

# The Publication Dedicated to Retired Florida Educators & School Personnel



Volume 50, Issue 1  
Spring 2023



## FREA BULLETIN



Edwinna Williams  
FREA President

Dear Members and Friends,

March promises to be a busy month full of challenges and blessings. March is our "Women's History Month". We all have women in our communities supporting education, arts, well-being, health and security. Take a moment to thank them with a note, email or phone call, for their support and leadership in honor of the countless women in history who have made advances and improvements in our communities.

March also is the month our Florida Legislators vote on bills impacting the future of our state. Please check our website: ([www.frea.org](http://www.frea.org)) under the "Legislative Advocacy" title and take a few moments to let your legislator know there are over 225,000 education and school personnel retirees depending on FRS pensions in our state. Our Florida Retirement System (FRS) is one of the best-funded pensions in the U.S. and does not need any interventions. YOU can make a difference by calling and letting your representative know we are not a silent group of citizens! If you scroll down the page you will see a link to tips on how to talk or write your legislator as well as how to contact your Senator or Representative. Host a "calling or email party" at your next meeting. You are creative and resourceful educators, be active and get involved! Your silence is unspoken approval of the current legislative actions.

March is the month we begin registrations for our upcoming Convention in Panama City Beach (PCB) at the Blue Greens Resort (formerly known as the Sheraton Bay Point Resort) May 16-18, 2023. Partners, it is time to "Saddle up". Grab your boots, your hats, and head on up to PCB where the sun is bright, the air is clean and the sand is sugar white! Our Convention Committee has been working very hard. You will not be disappointed, as the Committee plans to make your convention a unique and exciting experience.



In NW Florida we have a huge beach party with a game called the "Mullet Toss". (see pg. 2) We will have our unique version of the game. (No live fish will be harmed in this activity.) [Click Here](#) for all the information you will need to register for Convention. I hope you will all attend - and bring a friend as well!

Lastly, I encourage you to reach out to others in your community and let them know the benefits of belonging to FREA and our local units. We focus on your benefits and securing your pensions, but we are also about the relationships and friendships we have developed through the years. FREA Members are engaged, support one another, and understand the importance of community. We share common interests and we all want a retirement that is secure and stable. We do not stand alone; as educators we stand together!

### FREA Calendar

FREA Calendar	
<b>March 27-30</b>	<b>Legislative Days - FREA Member Representatives to Tallahassee</b>
<b>April 5</b>	<b>Wednesday Webinar - Understanding your Vision and Dental Benefits</b>
<b>April 10</b>	<b>Convention Registration</b> still open, but Late Fee applies and rate changes may happen.
<b>April 20</b>	<b>Wednesday Webinars</b>
<b>May 3</b>	<b>Fraud Watch, Avoiding Senior Scams</b> <b>Medicare 101 - Surprises in Medicare - not good.</b>
<b>May 16-18</b>	<b>FREA Convention - FREA Office Closed until May 30</b>
<b>June 30</b>	<b>End of the FREA Fiscal Year</b>



**[Click Here to Register](#) ~ Convention 2023 ~ May 16-18, 2023**

**Location: Bluegreen's Bayside Resort and Spa at Panama City Beach**

(Formerly the Sheraton Panama City Beach Golf and Spa Resort)

