

UAB Retirees Association

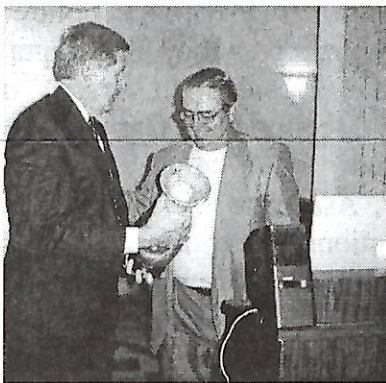
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Retirees Association

July Newsletter 2005

MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING HELD

The University of Alabama at Birmingham Retirees Association held their Annual Membership Meeting at the Medical Alumni Building on the campus of UAB on May 12, 2005. Featured speakers were: Emily Mann, Auburn University School of Pharmacy who spoke about a program specifically designed for those enrolled in PEEHIP. The program examines prescription drugs and optimizes medication use and determines if more cost effective treatments are available. Next, Dr. Carol Z. Garrison, President of the University of Alabama at Birmingham spoke on the future of UAB. A great series of programs are coming to UAB as well as some new and much needed buildings. Following Dr. Garrison, the UAB Retirees honored former UAB President Joseph Volker with the awarding of the "Joseph A. Volker Inspirational Leadership Award" to this year's honoree, Dr. David G. Bronner.



Jack Bradford, President of UABRA, presents this year's Joseph Volker Leadership Award to Dr. David Bronner.

Dr. Bronner held the crowd of more than 100 attendees spellbound as he explained how much more difficult the job of protecting the retirement system had become. He stressed that voters must stop sending enemies of the system to the state legislature. He said he did not care if a retiree hated him, or hated Paul Hubbert, or Janice Charlesworth—we are all the same. This is a true statement, because, once an education employee becomes a retiree, they all look the same and are a part of the same retirement system—it doesn't matter if they taught quantum physics or kindergarten, they are the same. At this point in life, we all need to hold together as one.

Janice Charlesworth, Executive Secretary of AERA, performed the installation of the officers for UABRA. Officers for the up-coming year are: President, Jack Bradford; Vice President, Alan Dimick; Treasurer, Marilyn Doss; Membership Secretary, Terry Habshey; Recording Secretary, Sandra Dillon; Corresponding Secretary, Cecil Nepomuceno. Members of the Board of Directors are: Von Stephens, Joan Padalino, Bill Moates, John Gillespie, Denny Bearce and Ellen Jane Jackson. Among those recognized in attendance was AERA President Elect, Sherilyn Osborn. The UAB Retirees Association announced that its membership now stands at **509!**

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Congratulations, your 4% COLA will become effective on October 1st! (If you retired by October 1, 2004). The second special session of 2005 focused on the passage of the General Fund Budget. AERA, AEA, and UABRA, along with many others worked to

210 Administration Building - 701 20th Street South

Mailing Address: UABRA • AB 210 • 1530 3RD AVE S • BIRMINGHAM AL 35294-0102

protect the Education Trust Fund. ETF funds are “ear-marked” to prevent diversion, and we must be watchful of these funds.

The spring of next year will place us at the beginning point for budgets for education and retirees of education. The active teachers got a 6% increase this year with retirees getting a 4% COLA this year and the hope of a 2% COLA next year. That 2% will be realized only if the conditions are right. First, the money must be there. That means that the revenue from sales tax must continue to rise. Secondly, we must again organize and fight for ourselves. Our health care costs will again take center stage. Health care costs are rising nationally and our state is no exception. We stand a chance to lose some coverage or to encounter more cost coming to us. We can help forestall this happening. How?? By doing for ourselves. We need to GET and STAY as healthy as we can. We need to make good life choices—no smoking or use of tobacco products, weight control, drink in moderation (if at all), and get regular exercise. If we undertake a coordinated effort in these areas, we can gain control of our own health costs. Everyone needs to make an effort.

