

# UAB Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER  
1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER 2005

## Editors Note

Every organization has a beginning and someone to thank for bringing about that beginning. The UAB Retirees Association is no exception. Our group owes its existence to a man who still works at UAB to help make ends meet. That man is Mr. Ray Underwood. Ray was the Father of our organization and was the first person contacted by Dr. Wayne Teague and Ms. Janice Charlesworth about forming an organization at UAB. He organized the first meeting of the fledgling organization and they met at the Layne School in Birmingham.

From that humble beginning, the Association now stands at a membership rapidly approaching 500 members. Mr. Bill Moates now proudly carries the UAB colors to the Legislative Committee of AERA where he serves as a higher education representative. The voice of the UAB Retirees' Association is clearly heard. Please, the next time you are on campus and spot a campus ride driver named Ray, stop and give him a kind word of thanks. He has made all of this possible.

## Your Board

Dr. Denny Bearce, formerly the Chair of the Earth Sciences Department recently returned from Paraguay where he worked with a group of Methodist missionaries in and around the city of Asuncion. The group was building a seminary, installing water wells, instructing in soil conservation, and instructing in how to market the crops of the area. The group also provided spiritual leadership and encouragement to the grateful natives.

Our retirees gave their best while under the employ of UAB and continue to enhance the lives of people around the world. Just as Denny makes a difference in the quality of life of those in Paraguay, our UAB Retirees' Association makes a difference in the quality of life of those retired from UAB. If you have a friend or neighbor who has retired and not yet joined our Association, take a minute and encourage them to join now.

## More about the Board

I wish to give personal thanks to the following Board members who will be retiring from the Board this year or seeking reelection to the Board for a three-year term: Vance Alexander, John Ballard, Marilyn Doss, and Frank Williamson. Each person served a one-year term and is now eligible for reelection to the Board. This measure helped establish the staggered terms of one third of the Board that are elected each year.

I am very excited about the slate of those seeking to fill vacancies on the Board. Please note that all BALLOTS ARE DUE BACK BY APRIL 18! (If by chance, you have recently joined UABRA and not received your ballot, please call John Gillespie at once at, 205/822-3474. (If you are a relatively new member and you filed your application and paid your dues by January 1, 2005 or later, your dues are paid thru May 14, 2006! That's a bonus of 4 ½ months)!

This past year, our Board has given unwavering service to our organization. You can be proud of the fact that Bill Moates was selected to serve on the AERA Legislative Committee. Also, even though Ellen Jane Jackson has moved to Pensacola, Florida, she has continued to faithfully fulfill her Board responsibilities. Thanks to each of you and to all of the members. I extend my personal thanks to John and Mary Gillespie who have always been there for me when I needed help—it did not matter what was needed, they have always been there. Thanks.

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**Membership: (If you are getting this publication as a surviving spouse of a retired UAB retiree, it is no mistake—you are a stake holder in the future of the retirement benefits of retirees—this is your Association also).**

The UAB Retirees' Association is proud to announce a record membership of 372, plus an additional 76 spouse members for a grand total of 448. If this is not the largest higher education association count in the State, it soon will be! What good is having a large membership? Politics is a contest of numbers, the big numbers win and the smaller numbers don't. I don't know how to put it any nicer. We are very fortunate to be under the umbrella of the Alabama Education Retirees' Association and enjoy affiliation of the Alabama Education Association. When these two groups speak together, it is with a very loud voice. When you are enjoying your COLA, don't forget to thank each of these organizations—COLAs don't happen by themselves! Be sure to thank legislators who stopped the raid on the Higher Education Trust Fund.

Our Board has responded to a growing number of requests from working UAB employees who have expressed an interest in helping preserve and expand our retirement benefits (they are our future stake holders). We now have a special category, Associate Member—non-voting, but these folks get our newsletters and can attend our annual Member Meeting! (Associate Members pay \$10.00 per year).

### **Membership Meeting on May 12 at the Medical Alumni Building**

We have a great Membership Meeting planned for May 12. Registration begins at 1:00 with the program starting at 1:30 sharp. The Medical Alumni Building is located at 811 20<sup>th</sup> Street South. Parking (at a fee) is available in Parking Deck 3 located at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> Street South and University Avenue.

Program highlights:

Emily Mann from the Auburn University School of Pharmacy will share the details of a special program tailored to retirees and their use of prescription drugs. If you have been reading the newspaper or watching the news on television, you know that we need this sort of information.

Dr. Carol Z. Garrison, President, The University of Alabama at Birmingham will address our group for the first time. We are all looking forward to hearing what she has to share with us.

The first awarding of the Dr. Joseph A. Volker "Visionary Leadership Award" went to this year's recipient, Dr. David G. Bronner, CEO, The Retirement System of Alabama. Dr. Bronner will be sharing some comments with us.

### **For the Members, from the President**

As long as the legislature has a hard time raising money to provide services for the citizens of our State, our well being will be challenged. It costs money to run any state. Other states raise taxes when costs go up. Here in Alabama there exists a reluctance to raise taxes. Therefore, the "answer" to meeting costs has been shuffling of cost centers or swiping from other State accounts. This non-answer pits one segment of State Government against another. As long as this is the modus of our Legislature and Governor, we must join together, lock arms and protect what we earned throughout our working lives, our retirement benefits. I do not know how close we came to losing ground this year, but the battle seems more intense each year. (You need to know and understand that the Governor's budget contained a provision for a 4% increase for active teachers and faculty—it did not contain any provision for any increase for retirees). Please help us to help you, immediately RENEW your membership in UABRA as well as AERA, talk to other retirees about joining and finally, get involved!

I wish to see each of you on May 12 at the Medical Alumni Building for our Membership Meeting.

*Jack Bradford, President UAB Retirees' Association*