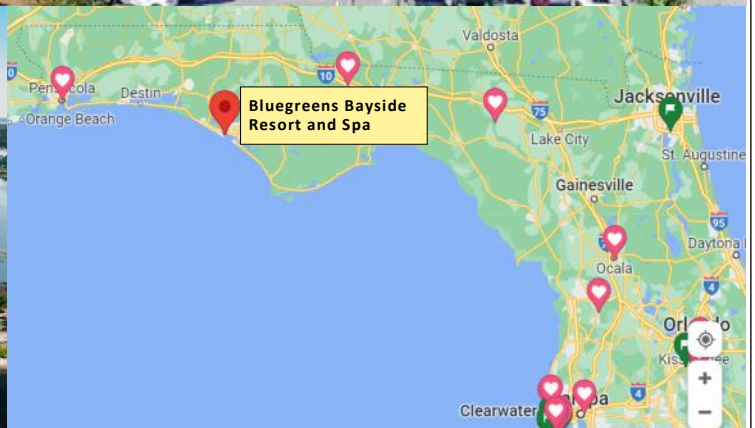
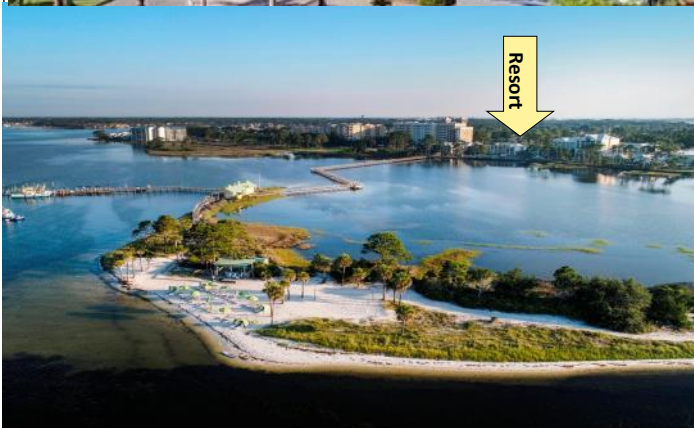
The 2023 FREA Convention has shaped up to be an educational and enlightening Convention. Please make plans to join us, as for the first time since 1954, we convene in the beautiful Panhandle of Florida. President Edwinna Williams has chosen as her theme: "Country-Western Florida Style". For the latest up-to-date information and registration go to the FREA website. Check back often.

[www.frea.org/convention](http://www.frea.org/convention) PS: The price? An amazingly low rate of \$167.00 per night. This price is good also for 3 days before, and 3 days after, Convention.



### What is a Mullet Toss?

Did we mention the Convention will be entertaining also? Warm up your tossing arm, because Wednesday evening, teams will be vying for the FREA Mullet Toss Championship. The FREA Mullet Toss consists of teams on the Pavilion Lawn, throwing a toy mullet, from a hula-hoop circle in Florida, across the 'state line' into 'Alabama'. The person who throws it the furthest is the winner.



# Elevate Your life With Everlasting Hope

The first quarter of 2023 is winding “up” and promises to be a year to remember for Florida Retired Educators. “How so”, you may ask? Did you know, within our membership there are a multitude of amazing resources possessing a myriad of ideas, talents and gifts just waiting to be

“The very least you can do in your life is to figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof.”

—BARBARA KINGSOLVER

born? (Often times, these are members working behind the scenes and somehow go unnoticed.) Therefore, the solution to each of our concerns, issues and/or obstacles, regarding the future of Education, simply waits on standby, eager to come forth at our beckoning call. Let us make that call... A beautiful new season is here, we must continue to walk together while stepping higher as we climb using the tools we now have.



**Harriett M. Jenkins**  
FREA President-Elect

As we enter this new season of Spring together, let constant thoughts of Elevated Hope permeate all decision making during each meeting on all levels. Elevated Hope is a feeling of “higher” expectations and desires for certain things to happen a certain way. If after we have planned appropriately and positioned ourselves in the right direction for success, that will be the result in every situation, just watch! Yes, Elevated Hope works every time, when you have given due diligence to the situation, and maximized all resources presented for your use. What is left to do is watch and receive, as the rest will be beyond your control. The next move is to applaud the outcome.

This brings to my mind a widely known educator and successful leader who faced such difficult circumstances that he said despondently: “My strength and my hope are all gone.” Have you ever felt that way...as if you had no more strength or hope to face the demanding situations in your life?

The good news is that this great leader shifted his ordinary thinking up to another level. Instead of ordinary hope he realized he needed Elevated Hope to succeed. He was reminded that with Elevated Hope, every day would start anew bringing higher expectations and opportunities to reach each goal. Indeed, he did reach each goal and accomplished his mission with flying colors.

