



# GCREA Newsline

November 2022  
Volume 10 Issue 2

GWINNETT COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION [GCREA.org](http://GCREA.org)

**2022  
NEXT  
GCREA  
MEETING  
FRIDAY  
DEC. 16TH  
10:20 a.m.  
Holiday Basket  
Silent Auction**

**TPC Sugarloaf  
Country Club**

**President:  
Kimberly Rooker  
President-elect:  
Karen Efstration  
Secretary:  
Ellen Sumner  
Treasurer:  
Holly Gardiner**

**Fellowship  
Support  
Service**

## From the President Kimberly Rooker

How proud I was of your attendance at the September 16th meeting! Total of 56 members present. I value your support!! The fellowship, the food, and the speaker created good times. It was especially meaningful after the 2 years of uncertainty and Zoom meetings. It is always good to see friends who are retired educators! And to see seven new members added to our unit!

That is why we need to keep up that good attendance. The Sugarloaf Country Club is an excellent venue, and we must continue to meet our Food and Beverage minimum by having 50 to 60+ members at least for each meeting. The Treasurer reported that GCREA was only \$200 shy of breaking even for the 9/16 Luncheon. Sugarloaf was VERY understanding during the 2020 to 2022 period of meeting changes and cancellations. GCREA has a set contract with Sugarloaf, and we must honor their loyalty to us.

What a glorious time we will have on Friday, December 16th. 🎄 I love the gatherings of friends during the Holidays! Hanukkah 🪄 begins on the 18th, the winter ☆ Solstice is the 21st, Christmas Eve ❄️ is the 24th and ❤️ Kwanzaa begins on the 26th. My dad always started gathering his gifts and shopping about a week before, he loved the last-minute bargains and bustle. Please join us for a lovely celebration of GCREA friends on 12/16! Raising money for scholarships by having fun. Bring a clever Holiday Basket. Here are a few

suggestions: Cultural Food Basket (Kosher), Holiday Hair Basket, Coffee/Tea Lovers Basket, Chocolate Lovers Basket, Teacher's Supply basket (deliver that in January when they really need it).

Lastly, I am thankful for GCREA during the month of November, it's a busy month and many of us are celebrating Ga Retired Educators Day, Voting, November birthdays, cooking Turkey 🦃 and generally being very busy. All of you are my teaching buddies and I always look forward to seeing you and remembering "those good old teaching days"!



## Upcoming Events



### Georgia Retired Teachers Day

On Sunday, 11/6, we will give out ribbons and gather together for fellowship hosted by Hamilton Mill Church, centrally located at 2000 Gravel Springs Rd. Buford, Ga. Our social time will begin at 10:15 am for coffee and snacks. The 11:15 a.m. non-denominational church service that follows is completely optional.

### Walk to End Alzheimer's November 12, 2022 Suwanee Town Center Park

You do not need to be a member of our team to walk with us. Just meet at the steps of the city hall at 9:00. There is still time to make a donation. Here's how:

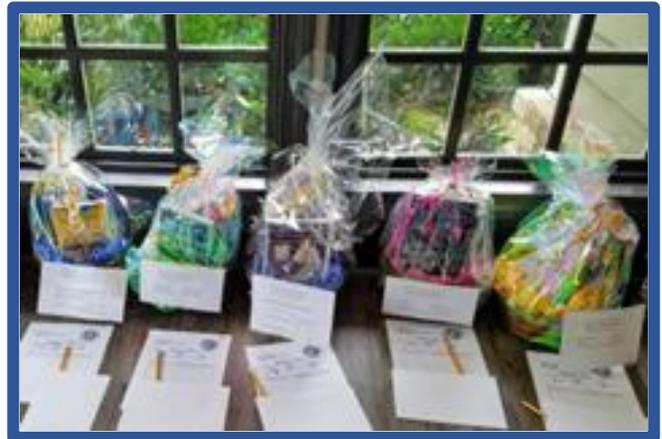
Just Google Walktoendalz Gwinnett County 2022 to find the home page.  
Then click on the white Donate box  
On the next page type in the following and click:  
Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association  
On the next page you can click on the blue letters which will take you to our team page where you can donate.

## Make a Basket for the Scholarship Auction!

Hi, it's time again to raise money for the scholarships that we give to deserving teachers, present and future. I know we've missed the auction during the pandemic, so we should all be excited to participate this year. The auction will consist of baskets on which we can bid. I'm preaching to the choir here because over the years we have had wonderful baskets created by so many different people, but in case you are new to GCREA, and there were several new members at our last meeting, I'm going to give you a few ideas that might be helpful.

