

Retirement Times

President's Message

\$5.83

What do a pound of ground beef, a tub of Folger's coffee, and a big box of Cherrios have in common? They each cost more than a one-month membership to our association. Even though it's March, by the time the May newsletter is published, our membership committee will be well into their work encouraging new folks to join and all of us to keep up our commitment. Hundreds of educators retire in Knox County each year. We need to make sure they know about the work we do. Why? A strong membership will ensure we remain a viable force to advocate for the protection of our retirement benefits. A strong membership means working towards tax fairness to address the growing needs of public education and retirees. A strong membership means we will be able to support public educators in Knox County and across the state. Invite a retired colleague to our March luncheon. Do you know someone who is retiring this spring? Tell them about us. Thank YOU for your membership!

Libby Burney, President

Legislative

Valerie Biberdorf and I, along with a few members of the Knox County Education Coalition have continued to meet with our Knox County Legislators, these past several months. Our relationships with local legislators continues to strengthen and grow as we complete our first round of meetings with them and begin our second. Our state surplus continues to rise to historic proportions and our schools are still underfunded. Our focus remains on funding, however there are several bills which need our attention.

First and foremost is the 3rd grade retention bill which was passed in 2021 but goes into effect this spring. **"The intention behind this policy is to improve student achievement. There is evidence to suggest that retaining students in third grade may have negative impacts that outweigh any potential benefits.** A better approach would focus on very early evaluation for struggling readers, and a robust program of academic supports and interventions beginning in kindergarten and continuing as long as needed. Retention should be limited to Pre-K, kindergarten or possibly first graders; third grade is too late. **Contact your Tennessee legislators and ask them to invest in academic supports and interventions for our youngest school children and to leave retention decisions to teachers and parents, where they belong.**" (excerpts from The Tennessean OpEd signed by members of the Tennessee Public Education Coalition.)

HB433 would expand the ESA vouchers to Hamilton County schools before we have had even one year of experience with the program.

There is a huge charter amendment to **HB1214/SB1194**. This 9-page amendment: creates a scheme for allowing charter schools that serve home-schooled students and allows for the creation of residential/boarding schools that are charter schools. There are 35,000 to 50,000 home school children in the state and at about \$10,000 per student per year, this would involve \$350 to \$500 million dollars per year coming from both state and local tax revenues. If Knox County has 1000 home school students taking part, it would cost about \$5 million/year new local tax revenue.

Please contact your representatives and the education committee members about these bills!

Call or email me if you want more information: 865-250-3854
jaskinne@hotmail.com, Jane Skinner, Legislative Chair

KCRTA Program Plans

If you were with us at the January luncheon, you know that Superintendent Rysewyk was our guest speaker. His topic was the School System's District Priorities. If you missed his presentation, you should know that KCS leadership has identified four system-wide priorities: Career Empowerment and Preparation, Success for Every Student, Excellence in Foundation Skills, and Great Educators in Every School. Of course, his presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session.



KCRTA Officers and Committee Chairs

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Libby Burney

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Karen Peterman

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Don Loy

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Gussie Cherry

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Services:

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Legislative Chair:

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Mike Blankenship

Scholarship Foundation Rep.:

Lexa Hooten

Web Page Chairman:

Chris Vandergriff

Executive Secretary /

Treasurer:

David Huntsinger

Please join us on March 23rd for lunch at the Foundry and an informative presentation on senior travel. Emmaly Fisher, is a member of the Rhea County Retired Teachers Association. An experienced traveler, Emmaly will soon be joining the staff of Knoxville Tours. I'm looking forward to hearing her suggestions for making the most of our travel opportunities. Mark you calendar and make plans to attend our March 23rd meeting.

Karen Peterman, President-Elect

Membership Matters

Let's think about COST and VALUE of our Association dues. We have a cost. NEA-R and TRTA annual dues are \$60; KCRTA annual dues are \$10, only \$70 total! The value I get from my \$6 a month compared to what I receive in return is invaluable!

We receive a TCRS check! Without this we could not survive! Life insurance is available through our national association with a minimal amount. We do use Medicare but also need supplemental insurance. Through our state association, this is available for a reasonable monthly premium!

By being a member of TRTA, we have a lobbyist at legislative committee meetings where potential changes could be made regarding our retirement benefits or insurance plans. This is simply invaluable!

When talking to a potential member, tell them why they need to be a member. It doesn't cost to be a TRTA member. It pays to be a member!

*Adapted from Judy Whitehill
TRTA President

Jeanette Casteel, KCRTA Membership Co-Chair

Website Help Needed

KCRTA needs someone to take over our website! The main responsibility is to keep it updated. If you are familiar with websites or interested in this position, please contact Jeanette Casteel, 865-705-9632 or jacasteel1@gmail.com. Her daughter, Leslie will be happy to assist you.