There are so many examples of how Elevated Hope is the missing part of an equation and when added successfully solves the problem. Try including it as you plan to attend the 2023 FREA Convention, monthly FREA Unit Meetings, and/or meeting with our Legislators in Tallahassee. Amazing and winning results will be found as higher expectations are set. In 1945, Les Brown famously coined the phrase, “No one rises to low expectations.”

This is an excellent time to be retired in the State of Florida. We are among over 11,000 retired FREA educators who love this profession and are working diligently to make a difference each and every day without missing a beat. Our voices remain loud and our stand and beliefs are firm. When we purposefully pull together while placing Elevated Hope in the center of each platform, our destination(s) become reachable. Remember to reach out to your active and inactive Unit Members, and lift up who they are as you celebrate their gifts and talents. Let us end this fiscal year with a bang so loud it not only rings across our state but across our nation. Strategically ensuring that it is one unified sound that resounds from sea to rolling sea.

*Harriett*

If your  
actions  
inspire  
others to  
dream more,  
learn more,  
do more &  
become more,  
**YOU ARE A  
LEADER.**

— John Quincy Adams



**By the Numbers Unit 12 –** The Santa Rosa CREA hosted a New Retirees Reception in September. The unit’s Information Services Committee has compiled a five-page Senior Discounts list, and this was given to each new retiree.

Note: A copy of the list has been requested from SRCREA and will be shared with all FREA members!





George Ellis  
FREA State Legislative  
Co-Chair

# FREA... ...Keeping an Eagle Eye on Your Pension!



## FREA Legislative Priorities

- FRS - Protecting and Enhancing Retiree Earned Benefits
- Ensuring Accountability and Equity for all schools taking state funds
- Health & Wellness for a Retirement with Dignity for Florida seniors

## FREA Legislative Days in Tallahassee

The FREA Legislative Team of 20 FREA members representing the 47 FREA Units around the state will be in Tallahassee for the Legislative Session March 27-30. We will be meeting with legislators and personnel from their offices to advocate for our Legislative Priorities.

This year we are focusing on offering strategies to help

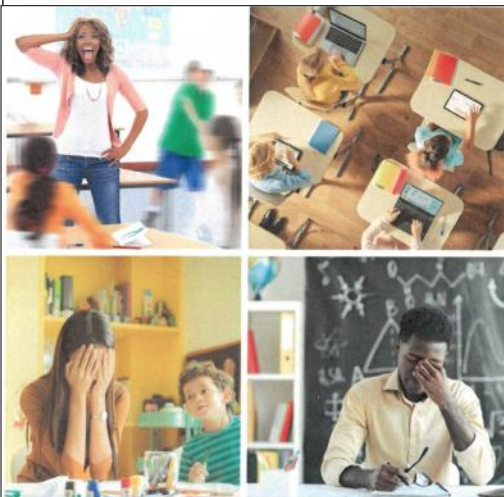
Attract and Retain Teachers in Florida schools. (See the graphic on this page.) [Click here](#) to download and share with legislators) Florida is short nearly 5,000 full time teachers, and nationally it is closer to 50,000. Developing meaningful suggestions that will lead to careers in education will help ensure continuity in student learning and promote the importance of those in the teaching profession.

### Florida Legislature - Key Bills to follow:

- ⇒ SB 1 and HB 202 Expanding School Vouchers
- ⇒ SB1354 & HB 181 Reinstating COLA after 2011
- ⇒ SB 150 Ending AP High School Courses
- ⇒ HJR 31 Proposed Constitutional amendment for partisan School Board elections; 8 yr. terms

Every FREA member should be registered to vote and then vote when primaries and general elections are held. Contacting your local district representative/s to stay informed and advocating for our priorities is very important. Legislators keep track of what their constituents support.

Be sure to use the [FREA website](#) to find many resources that will help keep you informed as well as tools to enable you to contact legislators easily.



