



# Retirement Times



## President's Message

## Looking Back and Looking Forward

The year 2025 was quite a momentous year for KCRTA. We changed our luncheon venue from the Foundry to Rothchild's. The Foundry is now the home of the Knoxville Children's Theater. We had interesting and informative programs culminating with the Scholarship Foundation Luncheon where we awarded a record breaking \$27,000 in scholarships. Our members have volunteered their time in many ways to benefit the Knoxville community. The Clothing Center, the Teacher Depot, Walk for Alzheimer's, the Zoo, the Senior Center, Mobile Meals, and the Mabry-Hazen House..just to name a few! We awarded 4 \$500 Active Teacher Grants to classroom teachers to enhance their classroom instruction. Our group participated in the TRTA Regional Representative Assembly in Maynardville. In short, we've been busy!

The year 2026 is shaping up to be an exciting year! At each luncheon, we will celebrate an aspect of the 250 years (seminquincentennial) of The United States of America. Amanda Gold with Mobile Meals will present the January program along with a panel of members who volunteer their time. In March, we will learn about the Women's Right to Vote and Knoxville's role in the passage. May is Membership Mania Month. Curious? Come check it out. In July the recipients of the Active Teacher grants will tell us how the money was used in their classrooms. In September, we will welcome Antionette Lee, the new TRTA Executive Director. She will bring us updates from the state and give us tips on how to effectively communicate with our legislators. We'll round out the year with the scholarship luncheon in November. Our members will find more ways to volunteer and we will participate in state and regional TRTA meetings. Let's start the new year together. Invite a friend and we'll see you on January 22.

Please RSVP to Karen Peterman (information below) and join us for an exciting new year!

**Libby Burney, KCRTA President**



## KCRTA LUNCHEON New Year, New Reservation Guidelines

The deadline for making a reservation for the January 22nd KCRTA luncheon is noon on Monday, January 19th. To make a reservation, text Karen Peterman at 865 363-6854 or email her at [petermank1@gmail.com](mailto:petermank1@gmail.com). Remember that if you make a reservation and don't cancel before the January 19th deadline, you will be responsible for the cost of the reserved meal which is \$25.00.

**Karen Peterman, Executive Secretary/Treasurer**

## Community Participation 2025 Active Teacher Grants

Recipients of the 2025 KCRTA Active Teacher Grants were selected on October 8th by a committee of six judges; and they received their \$500 grant checks on November 21st. The committee, consisting of Libby Burney, Nancy Meyer, Janet Oakes, Karen Peterman, Kitty Spry, and Elnora Williams reviewed some outstanding applications and identified the four recipients. The recipients were Jake Albright (Green Magnet STEAM Academy), Nicole Duke (Northwest Middle), Carrie Brooks (Carter Elementary) and Adrienne Notess (Dogwood). These four educators will join us at our July 23rd luncheon to share information about their projects.

**Karen Peterman, Community Participation Chair**

## KCRTA Officers and Committee Chairs

President:

Libby Burney

President-Elect:

Past President:

Karen Peterman

Secretary:

Communications:

Margaret Willis

Community Participation:

Karen Peterman

Hosting Chair:

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Information & Protective  
Services:

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Legislative Chair:

Terry Whitaker

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Nora Messing

Chris Vandergriff

Newsletter Editor:

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Scholarship Foundation Rep.:

Lexa Hooten

Web Page Chair:

Libby Burney

Executive Secretary /

Treasurer:

Karen Peterman

# KCRTA Membership

The Knox County Retired Teachers Association welcomes all retired educators who want to stay connected, informed, and involved. Membership offers opportunities for fellowship, community service, legislative updates, and continued support of public education. Whether you're newly retired or long-time retired, KCRTA provides a place to share experiences, make new friends, and stay engaged with the issues that matter to our schools and community.

## KCRTA Membership Co-Chairs:

**Chris Vandergriff**

chris.vandergriff@gmail.com  
(865-924-4600)

**Nora Messing**

ndbmess@comcast.net  
(865-406-5867)

## Information and Protective Services:

### Artificial Intelligence (AI) capability being used to impersonate people

We have previously discussed the "impersonation" scams used to try to get senior citizens to send money for some fake emergency. You may recall that I got one of these calls some years ago claiming that my grandson was in jail and wanted me to wire money. That was easy to refute since I do not have any grandchildren!

