

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**Denny and Duls elected as president-elect and secretary**

Delegates elected new officers for 2019-2020 during the Annual Business Meeting on May 8 at the Comfort Inn in Bowie.

George Denny Jr., Prince George's County, will serve as president-elect, and Carla Duls, Anne Arundel County, as secretary.

Officers continuing in their positions are President Ann Marie Downey, Washington County; Vice President Charlie Gable, Anne Arundel County; and Treasurer Alicia Hardisky, Anne Arundel County.

Non-board members of the Nominating Committee elected were Joyce Cummings, Baltimore County, and Velma Hicks, Baltimore City.

Officers were installed by the outgoing Nominating Committee Chair and Immediate Past-President Frances "Fay" Miller.

Alicia Hardisky, treasurer, reported that the organization's assets are in good standing.

The 2019-2020 budget, prepared by the Finance Committee, chaired by Dr. Steve Raucher, Montgomery County, was passed by the delegates.

An amendment to the bylaws to allow for electronic meetings was presented by Bylaws Committee Chair Lorraine Johnson, Prince George's County. The amendment was passed by the delegates.

A beautiful memorial service was held for the more than 400 members of MRSPA who passed away during the past year.

Local associations brought and "connected" their paper clip chains to other counties' chains to symbolize how locals and MRSPA keep members "connected" through their various activities.

Each delegate received a swag bag of items from Maryland in keeping with the meeting's theme of "Connecting Maryland." The MRSPA member

benefit vendors who attended provided door prizes and items for the swag bags.

The Scholarship Committee held its first Wine Bottle Ring Toss to raise funds for the Scholarship Fund.

Three scholarship winners were announced at the meeting. The \$2,000 scholarships are awarded annually to successful applicants who are continuing in their goals to earn their Maryland teaching certificates. (See additional information on page 4.)

In addition, at the meeting, Community Service local association and individual awards were presented by Trish Bendler, Chair. (See page 4 for additional information.)

At the next Annual Business Meeting on May 13, 2020, we will celebrate the 75th Anniversary of MRSPA at the Camelot in Prince George's County.



MRSPA officers are Charlie Gable, vice president, Carla Duls, secretary, George Denny Jr., president-elect, Ann Marie Downey, president, and Alicia Hardisky, treasurer.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Ann Marie Downey



Looking Back And Moving Forward!

Following the advice of the well-known saying, "You can't know where you're going unless you know where you've been," MRSPA has been (and will continue to) *look back with an eye to the future.*

At our May 8th Annual Business Meeting, we joined together for a remembrance service honoring MRSPA members who departed this life in the past year.

Delegates reviewed the year through the sharing of reports of the Association's work during 2018-19 and approved the 2019-20 budget and the proposed bylaw change.

Retiring board members were recognized with much appreciation for their service to MRSPA, and our newly elected officials were installed.

Community service and membership growth awards were bestowed upon locals and individuals, and we celebrated this year's scholarship winners. Our member benefit providers shared their available services at vendor tables and 598 lbs. of food were donated to the Maryland Food Bank by our very generous delegates! We had fun connecting MRSPA members (and our paperclips) from across Maryland. Door prize and scholarship raffle drawings kept us in suspense until the lucky winners were chosen.

May 8th was a wonderful day of looking back and of looking forward to MRSPA's future. Thank you to all who worked to make this event possible, to all who attended this year, and to everyone who will be leading local Associations and MRSPA into the future!

This year, we have a special opportunity to look back, as MRSPA celebrates its 75th anniversary! In 1945, when MRSPA's predecessor was established, the world was quite a different place. Fortunately for us, there were those who recognized the need to establish and protect a secure retirement for school personnel! Those

MRSPA News
is published five times each year by the
**MARYLAND RETIRED SCHOOL
PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION.**

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leaders of 1945 were certainly looking forward, and it's our responsibility to continue their resolve.

During the upcoming year, we will look back *and* move forward as we celebrate and continue MRSPA's mission.

I hope you have a delightful and relaxing summer!