## Florida Faces An Education Crisis



Florida is experiencing an unprecedented shortage of teachers and few students entering the profession.

The Florida Retired Educators Association (FREA) appreciates that Governor Ron DeSantis has proposed incentives and bonuses for retired military personnel and first responders to be trained as teachers, as well as new pathways to become an educator.

As an association of career educators, FREA offers additional ideas for recruiting future educators to help solve Florida's short- and long-term teacher shortage.

**1**

Enact legislation to pay teachers more so they stay in the profession.

**5**

Elevate respect for teachers.

**2**

Strengthen benefits for working educators: healthcare, pensions, and cost-of-living adjustments.

**6**

Increase funding to universities and schools of education to boost student enrollment.

**3**

Provide college graduates with the same benefits and incentives as working teachers so they are attracted to the profession.

**7**

Provide high schools with funds for future teacher academies, and fast track dual enrollment opportunities.

**4**

Provide retired teachers with the same benefits and incentives as working teachers so they return to the classroom.

**8**

Develop a marketing campaign such as "Be A Teacher That Makes the Difference."

Florida Retired Educators Association  
8950 9th St. North, Suite 105  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

[www.frea.org](http://www.frea.org)



## Greetings from FREF!



### Extravaganza Tickets—Get ‘Em While They’re

Can you use some extra cash? You have a chance to win between \$100—\$600. For just \$10, you earn two chances to win the following cash prizes:

\$500 - 1st Prize

\$300—2nd Prize

\$200—3rd Prize

\$100 Cash Prize to a winner in each FREA District

Between now and the end of April 2023, you can buy tickets through your local FREA Units. See statement at right on how to buy them at the Convention.

### New Extravaganza Addition

Extravaganza tickets will be sold at the 2023 FREA Convention. **There is a catch!** They may only be purchased with a check, NO CASH. Convention tickets will only be entered into the large drawing, not the individual district drawings. Therefore, you will not have as many opportunities to win.

### Convention Basket Alternatives

Since our 2023 convention will be held in Panama City, Florida, some members have said they wish to fly and not drive. One of our main FREF fundraisers is our basket room at convention. People flying, will not be bringing baskets.

In an effort to continue raising funds for the FREF scholarships, I am proposing alternatives to baskets. For those who still wish to take baskets, please do so. Here are the alternatives:

1. Your unit can send me a check for at least \$50. I will make a display for your \$50 & assign a number (just like baskets), and whoever wins your item number will get \$50 cash.
2. Your unit may wish to donate a group of gift cards (with a total of at least \$50 in value). You can either bring those with you or send them to FREF at the FREA Office to make a display. Each Unit's donated gift card(s) will be assigned a number and awarded just like the baskets.
3. Your unit may wish to donate \$50 worth of Lottery scratch-offs. You can either bring those with you or send them to FREF at the FREA Office to make a display. Each Unit's group of lottery tickets will be assigned a number and awarded just like the baskets.
4. Give your unit basket to a neighboring unit member who will be driving up.

Should anyone have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (941) 722-4692 or at [brogdon1@msn.com](mailto:brogdon1@msn.com). If you wish to mail something to me, here is my mailing information:

Karla Brogdon  
101 61st Street, E.  
Palmetto, FL 34221



#### FREA Executive Committee

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Santa Rosa CREA  
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Executive Committee Rep. 6-10  
Cathy Thompson  
[cthompson13@cfl.rr.com](mailto:cthompson13@cfl.rr.com)

Ex-Officio

FREA Executive Director Anne Fagan  
[anne@frea.org](mailto:anne@frea.org)



#### Build a “They Continue to Care” Legacy for your departed loved one.

When loved ones pass, family members may donate to FREF in their memory. (i.e. include in obituary, “In lieu of flowers, please donate to FREF”.)

The loved ones legacy will live on in the Foundation.





**Diane Bassett**  
State Volunteer  
Services Chair

## Volunteer Services

This is the time of year that keeps your Unit and District Volunteer Services Chairs very busy! Volunteer Hours recorded, 5th Grade Essay winners chosen, and Volunteers of the Year selected.