Karen Trent sent an article (<https://www.idz.us/knowledge-center>) about how AI technology has greatly increased the chance that I will not be able to sort out the scams so easily next time. AI can sort through all the internet sites and know my family history; they can mimic voices, and create false narratives based on birthday and holiday greetings. If my scammers are using AI, they will probably not make the same mistake next time! My dumb husband has our complete family tree posted online!

Other than relatives and law enforcement, some of people being impersonated include government officials, court officers, celebrities, and even neighbors. Anytime someone is asking for immediate money transactions like gift cards, wire transfer, or money orders; be very cautious.

**Pam Chipley, Information and Protective Services, Chair**

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

I am so excited that our Knox County Board of Education voted 6-3, Dec. 4th to affirm that every child in the district, regardless of immigration status, has the right to a free public education and asked our state lawmakers to reject efforts to make school systems collect or verify the immigration status of students. the bipartisan agreement was to include this measure among their legislative priorities. This approved measure, titled "Free Education for All Children," restates the district's position that Tennessee's constitution guarantees access to public schools for all students. It also asks state lawmakers to reject any future state mandates that would require districts to collect or verify the immigration status of students.

This was in response to a state Legislative bill that would give school districts the authority to ban undocumented students or charge them tuition. This bill passed the Senate during the 2025 session and is up for further consideration in the House during the 2026 session. The bill is a direct challenge to a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that prevents public schools from excluding students based on immigration status.

For months, Knox County citizens adults and students have been writing, calling, and showing up asking our school board to reject this bill: at times filling both the boardroom and the overflow room. Anne Templeton and Katherine Bike crafted the legislative priority. Board members voting against this were D5 Lauren Morgan (865 594-1630 [lauren.morgan@knoxschools.org](mailto:lauren.morgan@knoxschools.org)), D6 Betsy Henderson (865 594-1630 [betsy.henderson@knoxschools.org](mailto:betsy.henderson@knoxschools.org)), and D7 Steve Triplett (865 594-1630 [stephen.triplett@knoxschools.org](mailto:stephen.triplett@knoxschools.org)), those voting for the measure were D1 John Butler (865 617-2603 [john.butler@knoxschools.org](mailto:john.butler@knoxschools.org)), D2 Anne Templeton (865 352-7979 [anne.templeton@knoxschools.org](mailto:anne.templeton@knoxschools.org)), D3 Patricia Fontenot-Ridley, (865 934-9067 [patricia.fontenotridley@knoxschools.org](mailto:patricia.fontenotridley@knoxschools.org)), D4 Katherine Bike (865 594-1630 [katherine.bike@knoxschools.org](mailto:katherine.bike@knoxschools.org)), D8 Travis Wright (865 594-1630 [travis.wright@knoxschools.org](mailto:travis.wright@knoxschools.org)), and D9 Kristi Kristy (865 594-1630 [kristi.kristy@knoxschools.org](mailto:kristi.kristy@knoxschools.org))

Please send emails and sincerely thank those board members who voted FOR this legislative priority.

**Submitted by Jane Skinner, KCRTA Member**

## "Our Link to the Future"

Almost 50 years ago, two accomplished KCRTA educators, Tom Underwood and Reuben Hunter, decided there was a need to initiate a scholarship for young aspiring teachers who could be considered worthy of replacing strong retiring classroom teachers. They wanted the applicants to have a passion for teaching and a financial need as they completed their final steps in acquiring their teacher certification. Mr. Underwood and Mr. Hunter further decided that the recipients could use the scholarship money for any purposes they needed to help them finalize their studies. The first "Our Link to the Future" scholarship in the amount of \$500 was awarded in the early 1980s.