***75 Years of Connecting,
Protecting, and Making a
Difference!***

VISION STATEMENT

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association inspires the dedication, commitment, skills and abilities of its members in service to fellow retirees and the entire community in an ever-changing world.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association is a nonprofit organization comprised of retired school system personnel. It serves as an advocate for members and provides expanding services to members, empowering them to enrich the quality of their lives. The organization is dedicated to excellence in education and life-long learning. It promotes community service by its members through a myriad of volunteer activities.

From the

Executive Director

Wanda Ruffo Twigg



As another hot, humid summer approaches and another year of work is completed for the members of MRSPA, I can't help but reflect on how much our members care. As a former teacher, myself, how much educators care isn't surprising to me, but I think we should shine a light on it.

Sometimes it's easy to become cynical and say we don't care, especially when our political climate is so divisive and when we are all so very busy. Our MRSPA members are busy caring for parents, spouses, partners, children, and grandchildren. They care when volunteering at their church and with other organizations in their community.

Local school children and active educators benefit greatly from our caring members. Our locals and MRSPA would not exist without members who care. It seems our members continue to show they care in retirement just as they did as active employees of our school systems. **It is wonderful to behold.**

Caring takes many forms. Some members aren't active in their local or the state organization, but they affirm that they care by sending their dues each year. Others will attend a local luncheon or donate to the local or state scholarship fund or to a broad variety of community service activities. Some members show they care when they send a card or note to a member who is ill or coping with difficult family circumstances.

Luckily, for our locals and MRSPA, we have members who show they care by accepting leadership positions at the local or state levels and who participate in local and state committees. Our members care!

Regardless of how you show you care for your community, local and MRSPA, we thank you! Our associations would cease to exist or be successful without ALL our caring members.

Thank you for caring enough to be an MRSPA member!

Enjoy a wonderful summer!



After **Matilda Barckley** announced the names of the counties who had deceased members in the past year, **Karen Bundy** and **Bev Yurek** placed a rose in the honor vase. More than 400 MRSPA members had passed this year.

Automatic Annual Dues Deduction

Annual dues will be deducted from the **July 31 retirement/pension check** for members who have authorized automatic dues deduction.

MRSPA dues are \$45, plus the local dues amount.

Members paying by check should receive your annual notice in mid-June.

A final notice will be mailed to those who remain unpaid in August.

The Maryland State Retirement and Pension System Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) effective **July 1 is 2.443%** for retirees from the Employees or Teachers Retirement System OR persons who retired on or before **July 1, 2011.**

Three receive \$2,000 scholarships to continue education

Awarded with \$2000 scholarships each to continue in their goals to obtain their teaching certification were three persons employed in Maryland schools.

Matilda Barckley, Scholarship Committee Chair, presented **Kassie Blakelock** of Worcester County with her scholarship certificate during MRSPA's Annual Business Meeting at the Comfort Inn in Bowie, MD on May 8, 2019.



Kassie Blakelock of Worcester County, center, receives her \$2,000 Scholarship Award from MRSPA President Ann Marie Downey, left, and Matilda Barckley, MRSPA Scholarship Committee Chair, at the Annual Business Meeting in May.

More about Scholarship Winners:

April Powell is a Digital Learning Assistant in Worcester County Public Schools and is working to complete a bachelor's degree in Special Education from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Kassie Blakelock is a Job Coach in Worcester County Public Schools and is working to complete a master's in teaching degree in Special Education at Liberty University.

Jane Yoder is a high school English teacher in Washington County Public Schools and is working to complete a master's degree in Library Media Science at McDaniel College.

April Powell, Worcester County, and **Jane Yoder**, Washington County, were unable to attend the ceremony, but have since received their certificates.

Funds for the scholarships were raised through raffle ticket sales and envelope donations, both of which go directly to the Community Foundation of Frederick County, which is the nonprofit agency that houses and manages the MRSPA Fund.

Additional funds are raised through the returns on the scholarship fund investments.

Scholarship Committee members Matilda Barckley, Chair; Ann Marie Downey, Charles Gable Jr., Fay Miller, Carla Duls and Kathleen Pleasant thank those who purchased and/or sold the fundraising raffle tickets and those who made other monetary donations through the envelope collection.