**Unit Volunteer Services Chairs: Fifth-grade Essays:** Read and rated at the Unit level by the committee. **Unit Volunteer of the Year:** Your Unit's Volunteer Services Chair records the information of the dedicated VOY to represent your Unit as Volunteer of the Year. **Unit Volunteer Services Chairs** submit both the Fifth-Grade Essay and Volunteer of the Year choices to the District Volunteer Services Chair, by March 15th.

**District Volunteer Services Chairs** then become equally busy, receiving each Unit's Volunteer of the Year nominees and Fifth-grade Essay Contest winners.

**5th Grade Essay Contest District Level:** Each District Volunteer Services Chair, along with their committee, selects the submission to represent your District. This is often a difficult task due to the quality of submissions. District Chairs then submit their Fifth-grade Essay Contest winner to me (State Chair), by April 1st. The Fifth-grade Essay Contest Committee then selects 1st, 2nd, 3rd place winners at the State level, inviting them to attend our annual convention.

**District Volunteer of the Year:** The District Chairs send their Districts' chosen representative for the Volunteer of the Year to the State.

**A special and heartfelt thank you from me to the Unit and District Volunteer Services Chairs. You are all rock stars!**

**At Convention:** District Volunteers of the Year and the top three Fifth-Grade Essay Contest winners are awarded and acknowledged. It is so heartwarming and gratifying at the convention when the Volunteers of the Year and the 5th Graders are beaming and receiving their awards. The frosting on the cake is when the wide-eyed 1st place student reads their winning essay while their proud family watches with pride and joy!

I am excited for this year's convention because I get to acknowledge and award these outstanding individuals. I am humbled by the amount of volunteerism I see from each of our members every day! With gratitude for all you do,

*Diane*



**AARP**

**I'M MAKING  
A REAL IMPACT  
AND LASTING  
FRIENDSHIPS.**



Use your skills to teach drivers how to stay safer behind the wheel. It's a meaningful way to make a difference as well as good friends.

**BECOME AN AARP  
DRIVER SAFETY  
VOLUNTEER**

[aarp.org/volunteernow](http://aarp.org/volunteernow)

All AARP Driver Safety volunteer positions are unpaid. However, volunteers are reimbursed for approved, program-related, out-of-pocket expenses, such as mileage and postage.

## Let's Talk About D&D and I don't mean Dungeons and Dragons!

### DRIVER SAFETY and DISCOUNTS

**Cecelia's first note:** The following information was presented by Josh Dunning, the AARP VP for the Driver Safety program, at the NRTA's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Washington, D.C., last September. Josh began his career in the banking industry, with an interest in consumer financial education. When he joined AARP, he transitioned to traffic safety education and is passionate about keeping drivers and riders safe, independent, and confident as they age. The AARP driver safety programs he directs are well-respected throughout the nation.

Do you remember the National Safety Council's "55 Alive" ads? If you do, you are probably retired! When Josh Dunning spoke to the group, his first bit of information was a tad shocking - the "55 Alive" slogan was created 50 years ago! Josh gave us a moment to recover, then shared information on four of AARP's Driver Safety programs: the *Smart Driver* course, *Smart Driver TEK*, *CarFit*, and the new *SafeTrip* app.



**Cecelia Solomon**  
Info Services Chair

*Smart Driver* is the first refresher course designed specifically for drivers age 50 and over. This on-line course will help you

- ★ Refresh your driving skills and knowledge of the rules and hazards of the road.
- ★ Reduce your chances of receiving a traffic violation or getting into an accident.
- ★ Learn at your own pace, as you have 60 days to complete the course.
- ★ Possibly receive a multi-year discount on your auto insurance\*

\*The AARP Smart Driver™ online course is recognized as an approved accident prevention course for drivers age 55 and older by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Insured drivers age 55 and older may be eligible for an appropriate reduction in automobile insurance premium charges good for three years after completing this course. Please check with your insurance company or agent for any additional requirements for eligibility.