On November 20, 2025, KCRTA's Scholarship Foundation awarded nine (9) \$3000 scholarships to students from Lee University, Johnson University, and The University of Tennessee. Applications were received from two other universities as well. These nine recipients were selected from thirty-seven (37) applications. The members of KCRTA who attended the Scholarship Foundation Luncheon listened attentively and applauded enthusiastically as they heard each recipient's story, vision, and accomplishments. These students were excellent students with compassion for others, passion for teaching and love of learning. It was a great day of celebration!

I left the luncheon with a sense of tremendous pride, not only because of the awarding of scholarships to nine teachers ready to approach the classroom with passion, but also because of: 1) the nine retired teachers who served on the Scholarship Selection Committee who gave their time to the process and then presented these winners with pride and support: 2) the KCRTA members who have donated to the scholarship fund for years; and 3) the fact that Tom Underwood was there to witness this great celebration. (I wish Reuben Hunter could have been there to see how his vision has grown through the years too.) Thank you, also, to all of you in KCRTA who worked and helped make this day possible.

**Mary Lou Kanipe, Scholarship Selection Committee Co-chair**

### KCRTA Scholarship Foundation Luncheon

I would like to convey my appreciation to the following people who were instrumental in the success of the Scholarship luncheon. The first group is the KCRTA members and families who donated money to make it possible to give nine \$3,000. scholarships. Without these donations the Scholarship Foundation would be unable to provide scholarships to deserving students.

The selection committee consisted of chairperson Mary Lou Kanipe and Christine Oehler, and nine members. The members are: Kitty Spry, Patricia Harris, Emily Lenn, Kathy Coley, Anthony Hancock, Paula Hancock, Jane Parker, Bill Parker, and Judy Pyne. Thanks to Connie Silvey for hosting the committee at her home. The committee's selection of the nine recipients was outstanding.

Thanks to Kitty Spry, Margaret Willis, Myra Sowder, and Kaye Williams for helping with the seating of the guests, and Vickie Andrews for the programs and table decorations, that she has been doing for a number of years. Thanks to Lexa Hooten the Treasurer of the Foundation for the numerous tasks she undertakes for the Foundation. Thanks to the KCRTA and the Scholarship boards for your support of the Foundation. Thanks to our current President Libby Burney who is serving her second term.

**There is no doubt that our organization strength is in our members. Thank each of you for being such a dedicated and valuable part of this organization.**

**David Huntsinger, Former Executive Secretary/Treasurer**



**Pictured Left to Right: Kelsey Mitchell, Faith Mitchell, Mary Nell Rocheleau, Walker Weems, Said Brantley, Sara MacGregor, Katerina Scott, Kate Faulk and Behnz Kasraei.**



Calendar

Be sure to mark your calendar for the following dates of the Knox County Retired Teachers Association meetings:

- NEW VENUE  
Rothchild's Catering & Conference Center  
8807 Kingston Pike

In order to assure that everyone is served, a RSVP will be required.

SAVE THE DATE:

Our next meeting will be January 22, 2026. The executive Board meets at 9:30 am before each luncheon, except in the month of November when the Executive Board does not meet.

All members are welcome to attend the Executive Board Meetings.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS 2026

- \*January 22 Mobile Meals
- \*March 26 The Suffrage Movement
- \*May 28 Membership Mania
- \*July 23 Active Teacher Grant Presentations
- \*September 24 TRTA Executive Director, Antionette Lee
- \*November 19 Scholarship Foundation

\*Any change of address, email address, or phone number should be sent to KCRTA, 711 N Hall of Fame Drive, Knoxville, TN 37917 or to chris.vandergriff@gmail.com

\*A hard copy of Retirement Times is available upon request. Contact Chris Vandergriff at chris.vandergriff@gmail.com

KCRTA Scholarship Donations

November - December 2025

In Memory of

Mike Asquith  
Paul Bean  
Dr. Fred Bedelle, Jr.  
Mollie Biscoe  
Richard Bridges  
Pat Carson  
Bill Crosland  
Dr. Margie LeCoultre  
Betty Jo Hamilton  
Christine Harness  
Christine Harness  
Sharon Hayes  
Carol Sue Hicks  
Ernie Israel, Jr.  
Helen Marks  
Wandy Moddy  
Patricia (Pat) Payne