1. Pick a theme. This year the basket I'm doing is "A Few Things You Might Need to Get Through the Holidays." Some things I'm including are homemade pumpkin bread, a pretty box of Christmas cards, seasonal soap, a seasonal candle, seasonal hand creams, a gift card to Panera, a bottle of red wine, and a bottle of white wine.
2. Baskets of many sizes can be found inexpensively at thrift stores. You can fancy it up with pretty tissue paper and maybe a bow and something else decorative. Some people are very good at wrapping the baskets in cellophane. I'm not, so I never do it.
3. Be sure to include a list of what is in the basket and the estimated total value. Put that on a pretty sheet of paper.
4. Have fun with it. Maybe get together with a friend and help each other think and create. The auction team in years past always had a lot of fun as we got it all set up.

I can't wait to see all the baskets that are brought that day. Oh, yes, don't forget your checkbook! **By Judy Shaklee**



## TEACHER TALES

### My First Two Years in the Classroom

Karen Efstration

Think August of 1972, my friends. I had just graduated with my bachelor's degree in elementary and special education. Growing up in a work class family in Ohio, I decided to complete my degree in 3 years by going to school every summer. I thought I would get a nice break after I graduated!

As fate would have it, the wife of one of my professors taught at the Junior High School in my college town. She was having a difficult pregnancy and needed bedrest immediately. My professor called me and asked if I'd take over her class when school started!

So, no break. I went straight from college life to the classroom. I had a self-contained class of young junior high school students. When I met them, I found out that they had been tested at 5 years old and never tested again! They were all students who had limited English and most likely parents who spoke their native language. Most of the students had failed to read or do math at an early age. As you can see, I was in a pickle!

I separated them into basic math and reading groups and started all over with basic skills. As a class, we had access to an old Home Economics classroom. There we could focus on practical "life skills" and this seemed to help tremendously.

Within a year at least half of my students were reading and doing math on a 3rd to 5th grade level. They really gave it their best efforts. Finally, after one year with these students I received my first summer break. Happily, I had enough money to buy my first car! It was a brand-new Orange Volkswagen Beetle!

My second year of teaching my same students, started with a drive to the Junior High School in my Orange Beetle. We had a productive year and most of my students were progressing. One day I was sitting at my desk after all the students had gone home, making plans for the end of school. I looked down and found this folded up note in my center desk drawer. It said, "Where did you park your car?"

Well, I jumped up and ran to the window and looked out. I could not see my Orange Beetle in the teacher parking lot! I ran down the staircase and outside into the lot. I found my Beetle up closer to the building in a different space than I had left it! The parking brake was on, and the 2 doors were locked?? My goodness!

Later that summer, one of my students who delivered newspapers rode by my home and stopped to say "hello". I asked him if he knew anything about how my car moved? He laughed and said that he and several guys had picked up my Orange Beetle (like it was a tangerine) and moved it to a different space!! They decided they didn't want me to leave the school for a different job, so they hid my car! Never underestimate the creativity, determination, and heart of the students.

## GEORGIA RETIRED EDUCATORS' DAY CELEBRATION

On a chilly Fall morning in September, three GCREA members delivered gifts to all the teachers at B.B. Harris Elementary School in Duluth in honored of Georgia Retired Educators Day 2022. Our GCREA chapter purchased a pack of dry erase markers for each teacher at the school and attached a handwritten note from one of our members to each pack of markers. We were greeted at the school by the principal, Dr. Erin Hahn, and the parent liaison, Lourdes Hernandez. As we chatted in the front office, a teacher, Linza Perez, happened in so we included her in our celebration. Dr. Hahn thanked us many times for the gift to her teachers and told us how much our gesture meant to the school and its staff. She promised to place a pack in each teacher's mailbox so they would all receive their gift.

Those delivering the gifts were Ramona Ricks, who was a parapro at the school before she became a high school chemistry teacher; Pam Tuggle, who taught kindergarten at the school many years ago; and Terrie Adkins, GCREA Membership Chair. What a special honor it was to celebrate Georgia Retired Educators by providing needed supplies to today's classroom teachers! [Terrie Adkins](#)



Pictured left to right: Terrie Adkins, Dr. Hahn (principal), Ramona Ricks, Linza Perez, Pam Tuggle



## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DESK!