The Committee extends their gratitude to the office staff, Board of Directors, local associations, and all others who supported this endeavor.

Scholarship Raffle Drawing Winners

Following the Annual Business Meeting in May, six themed gift baskets and a cash prize were awarded from the raffle ticket sales.

Lucky winners of the Scholarship Raffle at the MRSPA Annual Business Meeting were as follows:

Top prize of \$300 Cash - Mary Ford of Delaware.

Movie Night Basket - Johna Ruffo of Towson.

Spa Lovers Basket – Members of Garret County Retired School Personnel Association.

Wine Lovers Basket - Kay Brooke of Howard County.

Let's Get Cooking Basket - Kathy Garaffolla of Jarrettsville

Sports Themed Basket - Jan Bubnash of Carroll County.

Connecting Maryland Basket - Sharon Porter of Odenton.

Congratulations to all the winners!

Community Service Awards presented to local associations, individual members

At the May 8, 2019, Annual Business Meeting, **Trish Bendler**, Chair of the MRSPA Community Service Committee presented awards for 2018-2019 Local Association Projects and Individual Community Service Awards.

Local Association Project Awards are given to one local in each of the membership categories.

Those categories are 1 to 199 members (small), 200 to 899 members (medium), and over 900 members (large).

Submissions are received from locals in April and reviewed by the Community Service Committee which determines the winners.

Local Association Project winners receive \$100 to support the winning project in the coming year.

LOCAL ASSOCIATION AWARDS

In the small local category, **Allegany County Retired School Personnel Association** was awarded for their project Holiday Community Event. They worked with the Cumberland Fire Department and Toys for Happiness to help ensure children in need enjoyed a new toy during the holidays.

St. Mary's County Public Schools Retirees Association won the medium category for their Nibble and Notes Project.

Following the tragic school shooting at Great Mills High School in 2018, the retirees sent Hershey Bars covered with a message on the wrapper and handwritten notes to the staff of GMHS showing their support.

The responses SMCPSSRA received from the staff was so positive, they expanded the project to other schools in the system.

Winning in the large category was the **Association of Baltimore City Public School Retirees** for their Scholarship Project. Working with the *Steppin' Out Bunch*, members hold a crab feast and raffle annually to raise money and bring awareness of their scholarship program for high school seniors.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

The 2019 Individual Community Service Award Winner was **Lynne Bratten** from Wicomico



Lynne Bratten, right, of Wicomico County receives the 2019 Individual Community Service Award from **Trish Bendler**, Community Service Chair.

County. Lynne volunteers between 100 and 300 hours a month to a variety of community organizations, including the *Community Players of Salisbury* and the drama departments of 4 local school systems. Lynne painstakingly organizes and categorizes the costume and props departments to enable sharing between the departments and the *Community Players*. She assists with several theater productions annually.

Additionally, Lynne volunteers with the Optimist Club of Salisbury heading up their scholarship program. She is a member of the Housing Board of Adjustments in Salisbury and has served in various leadership roles in the Wicomico Retired Educational Personnel Association over the last 7 years.

Lynne was presented an engraved clock and will be the MRSPA winner of the AARP Andrus Award for Community Service in the Fall.

Bonnie Troxell of Allegany County won the Honorable Mention prize for Individual Community Service. She was awarded a certificate for her volunteerism as Editor of the MRSPA *News*, for her work with AARP Maryland, a member of the Red Hat Club, her Church Circle, and the Credit Union Reality Fair for high school seniors. Additionally, Bonnie volunteers as a docent at the C&O Canal classroom and museum in Cumberland.

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

The 2018-2019 Membership Awards were presented by **Ruth Clendaniel**, Chair of the MRSPA Membership Committee. Winners received a certificate.

Local Associations who reached the goal of a 6% increase in membership were **Howard** (6.59%) and **St. Mary's** Counties (6.73%).

Local's with the Highest Percentage Increase in membership were small local, **Kent** County (4.3%)

Membership Awards Continued on Page 6

2019 Legislative Session Recap



Trish Bendler, chair of the MRSPA Community Service Committee, presents Deb Faller, left, of St. Mary's County for first prize in the Community Service medium-sized category for its Nibble and Notes Project.

