

Retirement Times

President's Message

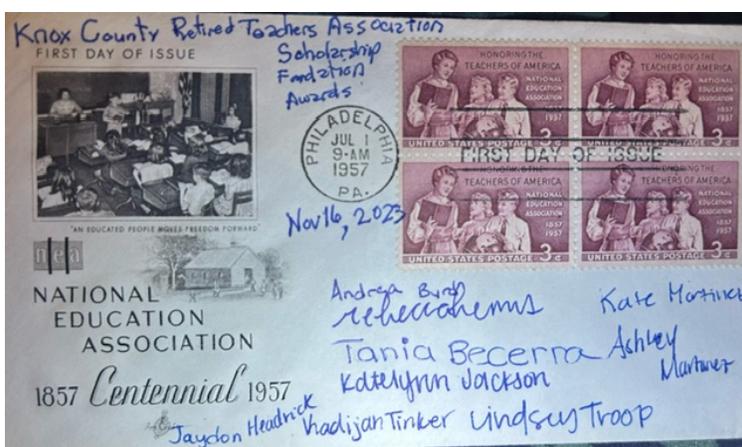
It's that time of year, again! Time to make your new year's resolutions. People have been making new year's resolutions for 4,000 years. According to History.com, the custom began with the ancient Babylonians, continued in ancient Rome, and was part of early Christian tradition. In 2023, USA Today identified exercising more, eating healthier, losing weight, saving more money, spending more time with friends and family, and spending less time on social media among the most popular new year's resolutions. A recent Forbes survey concluded that most 2024 resolutions will involve fitness; and from personal experience, I can confirm the Forbes finding that resolutions rarely survive more than two or three months.

With such a track record of failure, why do more than a third of Americans (YouGov, 2022) continue to make new year's resolutions? The answer is a simple one. The start of each new year is a new beginning and affords us with the opportunity to reflect on our past shortcomings and to resolve to make personal improvements. What resolutions did you make for 2024? I hope that one of them was to attend the bi-monthly KCRTA luncheons and to invite at least one retired educator to join you. If not, it's not too late. Happy New Year! I'm looking forward to seeing you on January 26th, when Bryan Massengale, a retired music educator, will entertain us.

Karen Peterman, President

Historical Photo

Today's commemorative cachet shows the signatures of the nine outstanding recipients who received scholarships from the KCRTA Scholarship Foundation at the November 16th, 2023 KCRTA luncheon.



Mike Blankenship, Parliamentarian

KCRTA Scholarship Foundation

Thanks to Co-Chairpersons Mary Lou Kanipe and Christine Oehler and the selection committee for the nine outstanding recipients who received scholarships from the Foundation. Thanks to everyone who had a part in making the Scholarship luncheon a very special event.

Thanks also to all our contributors to the Scholarship Foundation, who made the scholarships possible. You are the backbone of the Foundation.

David Huntsinger, Executive Secretary/Treasurer



KCRTA Officers and Committee Chairs

President:

Karen Peterman

President-Elect:

Mary Brockett

Past President:

Libby Burney

Secretary:

Gussie Cherry

Community Relations:

Margaret Willis,

Nora Messings

Hosting Chair:

Linda Tyler

Information & Protective
Services:

Pam Chipley

Legislative Chair:

Jane Skinner

Membership:

Nora Messings,

Chris Vandergriff

Newsletter Editor:

Myra Sowder

Parliamentarian:

Mike Blankenship

Scholarship Foundation Rep.:

Lexa Hooten

Web Page Chairman:

Libby Burney

Executive Secretary /

Treasurer:

David Huntsinger

KCRTA Membership Moments

Special thanks to those who have already paid your dues for 2023-2024. If you haven't already done so, simply fill out the membership form and mail it along with your dues check to:

KCRTA, 711 Hall of Fame Drive, Knoxville, TN 37917.

Payroll Deduction is still an option for paying your dues! All you have to do is fill out your personal information on the membership form and your SS number and signature on the right hand side of the form! Then send that to KCRTA, 711 Hall of Fame Drive, Knoxville, TN 37917. Less than \$6.00/month will be deducted from your TCRS check; you will never have to remember to mail a dues check again!

Several have asked questions about your membership card/number. These are included in the Fall issue of the TRTA Newsletter which is mailed to all members. It will be on the back of that newsletter and is perforated for easy removal. Your membership number will be on that card. If you still have questions regarding this matter, contact Chris Vandergriff or Nora Messings; and we will assist you in any way we can.

Thank you for your continued support of KCRTA!

Chris Vandergriff and Nora Messing, KCRTA Membership Co-Chairs

The KCRTA Membership Committee hopes that you will take just a few moments and write down one of your special moments that you experienced during your teaching career. It might be an interaction with a student, staff or an award that you are proud of receiving, or a funny, sentimental, happy moment, a leadership moment, a friendship moment, or why you became a teacher, why it is important to be a KCRTA member, etc., etc. KCRTA members can submit as many "moments" as they would like—the more the merrier!! The Membership Committee is going to take the members' moments and publish them in our newsletter and share a few at our KCRTA luncheons. We are so excited about this project and want as many KCRTA members to participate as possible. Thank you!