Gary Peterman  
Carolyn Wills  
Janet Young

From

Ron Campbell  
Patsy K. Vittetoe  
Patsy K. Vittetoe  
Emily Lenn  
Emily Lenn  
Emily Lenn  
Ron Campbell  
Sherry Morgan  
Nancee Rogers  
Ira Gladson  
Patsy K. Vittetoe  
Emily Lenn  
Ron Campbell  
Ron Campbell  
Emily Lenn  
Patsy K. Vittetoe  
Wrights Ferry Landing Inc.  
Homeowners Association c/o  
Anita G. Davis  
Marsha and Terry Uselton  
Ira Gladson  
Emily Lenn

In Honor Of

Donations

Sara Baskins  
Vernell Moore Gray  
Dr. Kimberly Hawkins  
Jennifer Owens  
William Potter  
Martha Smith  
Shirley Underwood  
Tom Underwood

Necrology

Sharon Rains Hayes  
Mildred Helene Billingsley Kelso  
Rita V. Fulp  
Charles Edward McGill  
Judith Elaine Witt Hodge  
Joyce Elizabeth Underwood Brown



## The US Penny: Making sense (CENTS) of it all!

According to Mr. Google one day in December of 2025, compiled information surrounding the United States **One-cent piece**, sometimes referred to as "a penny", production has been ceased on November 13, 2025. The U.S. cent was modeled after the British penny and thus this nickname stuck for over 200 years of use.

The first main point is, the one cent piece, the penny, is still legal tender and can be used for monetary transactions in the United States. As time marches, on the Penny will be reduced by attrition in our economy. Mathematics instructors should be on alert to include rounding up and rounding down exercises for student learners.

The first "Flowing Hair" cent, was minted by the U.S. Mint in 1793 and served as the official one cent coin! This was after the coinage act of 1792, established the National Mint now referred to as the U.S. Mint. The earliest usage of the cent designation, prior to vintage US coinage in 1793 was the "Fugio cent" minted in 1787 by authority of the Congress of the Confederation in New Haven, Connecticut from the metal copper bands around gunpowder kegs. Some collectors consider this the first penny in America.

Only one person, one image at a time has been displayed on the front of the one-cent piece. From beginning to the end of production (a total of 232 years), the US Mint has been producing the penny for business strikes. The following is a brief outline on the Penny's produced during those 232 years.

Large Cents (1793 - 1857)      Flowing Hair Cent (1793)      Liberty Cap Cent (1793 - 1796)  
Draped Bust Cent (1796 - 18j09)      Classic Head Cent (1808 - 1814)      Coronet or Matron Head Cent  
(1816 - 1839)      Braided Hair Cent (1839 - 1857)      Small Cents (1856-2025)      Flying Eagle Cent  
(1856 - 1858)      Indian Head Cent (1859 - 1909)      Lincoln Cent (1909 - 2025)\*  
\*Abraham Lincoln was the first US president to be illustrated on any coinage  
Lincoln Wheat Cent (1909-1958)      Lincoln Memorial Cent (1959 - 2008)

\*Changes on reverse side: Bicentennial Designs (2009)      Union Shield Cent (2010 - 2025)

I hope all enjoyed what they were given at the KCRTA November Scholarship Luncheon. Moreover, the exceptional share from Anthony Hancock concerning the penny was electrifying.

All in attendance received One 2025 US one-cent piece, business strikes. The nine (9) Scholarship Recipients received "Their two cents worth" including a 1957 FIRST day cachet for the "Teacher stamp", #1093.

Many thanks to Libby Burney and others for allowing me to express heartfelt gratitude on information and delivery on the Last United States American one-cent pieces to be generated by the United States Mint.

And one more thing YOUR PENNYS could be considered collector coins. It's never too late to start a penny collection! Some estimate that there's 300 billion pennies somewhere, possibly in collection jars, and various locations around the world. More than likely, there will be special sets in subsequent years, low manage, drawing attention to the US one cent piece. These will all be controlled by the Untied States meant for future release. You can check out your current pennies on hand by researching on the American Numismatic Association website.      **Mike Blakenship, Parliamentarian**

**Pictured below Anthony Hancock**



**The Penny**