**Smart Driver Course** You could change one bad driving habit. 97% of participants say they did!

**Smart Drive TEK** Technology is changing how we drive. *Smart Driver TEK Workshop* is a 90-minute program about the latest high-tech safety features in our cars. The program is offered as an in-person scheduled workshop, on-line any time, and virtually with a trainer in a scheduled Zoom workshop. For more information, visit Smart Drive TEK

**CarFit** *CarFit* is an AARP program in collaboration with AAA and the American Occupational Therapists Association that promotes safe driving and mobility for older drivers. It is a 20-minute check-up. Contact CarFit for information on hosting a check-up. There is also a 45 minute on-demand self-paced workshop available CarFit online workshop

**Safetrip app** The AARP *SafeTrip* app was launched in December 2022. The app is packed with insights on your personal driving habits, shows how you are doing compared to other drivers/ rewards your successes. Safetrip app



**Cecelia's second note:** All this talk about driving makes me think of

Alan Jackson's song, "Drive"  
 "A young girl, two hands on the wheel  
 I can't replace the way it made me feel  
 And he'd say turn it left  
 And steer it right  
 Straighten up girl now,  
 you're doing just fine"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQe3DKDQRRs>

Another choice? Get in the Way-back Machine, and you may also recall Sammy Hagar's tune: "I Can't Drive 55".

"...When I drive that slow, you know it's hard to steer  
 And I can't get my car out of second gear  
 What used to take two hours now takes all day  
 Huh, it took me sixteen hours to get to L.A  
 Go on and write me up for 125  
 Post my face, wanted dead or alive  
 Take my license, all that jive  
 I can't drive 55"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvV3nn\\_de2k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvV3nn_de2k)





## Meet Your District Director Nominees - Districts 3, 5, and 8



**Laura Hodges District Director 3 Nominee**, has been serving since being appointed to the position in 2022. Laura is the past District 3 Director, 2004-2007 and again in 2011 - 2013 and formerly served as President, Vice President, and FREF Scholarship Chairman in the Suwannee/Lafayette unit for 20 years, along with being a former District 3 Trustee for 9 years.

Laura graduated with a BS in Elementary Education and an MS in reading from Florida State University. She taught Title 1 Reading at the Suwannee High School for 3 years, and then taught at the Suwannee Elementary school for 28 years. She is active in the Senior Choir at Westwood Baptist Church and also taught Sunday School at Westwood Baptist Church for 36 years.

After raising four children, and being widowed after 45 years of marriage, she is enjoying being a Grandmother and a Great-Grandmother. Laura, with what spare time she has, enjoys painting with acrylics, reading, and traveling.



**Dr. Don Leech District Director 5 Nominee:** After 39 years in education, I retired from Valdosta State and Florida public schools. During my career I was a professor of leadership, associate dean, school principal, FL DOE school improvement team leader, district guidance services staff member, and chemistry and math teacher. I served in Baker, Duval, and Union County.

I currently teach leadership part-time at VSU and serve as the President and Legislative Chair of the NCREA. Additionally, I am the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Schlechty Center and The National Superintendents Roundtable. I hold a BS and MAT from Jacksonville University and an Ed.D. from the University of North Florida.

My wife Barbara is a retired librarian and Volunteer Services Chair for Nassau CREA. Our daughter Katelyn is a Spanish teacher. I enjoy spending time with family and friends and "playing at" golf.



**Linda Stephens-West District Director 8 Nominee** (In her words): I am honored, privileged, and blessed to introduce myself and some of the many attributes that make up the person that I am. I am not afraid of my future and my destiny in life, because it has afforded me opportunities and experiences that have made my life worth living...

...I am a retired educator of the Polk County Schools. I was fortunate and blessed to work 30 years as a teacher, Health Coordinator of Polk County Schools, and as an assistant principal. I enjoyed my tenure while working; however, that portion of my life has closed and now opens new and more adventurous opportunities for me at my present stage of life.