Please email to Sowdermossy868@gmail.com or mail to Myra Sowder, 8045 Majors Road Corryton, TN 37721-2713

KCRTA MEMBER NAME: _____

DATE: _____

YOUR BIRTHDATE: _____

YEARS AND SCHOOLS YOU TAUGHT AT: _____

KCRTA Membership Moments

Information & Protective Services

Subject: Gift Card Scam Alert

Just a quick mention of another scam, I heard about around Christmas. It involves gift cards. Some reporters bought gift cards for their friends and came to find out that the money had been drained off the card when their friends tried to use them. So, the reporters were on the case. As they investigated, several conclusions were reached. The security code and pin number had been scratched off the back of the card and the card was hung back on the rack for sale. The cards had been bought off a rack that was not behind a cashier. They were on a rack that was not in a secure area. The cards were paid for with a debit card and then someone was able to hack the debit card account. The suggestion is to only buy gift cards from behind a counter with a cashier and pay with a credit card. You stand a better chance of getting your money back. Hope this helps.

Pam Chipley, Information & Protective Services

KCRTA Scholarship Foundation

KCRTA Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors

Chairperson	David Huntsinger	Huntsingerd@bellsouth.net
Vice-Chairperson	Gussie Cherry	
Secretary	Libby Bumey	
Treasurer	Lexa Hooten	lexahooten@bellsouth.net
Member	Liz Honeycutt	
Member	Connie Cole	
Member	David Sincerbox	

Legislative News

January 2024

Oh my!!! We have so much to be upset about: letter grades for each school in TN, state legislators turning away \$1.8 billion in federal monies for public schools, 3rd grade retention, charters, ESA's (vouchers) in every county of TN. It's difficult to know where to begin? We as retired teachers need to remain informed on what is happening and take action. This next year is a big election year, we need to VOTE and make our feelings known. But try to do more: make phone calls, send emails, write to legislatures, send texts, postcards, motivate others to join you, campaign for like-minded candidates, we must save our public schools.

Our superintendent Jon Rysewyk summarized the grading for schools in a message to parents stating, "I want to be clear that although we applaud the legislature's intent to increase transparency, I do not believe a school's impact can be summarized by a single score." We made historic improvements in third-grade reading and saw math scores rebound to pre-COVID-19 achievement levels. These gains are proof that we are making progress." Research indicates that socio-economic status is the biggest predictor of academic success. Giving each school a single letter grade is yet another attempt to undermine our public schools.

We need to continue to pushback on 3rd grade retention and the refusal of \$1.8 billion in federal funds.

We need to stop the expansion of Governor Lee's Education Savings Account (ESA) voucher program. This bill would take almost \$150 million out of our public school districts to pay for private school vouchers.

- This bill will use our tax dollars to subsidize wealthy families and line the pockets of private schools.
- Beginning in 2025, all vouchers would be open to any family, regardless of income.
- Everyday Tennesseans will be on the hook to make up the gap in the form of increased local taxes, while not adding a dime to our current school budgets.
- Students with disabilities only benefit from these programs if they give up their protected rights.
- Students living in rural areas face barriers such as access to transportation and access to schools to choose from.

Public education is the foundation of our democracy and our students deserve more investment. This program offers subsidies to the wealthy (who can already afford private programs) at the expense of everyday Tennesseans. Tennessee is currently in the bottom 10 in the nation for per student funding. Let your state reps know that you oppose this voucher plan and that we need fully funded public schools!

If you are interested in getting involved, Call or email me: 865-250-3854 jaskinne@hotmail.com

Jane Skinner, Legislative Chair

KCRTA Community Relations: Note of Thanks

Reminiscing the year 2023 and the many years before, KCRTA has been privileged to have faithful friends of Knoxville's media world. The opportunity presents itself to recognize some unfailing friends of KCRTA referencing announcements about KCRTA's bi-monthly meetings and coverage of the annual Scholarship Foundation Awards Luncheon.

With great appreciation, we proudly recognize SHOPPER, FOCUS and KNOX TODAY newspapers and VIP Knoxville magazine. To all the staff and management of the news media, KCRTA would like to extend a grateful "Thank You" for your dedication and consideration for many years.

Margaret Willis, Community Relations

Calendar

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

- January 25, 2024

Bryan Massengale, pianist

- March 28, 2024

Women's History Month Program:
First Lady, First Teacher presented
by Mary Brockett and Karen
Peterman

- May 23, 2024: TBA
- July 25th, 2024: TBA
- September 26th, 2024: TBA
- November 21st, 2024
Scholarship Luncheon

Meeting are held on the fourth Thursday of alternate months at 11:15 at The Foundry. The Executive Board meets at 9:30 am. All members are welcome to attend.

In November the meeting is on the third Thursday. The Executive Board does not meet during November.

*Any change of address, email address, or phone number should be sent to KCRTA, 711 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

Received for November - December 2023

In Memory of

Mike Asquith
Betty Berry
Betty Berry
Dr. Sam Bratton
Bob Chambers
Bill Crosland
Gail Garner
Bobby Gratz
Carol Sue Hicks
Norma Kelley
Brenda McSpadden
Brenda McSpadden
George Whedbee
Jim Williams
Ann Wolfe

From

Ron Campbell
Ron Campbell
Terry and Marsha Uselton
Shirley Underwood
Shirley Underwood
Ron Campbell
Neldean Bragg
Dr. Kim Hawkins
Ron Campbell
Shirley Underwood
Neldean Bragg
Ron and Lexa Hooten
Shirley Underwood
Shirley Underwood
Neldean Bragg

In Honor of

Donations

Frances Potter
Tom Underwood

“Your present circumstances don’t determine where you can go. They merely determine where you start.”

----Nido Qubein

“Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.”

----Carl Bard

“What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year.”

----Vern McLellan