Community Service Awards (Continued from Page 5)

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

and medium sized local, **St. Mary's County** (6.73%).

The winner of the Largest Numerical Increase award in the small local category was **Dorchester County** with 16 new members

In the medium-sized local category, **Howard County** won with 64 new members.

Montgomery County won in the large local category with 96 new members.

MRSPA is indebted to our locals for the recruitment work they are doing.

We encourage every member to reach out to a potential member and ask them to join us.

If you need applications or information on recruiting, check the MRSPA website at www.mrspa.org, or call 410-551-1517.

The 2019 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, as always, was interesting, reports **Virginia Crespo**, MRSPA Legislative Aide.

Because of the 2018 elections, one-third of the members of the Legislature were new. The MRSPA Legislative Committee worked to learn about the new legislators and to teach them about our priorities and our Association.

We were well received by legislators and their staff as we explained our Legislative Priorities.

Senator Pam Beidle (Dist. 32) agreed to sponsor legislation for MRSPA (SB 913) to change the time of year when we may request blind recruitment mailings to newly retired school personnel through the State Retirement agency.

This was a "technical" bill with no fiscal cost, but it was important to us at MRSPA to more closely align our revenue with our fiscal year. It passed both chambers unanimously and was signed by the Governor.

We can now do our mailings in a timely manner in the same fiscal year. MRSPA is grateful to Senator Beidle and her staff for

writing, sponsoring, and shepherding our legislation through the General Assembly.

The Committee monitored numerous bills, including some that made minor administrative changes to the Pension System.

We also supported with letters and testimony twenty-four bills. Of those fourteen were enacted.

Notably, two active teachers (one Elementary and one Secondary) will become full members of the State Board of Education.

The Hospital Patient's Bill of Rights, the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, and the

Blue Print for Maryland's Future Act (Kirwan Commission bill) all passed and became law.

More details can be found on the Legislative Committee page of the MRSPA website at www.mrspa.org.

Our first MRSPA lobby day in a few years was held in Annapolis in early March. Eight MRSPA members participated, even when the weather tried to keep us away. Members lobbied over 30 legislators on 5 pieces of legislation. The Committee hopes that more members will participate in lobby day during the 2020 session.

The 2019 Session ended on a sad note with the passing of **Speaker Michael Busch**. As Maryland's longest serving Speaker, he will be greatly missed. He will be remembered and, hopefully, emulated for his inclusive style of leadership and his unwavering support of public education and public-school personnel.



*Virginia Crespo
MRSPA
Legislative Aide*



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Earn a \$10 gift card for each **NEW MEMBER** you sign up as a **DUES DEDUCTION** member.

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Write your name on the membership application, as recruiter.

Return the completed application to:

Questions: Email MRSPA at mrspa@mrspa.org or call MRSPA at 410-551-1517

MRSPA

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Connecting, Protecting, Making a Difference





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MRSPA CALENDAR

- July 4-5Independence Day Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed
- July 17Alaska Cruise Tour Preview
MRSPA Odenton Office
- July 24Local President's Meeting
MRSPA Odenton Office
- August 7Board of Director's Meeting
MRSPA Odenton Office
- September 2Labor Day Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed
- September 10AARP Andrus Awards
Ocean City, MD
- September 18MRSPA Leadership Workshop
Comfort Inn, Bowie, MD

MRSPA 2019-2020 TRIPS

(See Travel Insert for more trips and information)

Best of the Canadian Rockies:

Calgary to Vancouver

July 25 – August 8, 2019

1-800-221-2610 (Grand Circle Travel)

Viking River Cruises “Romantic Danube”:

Nuremberg, Krems, Vienna, and Budapest

October 6 – 13, 2019

1-301-384-3402 (Beyond the Sea Travel)

New England and Cape Cod Autumn Foliage

October 8 – 15, 2019

1-810-797-5710 or 1-443-904-4540 (Mayflower)

Imperial Cities with Oberammergau Passion Play:

Budapest, Vienna, and Prague

August 5- 15, 2020

1-410-296-8330 (Collette)