Historical Photo



This 100th Anniversary National Education Association commemorative postcard was issued on July 1, 1957 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Our KCRTA Board Members had the privilege of signing it at our January board meeting at The Foundry. Thank you Mike Blakenship, KCRTA Parliamentarian, for making this special Membership Moment happen.

If Knox County Schools are not in session for some reason, the Knox County Retired Teachers Association will not meet.

KCRTA Membership Moments

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

KCRTA Scholarship Foundation

The Knox County Retired Teachers Association Scholarship Foundation is a 501 © (3) non-profit tax-exempt organization. The goal of the Foundation is to provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships to students who are classified as full-time seniors or graduate students, who are pursuing a Tennessee teaching certification. The scholarships are awarded to students enrolled in a college or university in East Tennessee.

Since the 1980's, the scholarship foundation program has been a major emphasis of the Knox County Retired Teachers Association, and each November the KCRTA Scholarship Foundation holds its annual scholarship foundation awards ceremony and luncheon at The Foundry. For many years there were three standing scholarships---the Tom Underwood and the Reuben Hunter, named for the two men who established the scholarship program (1993), and the Colleen Bennett who left an endowment at her death to sustain the program. Since 2018, the families of Bill Crosland and Cindi Schowalter have funded a scholarship in their names. In addition, each year, the Knox County Retired Teachers Association, honors a member whose outstanding service to the organization merits recognition. Other named scholarships come from donations in memory of or in honor of those whose friends and/or family members wish to recognize someone special.

Although the scholarship initiative as we know it today has grown substantially and has evolved into a thriving, recognized effort of the KCRTA, it still remains true to the goals and core values established by its founders. Scholarship recipients are chosen from the applications of exceptional future educators enrolled in an East Tennessee college or university teacher education program. Each fall a selection committee, made up of former educators, critiques the scholarship entries. Over the years, the amount awarded to students has increased from \$300 during the first three years to the current total of \$1,500.

Gifts are welcomed in any amount and may be designated for either the Scholarship Fund or the Endowment Fund.

The KCRTA Scholarship Board appreciates the number of families and friends who have honored loved ones with named scholarships in recent years. To make a donation, please contact Lexa Hooten or David Huntsinger.

KCRTA Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors

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

Calendar

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

- March 23, 2023

Please join us on March 23rd for lunch and an informative presentation on senior travel. Emmaly Fisher, is a member of the Rhea County Retired Teachers Association.

- May 25, 2023

TBA

- July 27, 2023

Legislative Forum

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Thursday of alternate months at 11:15. In November it is the third Thursday. The Executive Board meets at 9:30 am. All members are welcome to attend.

Quote of the Month:

"The heart benevolent and kind..most resembles God.

- ----Robert Burns

*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 Jeanette Casteel at (865) 705-9632 or jacasteel1@gmail.com

KCRTA Scholarship Donations

Received for January - February 2023

In Memory of

Betty Berry
Betty Berry
Pat Carson
Ruth Fuson
Gerry Kivet
Donna Parrott
Donna Parrott
Granville Earl Wells
Erven Williams
Erven Williams
Steve Lee Williams

From

Lexa Hooten
David Huntsinger
Neldean Bragg
Ira Gladson
Kaye Williams
Neldean Bragg
Janet Oakes
JoAnn Wells
Ron and Lexa Hooten
Terry and Marsha Uselton
Dan Williams

In Honor of

Donations

Linda Denton

Necrology

Betty Berry
Pat Carson
Geraldine Kivett
Donna Parrot
Elizabeth Styles
Deborah Thompson



Meal Price Increase

A note about the price of our wonderful meals. The Foundry held off as long as they could, but increasing costs necessitated raising the luncheon price to \$20. This includes gratuities for the servers. Many thanks for your understanding.

Spotlight on KCRTA Centenarian

Emma Ruth Catlett turned 101 in February this year. She began her teaching career in Sevierville before coming to Knoxville City Schools at Brownlow Elementary from 1957 to 1968 and then to Chilhowee Elementary from 1968 to 1982. She retired in 1982 after 26 years of teaching in the City Schools. Believing that everyone should have access to a public library, Mrs. Catlett worked tirelessly with members of the Northview Community Association to get the leaders of Sevier County to see the need for a public library in Kodak. The Catlett family made a significant contribution to acquire the land and build the library. Mrs. Catlett was one of the founders of the Friends of the Kodak Library. She served on the library board for many years, helping to raise funds for building and supporting the library after it opened. According to Mrs. Catlett, the library is flourishing and in fact is "bursting at the seams".