



GCREA Newsline

Summer 2023
Volume 10 Issue 5

GWINNETT COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION GCREA.org

**2023
NEXT
GCREA
MEETING
Sept. 15, 2023
TPC Sugarloaf
Country Club**

**President:
Karen Efstration
President-elect:
CeCe Landress
Secretary:
Carolyn Madden
Treasurer:
Holly Gardiner**

**Fellowship
Support
Service**

From the President

Karen Efstration

It seems that summer is finally here with unpredictable heat and sudden brief heavy rainstorms. The magnolia trees have been blooming like crazy.

At least 9 of our Gwinnett County Retired Educators attended the state convention in Augusta this May. We were able to meet members from other units and be reminded how really big our state is. Sessions were held focusing on fundraising ideas, community service projects, increasing membership, and how to stay healthy to name a few. I particularly loved the session about the reasons why Georgia’s landscape varies from flat and sandy to mountainous and rocky. Our GCREA once again earned the Unit of Distinction award thanks to all of you and our fearless, hardworking president, Kimberly Rooker.

As we look forward to the 23/24 year of GCREA, let us realize our continuing importance in this “retired stage” of our lives. We now have some time to focus on ourselves to stay healthy, to reach out to friends, to learn something new and even to accomplish something that we’ve been afraid to attempt in the past. We can do it with the support of each other!

Our first monthly meeting of 23/24 is scheduled for September 15 at the TPC Sugarloaf Country Club. The food service, security, and guest hospitality are outstanding. I will send out more details later. Please encourage your retired educator friends to attend also.

GREA CONVENTION 2023 - A GREAT SUCCESS!! Terrie Adkins

GREA members from all over the state gathered in Augusta, GA in early May for the 63rd Annual GREA Convention at the Augusta Marriott on the river. It was a beautiful venue for a beautiful crowd of retired educators. There were 9 GCREA members in attendance! GREA President Dr. Henrietta Gray opened the First General Session of the convention where members were given an overview of the convention events, adopted the agenda, heard reports from the GREA Museum & GREA Foundation Committees, the Teacher Retirement System report, the State Health Benefits Plan report, and the presentation of the budget for 2023-24.

The first evening found members enjoying a delicious dinner and then a hilarious talent show by members of the Governing Board. These included a Paddle Ball demonstration, a standup comedian, a wash tub concert, a GREA-t chef with her new cookbook, a jump rope demonstration and line dancing! The “celebrity judges” deemed them all winners!!

Day Two began with Awards Breakfasts for all units, divided into Area groups. Being in Area 14, we joined several other Areas and received our UNIT OF DISTINCTION AWARD from Area Director Terrie Adkins. For the first time in GREA history, 3 Areas, including our Area 14, had 100% Units of Distinction! The afternoon provided various break-out sessions for members to learn about technology (getting on Facebook, etc.), Exploring your family history, Outsmarting Scammers, Seniors in Motion (Exercise without killing yourself!), Best Practices for GREA, The Story of Augusta, AMBA answers your questions. At 4:00 PM we gathered to memorialize the GREA members who have passed away this year, in a very moving and beautiful ceremony. The day was topped off by another delicious dinner, music by the “Back in Time Band” (made up of retired music educators), and dancing.

Day Three consisted of the Second General Session with more reports from various committees and the Executive Director’s Report by Dr. Bill Sloan. Dr. Henrietta Gray presented the March of Dimes with a check for over 50 Thousand Dollars! The budget for 2023-24 was approved and then the gavel was passed from Dr. Henrietta Gray to the incoming President Joe Boland. Joe presented his message with the help of a host of “Fat Heads” (oversized photos of various well-known GREA personalities). Joe’s theme for the new year is GET ON THE BUS and his humanitarian project is TOTES TO TOTS. We will be hearing more about both in the coming year. New Area Directors and other state officers, including new President Elect Shirley Grant were installed, as well.

The new GREA Secretary, Liz Bouis, invited everyone to the 2024 Convention at the Classic Center in Athens, GA on May 7 - 9, 2024. You might want to plan to attend that one. You don’t want to miss anymore of the fun, so GET ON THE BUS!

The 2023 GREA Convention as Experienced by Three First Time Attendees

Karen, Karen, and Sharon were excited to attend our very first GREA Convention this past May. That's Karen Efstration (2023/24 GCREA president), Karen McKnight (Newsline contributor), and me, Sharon Larkin (Newsline Editor).

By the time we arrived in Augusta, got checked in to our hotel, dropped off our luggage, and picked up nametags and the schedule, we had missed the first general session. So, we were looking forward to the banquet that evening. We met up with the rest of the GCREA group and were able to fill an entire table. The food was delicious, the door prizes were plentiful and the entertainment, GREA's Got Talent, was quite funny.

