allison Wolven, training instructor, presented a program about fitness and nutrition. We are in the process of distributing state scholarship applications.

**Fayette County REA** is having a banner year. The Unit's activities reflect its commitment to "Share the Light." Throughout the year we have supported Fayette Samaritans, the Fayette County Teacher Resource Center and Children's Hospital of Atlanta. Recruiting new members as well as reconnecting with "Missing in Action" members. A highlight of each year is the FCREA Awards and Scholarship Luncheon. FCREA hosted its Annual Scholarship Auction. Auctioneer, Patrick Gould led an action-packed and fun-filled event. We look forward to honoring five outstanding eighth graders and awarding a scholarship to an outstanding senior. At our February meeting, Ms. Laura Milner, Exercise Physiologist from Piedmont Hospital, was our speaker. FCREA has met its Spotlight Ads and 10% goals.

**Floyd/Rome REA** had two informative and entertaining programs this winter. Our December meeting was held at the Great Hall of Winshape Retreat Center at Berry College. Our guest speaker was AMBA representative Brad Jones. Our guest speaker for February was local attorney C. King Askew. He covered Elder law topics such as estate planning, guardianship and durable power of attorney.

**Grady REA** held our monthly meeting featuring Southern Pines representative, Shanna Derby, sales and marketing director and Terry Wilder, health and wellness director presented a program about their independent living facility and gave away two \$100 gift certificates.

**Griffin-Spalding REA** had two projects for the Salvation Army. We stuffed 40 stockings to be distributed to children for Christmas. We rang the bell for the kettle drive in front of Hobby Lobby in Griffin. We will present our annual memorial scholarship of \$1,000 to an employee of the local school system who is seeking certification.

**Gwinnett County REA** holds an auction to raise funds for scholarships. This year thanks to all the auctions and raffles, enough funds have been raised to provide seven scholarships. All seven will be presented the scholarship at the April meeting.

**Habersham REA** recruited 26 members this year, showing 10% growth. Members volunteered to deliver food to 11 schools in the county. Lynette Drew was honored as our Emeritus Member with a birthday celebration. Members participated in the Rivers Alive Clean up in September. Local banks, funeral homes and businesses sponsor our meals and return HREA buys them a spotlight ad.

**Newton County REA** celebrated our Holiday at Newton College and Career Academy. Students in the Culinary Arts provided the meal. Several speakers shared insight into downsizing and decluttering our homes. Mr. Doug Holt, AMBA District Manager, spoke to us explaining the insurance benefits for GREA members. We are continuing to grow and becoming more active in our community.

**North Fulton REA** has adopted North Fulton Charities as our altruistic project. Since December, members have donated needed items such as diapers, toiletry items, socks and food for their pantry. Barbara Duffey, Executive Director of North Fulton Charities, was the program speaker.

**Oglethorpe County REA** welcomed Bly Hartley to our February meeting. Bly presented a program on the performing arts in the renovated 100-year-old Crawford School. TRS apprised the unit of upcoming proposed legislation. A raffle drawing for a quilt was held to benefit the scholarship fund.

**Pickens County REA** has had a productive year and enjoyed "sharing the light" in several ways. Several members welcomed visitors to the Talking Rock Schoolhouse Teaching Museum. In November, members created ornaments for our Christmas Tree, which was part of the Festival of Trees. In December we welcomed the Pickens County Teacher of the year, Kanyon Petti. At our March meeting we will award our Golden Deed Award.

**Polk County REA** had a busy end to 2018 and an even busier beginning to 2019. At the December meeting toy and cash contributions were given to "Christmas is for Kids," a program administered by the Rockmart Police, to help families without funds for their Christmas. February is the yearly "Country Store," where members bring homemade items that are sold to fund yearly projects. Money raised this year will go to fund our new teacher grant. Speaker for the program was R. Katie Holmes, Assistant Supt., who informed us of a new program at both high schools, to help students to remain in school and achieve graduation.

**Stephens County REA** members have been busy collecting new books for Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, as well as peanut butter for Stephens County "Food2Kids" program. We also made a donation to Shirley's Shelter for homeless men and women in Stephens County.

