

# HIGHLAND COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

7-19-2020

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"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" - *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

"Worry is like a rocking chair: It gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere." - *Erma Bombeck*

"When it rains, look for rainbows; when it's dark, look for stars." — *Oscar Wilde*

"... if you take the 'I' out of illness, and add 'we', you end up with wellness." - *Charles Ropel*

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy. - *Martin Luther King Jr.*

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Greetings from your HCRTA Executive Committee, sending wishes for a safe and sanguine summer! We are definitely missing each of you and pray that you are well in your circumstances.

## **A Message from President Robert Hottle:**

The HCRTA Executive Committee met this morning, and in light of continued public health concerns about the Corona Virus 19, we have made the decision to again cancel the upcoming HCRTA General Meeting in August. The Ponderosa Banquet center will not be available, and there is still much concern for the health of older citizens meeting in large groups and close quarters. The Executive Committee will meet again in October and at that time make a determination about a November meeting. Our hope is that by November we will be able to meet and hear from Tamla Cole from STRS regarding member benefit news, however, we will cross that bridge at the appropriate time.

In the meantime, welcome to our efforts to keep you informed about our retired teachers' group!

Teachers are greatly needed in schools! However, at some point we all reach the point where we will want to retire. If you have done so, or plan to, please stay in touch with those who bring about your history. We plan to stay in touch with you and let each of you know you are missed, when we cannot meet. We want to keep you informed about topics and activities related to the retired teachers of Highland County.

## **From the Editor:**

Every communication I read these days seems to start with an obligatory acknowledgement of what CRAZY times through which we are living. I suppose I just need a reminder that we are not dreaming this and that the world is not just business as usual. In-fact, the only business as usual today is unusual business!

As President Hottle mentioned earlier, we will not be meeting in August. As such, the executive committee is extending its request that you not submit dues until the November meeting. However, we do continue to need financial support for our scholarship funds. This year we had 5 worthy applicants for the 3 scholarships. The applications have been evaluated and the determination made to award scholarships. See the enclosed news release for scholarship award details. If you would like to honor or memorialize someone with a donation to the scholarship fund, you may do so by sending the form at the end of this newsletter to Doris Pulse. Since we last met there have been the following scholarship donations received: a \$325.00 donation by Mary Black and a \$50.00 donation by Sherry Wisecup Smithson, both to the HCRTA Harold W. Spargur Scholarship, in memory of Glenn Armstrong, as well as a \$30 donation to the HCRTA Scholarship Fund, in appreciation of Kevin Black for his technological assistance, by the Mariemont DAR.

## **Necrology**

Given that we are not meeting in person, there are no meeting minutes to include and no changes to the last Treasurer's Report, save the above-mentioned scholarship donations. As an executive committee, since we are not meeting, we felt it appropriate to memorialize our former colleagues by including the necrology report in this newsletter. As such, Cindy Eigel reported the passing of the following individuals:

Joe W. Thompson, passed away February 10, 2020. He began teaching at his alma mater, Dawson-Bryant High School (Coal Grove), in Lawrence County, Kentucky, taught history and coached football, basketball, and baseball. He later served as guidance counselor for Hillsboro City Schools and Paint Valley Schools.

Glenn Mervin Armstrong, passed away March 4, 2020. He began his teaching career in 1950, teaching in the Boston, Sinking Spring, and Leesburg schools. Glenn also coached boys' basketball. He retired in 1983 as math instructor and principal at Fairfield High School, Leesburg. Glen continued teaching at Wilmington College and Southern State Community College until 1994. He was a life member of Ohio Education Association, Ohio Retired Teachers Association, and the Highland County Retired Teachers Association.

Harry V. Turner, passed away March 24, 2020. Harry's career with Greenfield Exempted Schools included: New Petersburg, grades 5-6, 1946-1951; Seventh and Eighth Grade Science Teacher, 1951-1958; Assistant Principal, 1959-1965; and Principal of Edward Lee McClain High School from 1966-1979. He retired in 1979 after over 50 years of service in education. In retirement, Harry worked for Kenworthy Seed Company, sold real estate, was director of adult education at Laurel Oaks Vocational School, and was executive director of Highland County Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of Highland County Retired Teachers Association.

Sue Carol Goins McConnaughey, passed away April 3, 2020. In her career Sue taught first, second, fifth, and seventh grades during 37 years of teaching in the Hillsboro City Schools.

Eleanor June McCreight, passed away May 4, 2020. She worked as a teacher's aide in Hillsboro City Schools and owned and operated the Bargain Bazaar Consignment Store. She later retired as a pharmacy technician for the Hillsboro Kmart Store

George W. Foltz, passed away May 14, 2020. He served the community of Greenfield in many ways. George was employed at Weller's Plumbing and Heating, and was later self-employed for many years. He also was employed by Greenfield Exempted Village Schools (doesn't say in what capacity) and later retired from Laurel Oaks Vocational School.

Willard R. Parr (not a teacher, but thought he deserved recognition for keeping us all informed about snow days and also supporting many school activities through his broadcasts), passed away May 18, 2020. In addition to being the "Voice of Southern Ohio" for over 60 years, he served the Hillsboro community from 1951 to 1965 as a police sergeant

Donald A. "Sonny" McCoppin, passed away May 24, 2020, (grew up in Leesburg area). Mr. McCoppin began a teaching career teaching and coaching at Ross High School in Hamilton and later taught at Green Hills, Blanchester, and Laurel Oaks Joint Vocational School.