During my educational tenure, I enjoyed the day-to-day challenge of helping students and adults to be the very best that they could be. I also enjoyed several part-time experiences where I was able to connect with adults who wanted to improve their educational status. I worked with Polk State College and Travis Career Technical School, both in Polk County, FL. I found these experiences rewarding and gratifying...

...I served as President of Polk I (2018-2022), CREA of Polk County for the past four years. I am now the most recent Past President of the Polk One Unit. I attended the District Leaders and State meetings and I have been an intricate part of the activities found therein. I have volunteered at District Leader's meetings to give the encouraging word; I have volunteered at State meetings to help with registration and give directions to participants attending and been willing to help wherever I have been needed. (Edited for space available. To read Linda's full biography, please [click here](#) or contact the FREA office for a paper copy.)



## Meet Your District Director Nominees - Districts 9 and 10



**Bonita Williams District Director 9 Nominee:** It has been my honor to be a part of the St. Lucie County Retired Educators Association and I am honored to serve as a member of the FREA Board to help in any way possible to move our organization to the next level. Since graduating from Florida A&M University in 1974, I have been a distinguished and award-winning educator and coach in Saint Lucie County, serving as Dean of Students at Fort Pierce Central High School for 35 years, doubling as Head Coach of the Track and Cheerleader teams. I'm an active philanthropist in the Fort Pierce community with youth groups and other service organizations, receiving numerous honors for committed volunteer work. I'm a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., with 50 years of proud dedicated service as well as the President of the St. Lucie County FAMU Alumni Chapter. I also have the esteemed pleasure of serving as an Associate

Charter member of Jack & Jill of America Treasure Coast Chapter. I'm honored to be recognized and nominated to be the successor of Mrs. Felicia Bruce for this prestigious position.



**Sue Colton District Director 10 Nominee:** BA in Elementary Education, M.Ed. Early Childhood Education and Administration/Supervision (the University of Florida and Florida Atlantic University)

Levels or Subjects taught: Teacher: Elementary Pre-K-5; Reading Specialist; Assistant Principal; Principal, Forest Hills Elementary; Chairperson, Broward County Elementary School Principals; Planned/Opened a new Entrepreneurial School, Parkside Elementary Pre-K-6, as Principal in 2000; Served as Director of Leadership Development for three years and received a \$1.6 million U.S. Department of Education Leadership Grant to redesign district leadership continuum to meet new State Leadership Standards. Position at time of retirement: Proud Principal of Parkside Elementary. LOCAL Unit activities and offices held: 2021-2023 President; President-Elect/Vice President; Legislative Chair. FREA State activities and offices held: FREA Legislative Team, District 10;

Hosted District 10 Leadership Symposium, 2022; Conduct Memorial Service FREA State Convention, 2023. If you wish, share something unusual or outstanding in your background: 1999 Florida State Commissioner's Principal Award for Outstanding Leadership; 2000 Florida's National Distinguished Principal (U.S.D.O.E. and NAESP); "Awesome Alto" Broward County Elementary Singing Principals; 2013 Broward Education Foundation Inaugural Distinguished Alumni Hall-of-Fame Award; 2018 Published Author: Principal's Passion: A Quest for Quality Public Education; 2019 Appointed to Broward Education Foundation Board of Directors



**By the Numbers 04 – Broward County REA's** February meeting was their annual scholarship luncheon and fundraiser. Attendees were



encouraged to wear their favorite hats, the "Thought for the Day" concerned hats, and books about hats or hats in the title were table centerpieces. The books were donated to Joe DiMaggio's Children's Hospital, with a note in each book from a BCREA member. Gift baskets and prizes raised over \$1,300 for the scholarship fund!



# LIVE LIFE, UNITERRUPTED

## KEEP LIVING YOUR WAY.

You can, with the benefits and discounts from **FREA & AMBA**. Call now to find out more.