The COLA for this year became a reality because of friends of education and because those friends were able to defeat those that either do not like retirees and educators, or who are willing to forget us. I feel you need to know that the higher education group led by Gordon Stone, The Council of Presidents (of colleges and universities), and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in their budget recommendation to the Governor did not include one single red cent for a retiree COLA. Yet these folks told the press and television that theirs was the best and most comprehensive higher education budget ever formulated for the state. We need to understand that AERA, AEA, and associations like our own along with our friends in the Alabama State Legislature are who remember us and fight for us. To see at a glance who are our friends in the legislature, consult the

“Legislative Guide” which was included with the latest AEA publication “Alabama School Journal” (May 23, 2005). If we are going to stop sending retiree and education enemies to Montgomery, we must know the players! We must also take the time to thank those who stood with us and kept us in their minds, prayers, and budgets! Please, call your legislator and if you do not know how he or she voted, ask them. If they give an excuse for not voting for your COLA, remind them this is the first COLA in four years! They will be given a chance to vote with us this next year for a 2% COLA and then it will become our turn to vote—to vote for friends of retirees and friends of educators.

UAB REPORTER

A number of retirees had indicated to me they did not get the UAB Reporter or that their Reporter had suddenly stopped being delivered. One very articulate individual pointed out that UAB retirees look to the Reporter to stay in touch with UAB as well as to find out about events that they wish to support such as cultural or athletic events. They also find out about clinical trials and make research possible in many areas of UAB through participation in these trials.

A petition requesting a policy review regarding who receives the UAB Reporter was presented to President Garrison at the Membership Meeting. Dr. Garrison has since communicated with me through Dale Turnbough, Associate Vice President for Public Relations and Marketing. In her communication, Ms. Turnbough indicated that policy holds that any UAB retiree having served the University for 20 or more years before retirement is eligible to have the UAB Reporter sent to their residence. If you served for 20 or more years and still are not getting the Reporter, contact Mr. James Welch (205/934-3319) who is assigned the task of maintaining the mailing list of those eligible to receive the Reporter.

Those who have served fewer than 20 years may alternatively wish to access the Reporter via e-mail at: listserv@uab.edu Mail to this address, along with the text: "subscribe reporter, and your name." The list will send a confirmation back to you to which subscribers must reply: "OK."

I also asked Ms. Turnbough if the Reporter might be made available through the State Library System, making copies available in every community with a public library. I have not heard back on that proposal yet.

FALL SEMINAR??

At the conclusion of the May Membership Meeting, it was asked if UAB retirees would support a series of seminars, with the first coming in the fall of each year. These would feature a speaker on a topic of special interest to our retirees. The reception of the idea seemed nearly unanimous. The first seminar will be announced to UABRA members by postcard, and we may also try contacting you by e-mail, so watch for your notice explaining date, time, place and topic.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Along with this newsletter, I am enclosing a UABRA application. The purpose of this is multiple. If you have already joined UABRA for this year, thank you, we need your sustained support. If you have not taken the opportunity to renew for this year, use this blank to transmit your renewal check. If you have renewed or are not wishing to join at this time, pass this application along to a fellow UAB retiree with some encouragement for them to join. When UABRA approaches the Governor of Alabama or our legislature, SIZE of our organization does count! Numbers equate to voters in the minds of legislators and the governor.

ISSUES

If you have issues that you would like to be aired, please direct them to my attention and we will try to focus attention on your

concerns. I have one with which you may be able to help—I need an experienced person to help with the newsletter. To date, the President has been shouldering the responsibility of putting out the newsletter as well as writing the news column for the space provided for us in the AERA newsletter—HELP.



P.S. You are invited to attend the AERA Annual District Meeting at Jefferson State Community College on September 8th. Speakers include representatives from PEEHIP and Express Scripts. Watch for your copy of the AERA Voice!

You are also encouraged to join AERA/AEA. Membership dues may be payroll deducted from your retirement check. For more information about joining the state associations, please call 1-800-537-6867.