Katherine Frances Sexton, passed away May 30, 2020. She served Lynchburg-Clay School District as a cook for many years.

Janet L. Walker, passed away June 14, 2020. Janet worked for Lynchburg-Clay High School as a cook for 11 years.

Jannette M. Waller, passed away June 15, 2020. Jannette worked at Bright Local Schools as District Secretary for 31 years.

Barbara J. Hilliard, passed away June 18, 2020. Barbara worked at Hillsboro High School as cook for 5 years (in addition to being social worker at Highland County Human Services for 20 years).

### **STRS, ORTA, and ODE News**

One of the topics of discussion at the executive meeting was recent news from STRS. On its web site, STRS Ohio acknowledged that "... the recent stock market volatility may be unsettling for some of our members. [However,] STRS Ohio is a long-term investor with a diversified asset mix and understands that significant short-term market fluctuations will occur periodically." They go on to say that "... Unless the markets recover meaningfully before the end of June, this will be the first fiscal year with a negative return for STRS Ohio's total fund since 2009." They go on to point out that from 2009 until 2019, STRS Ohio's investments have been very strong, averaging +10.44% per year for the ten-year period. They further note that their "broadly diversified asset mix... is intended to achieve the long-term rate of return objectives of the fund (meeting the fund's actuarial assumed rate of return over moving 30-year periods) with an acceptable level of risk."

All of this to say that while the Covid-19 situations have had an impact on the funds backing our pensions, STRS Ohio remains optimistic about the long-term financial prospects for our retirement system.

The March STRS Board Update assured members that member benefit payments would continue as scheduled, and that other services such as applications, education seminars and in-person meetings would be available online or via teleconference.

If you have not been reading the monthly ORTA newsletters, it is always interesting to read Executive Director Robin Rayfield's report after listening to STRS Ohio Zoom meetings. In his June ORTA Newsletter, DR Rayfield stated,

There was some drama that unfolded during the meeting surrounding the budget submitted by STRS staff for approval by the board. The budget contained raises for STRS employees and continued financial resources directed to the investment staff for 'incentive pay'. The discussion on this matter was lengthy (by STRS standards) and resulted in a 6-5 vote to pass the resolution approving the budget submitted. Most of the opposition to the budget focused on the notion that active members pay more and receive less, retired teachers are not receiving their promised COLA, and the budget for education in Ohio was recently reduced. This is the first time that I have witnessed such a division in the board. The vote was as follows:

**No votes:** Dale Price (active member), David Gruber (appointed member), Mr. Hunt (alternate for State Superintendent Palo DeMario), Robert McFee (active member), Wade Steen (appointed member)

**Yes votes:** Bob Stein (retired member), Rita Walters (retired member), Yoel Mayerfield (appointed member) Carol Carothers (active member), Jeffery Rhodes (active member), Arthur Lard (active member)

As I consider the discussion from the June 2020 STRS meeting, I am encouraged that several members of the STRS board have acknowledged that the current status quo of retirees not receiving what they were promised while STRS employees receive annual increases is no longer acceptable. I believe that the split vote sends a clear message that we cannot continue down the path that we are on. Hopefully, the pressure from retirees, active teachers, and legislators will move the needle and we can look forward to receiving more of what we were promised.

This and other news can be found online:

Ohio Department of Education: <http://education.ohio.gov/Miscellaneous/News/>

Ohio Legislative News: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/>

STRS Ohio News: <https://www.strsoh.org/publications/>

ORTA News: <https://www.orta.org/news>

HCRTA: <https://hcrtawebly.com>

One Final Note: Bob Hottle Update

Putting this newsletter together has spanned over about a week. At the time of these finishing I am seeing reports on Facebook that President Hottle has been in the hospital in ICU and, until recently, on a respirator. The latest post on the **Support Bob Hottle- giving Lymphoma the boot** @support.bob.hottle · Community Facebook page, posted 7/20/2020 at about 3PM says,

Bob is doing so well and improving everyday! He is off the ventilator. His oxygen levels are doing well. We pray he continues to be able to cough which improves the fluid issue in his lungs.

He started physical therapy today after being on bedrest for 1.5 weeks. He was weak but showed grit!

They are letting him eat some soft foods so he gets a fair chance at proving if he does or does not need a feed tube.

We pray for healing so he can return home. We'd like to see him do what he loves again... being on the farm and helping others.

Please pray that his lungs continue to heal, no aspiration occurrences and lots of strength!

Thanks you and as Bob always says, "God Bless"!

Our appreciation for Bob and all he does to keep HCRTA organized and active are greatly appreciated. Your continued prayers are desired.



(Cut and Return this Portion)  
Doris Pulse, HCRTA Treasurer, 11740 State Route 753, Greenfield, OH 45123

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ HCRTA Scholarship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
• In memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
• In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address of family to be notified:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Spargur Scholarship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments:

Place this portion and your check in an envelope & return to Doris Pulse, HCRTA Treasurer, 11740 State Route 753, Greenfield, OH 45123.