Learn More: **1-877-556-4582**

**[myambabenefits.info/frea](http://myambabenefits.info/frea)**

FREA - Florida Retired Educators Association



Letter to the Editor:

Dear Fellow Retired Educators,

My REA unit's motto is "Committed to Community Service." Specifically, we are committed to serve the **education community**. With our collective experience and our passion for learning, we strive to support those who continue to work in our public schools. Today, more than ever, public school teachers need our support. Historically, retired educators have volunteered their time as assistants in classrooms and libraries, as mentors to students, and as financial and material resources. Now, a very different type of service is urgently needed.

First, teachers are overwhelmed with new tasks that steal precious time from instruction and student engagement. This is no secret; it is all over the news every day on TV and in print. Their professional judgment is called into question regarding books in classroom libraries.

Consequently, every single book must be approved or removed. Regardless of your personal stance on this new policy, please consider offering your time to help in the school of your choice.

Ask the media specialist how

you can assist to help take the load off our already stressed out teachers.

Second, teachers are subjected to all kinds of nefarious and insulting accusations, especially on social media. We know they ARE NOT indoctrinating students or exposing them to immoral behavior. We all remember that the goal of education is to develop critical thinkers and problem solvers. Please speak out with your voice of experience to defend those who are carrying on with the work we loved so much. And, tune out the noise on Social Media.

Finally, too many teachers are leaving the profession. It is common knowledge that we have a huge teacher shortage. Not only are they frustrated with current conditions, there are many other employers here in Florida only too happy to snatch up these bright, highly educated, and hard working individuals looking for new employment. I hear every day that they will never join Retired Educators because they will not make it to retirement. Heart breaking!

Please advocate for teachers by attending School Board Meetings, communicating with our governmental leaders, volunteer to serve where needed such as the Materials Review Committees, email, write letters, make phone calls . . . let your voice be heard. Because, as Florida Retired Educators, we are **Committed to Community Service**.

Anita

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of FREA or its members.*



# In Memory

November 17, 2022 ~ March 16, 2023

First Name	Last Name	Unit	Default City
Ann	Girardin	Alachua CREA	Gainesville
Elizabeth	Boyles	Alachua CREA	Gainesville
Jean	Mc Call	Alachua CREA	Gainesville
Luella	Johnson	Alachua CREA	Gainesville
Mary	Greathouse	Alachua CREA	Earleton
Roselee	Sutherland	Alachua CREA	New Orleans
Rosemary	Brantley	Alachua CREA	Gainesville
Virginia	Hayes	Alachua CREA	Gainesville
Sherry	Smithson	Bay County REA	Lynn Haven
Lois	O'Gorman	Broward CREA	Wilton Manors
Robert	Green	Broward CREA	Lauderhill
Fern Vontelle	Coppedge	Central Brevard REA	Charlestown
Nancy	Rotta	Central Brevard REA	Orlando
Nancy	Bryan	Central Brevard REA	Cocoa
Donna	Mc David	Escambia CREA	Pensacola
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Ron	Archer	Escambia CREA	Pensacola
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Charlie	Murphy	Madison CREA	Madison
Mary	Westendick	Manatee CREA	Tallahassee
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Edward	Simpkins		Pensacola
Elaine	Smith		Wellington
Sarah	Rains		Punta Gorda
Sharon	Holt		Green Cove Springs

*I will  
hold you  
in my  
heart,  
until I  
can hold  
you again  
in  
Heaven.*

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**There is strength in numbers, and FREA needs YOU to make our voices stronger together!**

**We are a Non-Partisan, Non-Political organization. We support those who support our Mission, and include all voices in our membership.**

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## The Last Word



### By the Numbers - Unit 83 -

During the Orange County REA February meeting, they celebrated the 90s – not the decade but the four members that turned 90 during 2022. At the front are two of their

beautiful new 90-year-olds: Barbara Robinson and Lorraine Harris. Both ladies are very active volunteering in local schools, as well as teaching classes as an instructor at a senior center and as an adjunct professor, and of course being FREA members. We all should aspire to such youthfulness and activity!