Fall is finally in the air and our unit is well on its way with meetings this year. What a great time of year to enjoy the beauty of the leaves, the pumpkin decorations and flavors and the gorgeous fall mums! Fall reminds us of change, so this is a good time to talk to your friends about “changing it up” a bit and joining GCREA. Today the GCPS retirees enjoyed a wonderful luncheon courtesy of the Gwinnett Retirement office at the Gas South convention center. Our members were there with brochures, talking to fellow retirees about joining us. Thanks to all who helped with that endeavor! Hopefully, we will see some growth as a result of their efforts.

As I have said before, the best way to get new members is to personally invite them to join you at a luncheon, see our leadership in action and meet other retirees - not to forget the delicious lunch! I will have membership brochures at all luncheons OR just email me and I can stick one or more in the mail to you or a prospective member. Keeping our organization strong is the responsibility of ALL of us, so ...please do your part and invite a friend to the next luncheon.

While, you are at it, if you are a Lifetime member of more than 6 years, please consider also being an ADD member. It is easy and convenient. You will never miss that \$2.09 out of your check each month. Trust me, I know! Ask me for the form and I will do the rest!

Blessings from your Membership chair, Terrie Adkins (ttadkins@sprynet.com)



## September Meeting Welcoming New Members

## TEACHER TRIBUTE

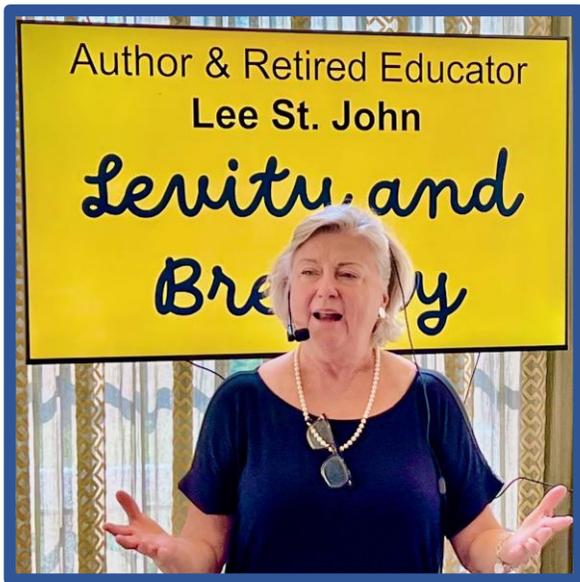
By Mike Weinroth

I remain thankful to a very close colleague and friend, Isabella C. Holmes. She was my mentor and personal friend during my seven years at the Georgia Department of Education. Though I left the department in 1978, she remained a close friend of our family until her death.

At the time, Mrs. Holmes was the highest ranking African American in a leadership position at the DOE. I don't think I have ever known anyone more kind and patient than she. The fact that her son, Hamilton Holmes was the first African American to be accepted to the University of Georgia after a year of court hearings and personal threats to him, gave her every reason to be angry. But that was never the case. She was a parent and worried that he would be harmed mentally and physically. He ultimately had to move off campus (because of on-going threats and violence) unlike Charlene Hunter who applied at the same time as the first African American female. UGA argued they did not qualify to be enrolled. After attorneys in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta forced the issue which made headline news, UGA reluctantly accepted them. Both graduated with honors and Hamilton went on to Emory University and became the FIRST African- American to graduate as an orthopedic surgeon. Isabella lived with this fear and concern which took place before I joined the DOE. It was my good fortune that I made a lifelong friend who I will never forget. Isabella taught me things about life that were not in textbooks.

When she retired, I was asked to speak about her in the State Board room and my remarks were partly comical and emotional. She was an amazing teacher. She became a close family friend and hosted the first shower that was given for my wife as we waited patiently for our first child, Adam to be born. What I was not prepared for was a note found in her bible that when she died, I was to give a eulogy for her. With great hesitation I did deliver the eulogy along with her closet friend and two of her children.

As I said in my remarks, "Isabella C. Holmes was not at credit to her race; she was a credit to the human race". She was clearly one of the MOST amazing people I have ever known.



Guest Speaker - Lee St. John

**Editor's Note:**  
The next edition of the Newsline will be published February 1, 2023  
Deadline for articles is January 23, 2023  
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