**Toombs County REA** began in September with GRE updates from James Twiggs and Harley Grove. In October, a legislative session was held with Senator Jack Hill, Representative Greg Morris and special guest Senator Blake Tillery. AMBA presented benefit plans at our November meeting. We have been holding monthly raffles to raise money for the state project and played games along the way. Moving into next year, our group took a tour of the new Vidalia High School led by Principal John Sharp. February proved to be a special with a group of FFA'ers from Toombs County Middle and High School (accompanied by Advisor Beth Galloway) presenting basic information of FFA, how to open a meeting, an essay, a speech and the FFA Creed. We are looking forward to a day trip to Savannah and installation of new officers.

**Valdosta /Lowndes REA** each year offers a \$2,000 scholarship to an aspiring future educator from one of three high schools. The applications are given to three area High Schools in January. Our unit has given more than \$25,000 in scholarships to area students since 1997. Catharine Kirk is the 2018 Scholarship winner.

**Washington County REA** sponsored 100 students, 50 Ridge Road Elementary students participated in Healthy Heart Challenge through aerobic exercises and 50 Ridge Road Primary students took part in Hoops for Heart moving through the six stations at the sound of a whistle. Prizes were given to the 100 from Earnestine Pinkston, WCREA President.

# Thank You to Everyone Who Bought a Brick 12/1/18-2/28/2019

Thanks so much to each and every one of you who purchased a brick for our Honor Roll Plaza at the State Office/Museum building. Through your generosity we will be able to pay off our mortgage on the building soon! Have you bought a brick yet? Forms can be found on our web site at [garetirededucators.org](http://garetirededucators.org) or you can call or email us and we will be happy to send you a card. Why not honor someone today with a permanent memory in our Plaza?

Alice Loggins	Glenda Waller	North Fulton REA
Lamar Adams	Glynda Harris	Pamela B. Altman
Rufus L. Akins	GREA Governing Board	Pamela Henderson
Albert S. Mercer	James G. Green	Pat Kirkland
Judy Alexander	Greene County REA	Patricia M. Woodard
Alexandra A. Boyle	Greg C. Chandler	Patricia Sandhagen
Alice Clark	Harley C. Grove	John F. Pearce
Alice M. Doanes	Habersham REA	Pearlie H. Robinson
Anna Brown	Hart Co. REA	Peggy M. Leonard
Anne G. Miller	Hazel G. Slaughter	Raymond B. Hester
Applying Co REA	Helen E. McClellan	Rebecca H. Amerson
Arolue Flemmen Prater	Helen Epps	Rebecca M. Oliver
Ata Abdel-Latif	Mary Maud Hiestand	Ricky Benton
Athens Area REA	Melanie Holt	Robert A. Clay
Atlanta REA	Frank Hutcheson	Robert W. Jones
B. P. Allen	J. M. Wood	Roger Williams
B. W. Moore	Jack R. Brown	Rosemary Pinson
Bernice T. Myers	Margie P. Jackson	Ruby M. Durden
Berrien Co. REA	Jacquelyn B. Summerville	Ruth S. Falligan
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Betty L. Sexton	James Edward Allen	Sallie R. Mills
Bettye Ann Swint	Janet B. Graham	Samie K. Lott
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Fran Boggs	Mickey N. Key	Marcia R. Wendel
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## GREA Is Proud To Announce A New Staff Member

The Governing Boards of GREA and GREM are happy to announce that former GREA and GREM President Jesse Hunter (2016-2017) has been employed part time to be the new Building and Grounds Supervisor for the State Office/Museum complex. He will be in charge of the facility and will coordinate all the activities involving the Brick Plaza. GREA President Mickey Wendel and GREM President Myrtice Johnson recommended to the two boards to employ him because of the huge amount of time involved in these activities. He had been doing these as a volunteer and it was a very time consuming task. He is a much needed addition to the GREA Staff and we all welcome him aboard.



Jesse Hunter

### GREA OFFICERS

Mickey Wendel, President  
Jo Ann Tomlinson, President-elect  
Myrtice Johnson, Past President  
Dr. Beverly Roberts, Secretary  
Dr. John Upchurch, Treasurer  
Dr. Bill Sloan, Executive Director

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### GREA BULLETIN

Georgia Retired Educators Association

*The Only Organization That Concentrates Exclusively On The Welfare of Retired Educators of Georgia*

Bill Sloan, Editor

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