The next morning, we attended an Awards Breakfast for Area 14. This was where we received the Unit of Distinction Award. As Terrie mentioned in the earlier article all the units in Area 14 achieved Unit of Distinction.

Following this we attended breakout sessions. All three of us attended The History of Augusta, which was very interesting and informative. We all chose different sessions after that. I chose the session by Johnny Smith, which focused on ways we could use technology to inform others about what our unit was doing. I will let Karen McKnight tell you about hers.

For my second breakout session I went to the "Seniors in Motion" session. The room was set up with chairs spread apart and a bottle of water in each chair. The presenters were from areas 16 and 17. If you didn't want to actively participate, you could sit in the back and watch. It was a fun filled 45 minutes of movement. We were given a sheet of instructions covering the exercises we used. I loved it and am using the sheet of directions at home 3-4 times per week. (Karen M)

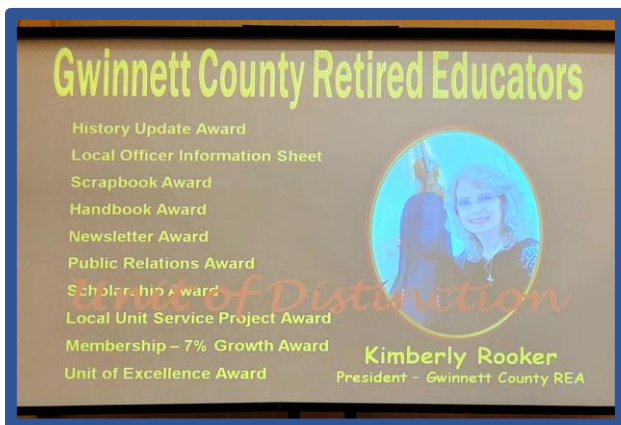
We enjoyed a delicious lunch at Boll Weevil with Holly Gardiner, CeCe Landress, and Kimberly Rooker. Just a side note here, the desserts were delicious and huge.

We had another banquet that evening, complete with speeches, presentations, and lots of door prizes. The highlight of the evening was a concert by "Back in Time". They reminded me a lot of Chicago, lots of horns. Many of the band members were former UGA Redcoat members. They had us up on our feet, singing, clapping, dancing, and having a wonderful time.

Terrie told you all about the General Session in her article.

The three of us, Karen, Karen, and Sharon can't wait to attend the 2024 convention in Athens. Hope to see you there, too.

Scenes from the Convention



Times have changed!

Last month I shared one of my early teaching experiences teaching full time with GCPS. I officially retired on December 1, 2012. A friend who taught at GSMST, was retiring at the same time, and encouraged me to retire early. Thank you, Beverly Jerrim, who is a GCREA member also. She taught AP Economics at GSMST. She was going to continue working half time. She recommended me to the administration to work the other half of her pre-retirement day. She wanted to continue working in the morning, so I would work the second half of the day. Teaching the second half of the day without benefit of an alarm clock, continuing earning my full retirement pay AND teaching one Honors/Gifted US History and two AP economics classes was a dream come true. The second day I was with the students, one walked in and proclaimed to all “You are certified in Everything.” I didn’t explain everything (11 subjects). He then informed me he looked up my web page from Give East

Our economics classes participated in the Georgia Council on Economic Education’s National Personal Finance Challenge with students throughout the state participating in teams of 3-4 students. I accompanied my State winning team of 4 students to St Louis, Missouri for the National competition. We flew both ways. One of the first things we did was exchange cell phone numbers with each other so we could be in constant contact. We visited the Clydesdales first thing. (They were huge and beautiful but. . .) The students told me if I wanted to go on the beer tour, they would remain silent. Since I don’t drink carbonated beverages, I declined the kind offer. We came in 14th place in the National Challenge. We had a great time and headed back home.

We had to use the plane trains at Hartsfield-Jackson to get to and from our gates. I drove us in my car to the airport. (Horrors) Back in Atlanta, my students boarded the train, with the doors closing before I could get on. They had a momentarily shocked look on their faces, while I waved. I was on the next train when my phone rang with my students asking where they should meet me. They were on speaker. (Horrors again). I told them to wait at the top of the escalators. When I arrived, they were spread out horizontally in a straight line about 5 feet from each other. Before the GSMST graduation ceremony, I shared the plane train story with Louise Radloff. We both agreed times have changed since we began with GCPS.

Karen McKnight (email below)

Please send your teacher tales to HSmcknight21@outlook.com to be included in our newsletter.

Editor's Note:

The next edition of the Newsline will be published Sept. 1, 2023

Deadline for articles is Aug. 23, 2023

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