

mrspa

MARYLAND RETIRED
SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

news



advocate ●

serve ●

connect ●

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Winter 2025

McKenzie Receives AARP Andrus Award

On Wednesday, October 8, 2025, Pat McKenzie was awarded a 2025 AARP Maryland Andrus Award for outstanding community service. The event took place at Kurtz's Beach in Pasadena.

AARP Maryland annually recognizes a member of MRSPA who exemplifies the volunteerism of NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association) and AARP founder Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus.

MRSPA President Betty Weller introduced the MRSPA award winner sharing Pat's commitment to volunteering almost 40 hours weekly. Pat is a member of the Wicomico Retired School Personnel Association (WRSPA) where she has stepped up while the local has not had a president or vice president, often taking on the responsibilities of those roles, while also serving as corresponding secretary.

As treasurer of Nanticoke Westside Parish, Pat does accounting related to the offerings and payments. She has spearheaded fundraisers and special projects like providing gifts to those in need. Pat also volunteers at the Bivalve Thrift Shop sorting donations, pricing items, creating displays, and selling merchandise to benefit the neighborhood.

While volunteering for the Westside Neighborhood Alliance, Pat works on the fall school supply drive and Trunk or Treat events. She supports Fresh Start, an initiative sponsored by the Board of Education and Department of Parks and Recreation. Fresh Start also provides school supplies and other services to county students.

In addition, Pat encourages fellow WRSPA members to participate in her varied activities. Pat is insightful, dependable, and has a heart for serving others. She is always ready to lend a helping hand. Pat exemplifies the spirit of Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, and we could not be prouder of her.

Congratulations Pat!



Betty Weller, MRSPA President; Pat McKenzie, Andrus Award Winner; David Conway, AARP Maryland President



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Betty Weller

There is nothing quite as sure as change. As the day changes, so does the temperature, the moisture, and the amount of daylight vs, darkness. As the temperature changes, so do plants, animals, and rocks. The list of changes could go on and on and now, among the changes, we can include the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association. Over the past few months we have changed our logo and our colors, largely to appeal to the education personnel who are younger and who we hope will be our new members. We hope our current members also like the new look. We are looking at our organizational structure to see if it needs to be updated, and while change can be difficult, it can also improve what we can offer to members. Stay tuned over the next many months to see what those changes might be.

The MRSPA has worked hard trying to maintain and grow our numbers. I am personally grateful for all that's been put into those efforts, but we aren't finished yet. Recently, I learned a lot about the benefits that people who join MRSPA have available to them. I already knew about the legislative committee that works hard to monitor bills introduced during the legislative session each year. We have a legislative agenda that defines what is important to our group, and it's not just our pensions. That is the main reason why folks join us. There are so many other advantages to being a member. Go to our website, www.mrspa.org. Near the midpoint of the purple menu you'll see the "Benefits" heading. Click to explore these advantages. There are a lot of ways to save money from stores and vendors many of us use all the time. As was pointed out to me, it's easy to save enough money using those benefits to more than cover your dues! Change the way you use your MRSPA membership and share it with potential members, too!

In order not to go on and on, let me just say the times are changing, the seasons are changing, and the year is about to change. Change is inevitable; sometimes it's hard and often it's desirable. You may have

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Editor

Debbie J. Hance

Officers

- President.....Betty Weller
- President-Elect.....Alice Mitchell
- Vice President.....Tillie Barckley
- Secretary.....Sharyn Doyle
- Treasurer.....Dr. Stephen Raucher

MRSPA Business Office
8379 Piney Orchard Parkway
Suite A

Odenton, MD 21113-1508

Phone: 410-551-1517

Toll Free: 877-625-6782

Website: www.mrspa.org

Email: mrspa@mrspa.org

results is the definition of insanity. These new changes, when they are finished, we will be a bigger, stronger, more relevant organization for our members. We will still advocate, serve, and connect; and we will continue to work towards improving the lives of each other and our communities. These sound like big, hairy, audacious goals and they are. They are toward people who are retired school personnel, but heck, that's what we've always worked for.

We welcome the new year, new challenges, new members! Embrace them, and together let's be a part of the change we want to see.

MRSPA: Opportunities to Advocate, Serve, and Connect

From the

Executive Director

Wanda Ruffo Twigg



In the August edition of *Retiree News & Notes* published by the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, there was an article about the Pension System discontinuing paper copies of both the newsletter and your bi-annual paper *Automatic Deposit Advice*. You will receive your last paper copies of these in January 2026.

To receive these documents electronically, the Pension System asks that you set up an account in their mySRPS portal. If you already have an account in the mySRPS portal, then you don't need to take any action. You will simply access the portal to view these documents. You can also ensure that the Pension System has your correct email address by completing and submitting a *Contact Information Change Request* (Form 77) available on the www.sra.maryland.gov website.

If you do not yet have an account in the mySRPS portal, you will need to set one up by going to the Pension System website at www.sra.maryland.gov and clicking on the mySRPS button in the top right of the page. You will need an ID like a driver's license or other State-issued ID or Passport. You will need to take Smartphone or tablet photos of both sides of your ID and a selfie. A computer, tablet, or smart phone may be used to set up your account.

When we at MRSPA read that paper copies of these documents were going away, we contacted the Pension System to express concern for our members who may be unable to access the documents digitally for a variety of reasons. We requested exemptions and that the Pension System provide a webinar for our members on how to set up an account on the mySRPS portal. We were successful in getting both.

On September 17, over 100 MRSPA members took part in the very informative webinar. To view a brief recording that describes how to set up your portal account, visit our website at www.mrspa.org, click News/Events in the menu, then click Resources. The link to the recording is the first item in the list of Resources. You can also find the recording on the Pension System website.

Should you be unable to set up an account on the portal, you can request to continue to receive paper copies of these documents by calling the Pension System at 410-625-5555 during business hours. Please allow at least a half hour to make this call as you may wait in the queue for a while, but you will get to a customer service person.



SRPS

MARYLAND STATE RETIREMENT
and PENSION SYSTEM

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 retirees 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.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

We, the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, are evolving to reflect the goals and aspirations of a contemporary organization. Through our shared values, we create an environment where all members are included, respected, and appreciated.

MRSPA Legislative Leaders Hard at Work Advocating for Members

Often the primary reason retirees join MRSPA is for the pension protection advocacy. For 80 years, MRSPA and our members have been doing the work to make sure that our issues are in front of the decision makers at the local, state, and federal levels. Sometimes that work is done on paper, in an email or text message, or by phone. Other times, that work is done in person when our members attend a variety of events across the state.

In this edition, you see photos of our MRSPA Legislative Committee Chair, Tom Slater, and our MRSPA Legislative Aide, Virginia Crespo, in action meeting with state and federal leaders. It is so very important that we are “seen” and that personal connections are made with elected officials. Then, when those officials hear from us during the legislative session or on a specific legislative issue, they know exactly where we stand.

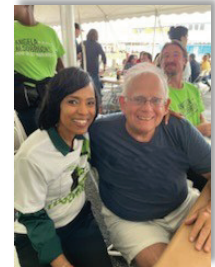
Should you have a personal relationship with any local, state, or federal official, MRSPA would love to know about it. Then, we can call on you in the future when we need someone with a connection to that official. If you are willing to participate in this process,

please send an email to mrspa@mrspa.org. Tell us who you know, how you know them (briefly), and their email address and/or phone number.

We look forward to hearing from our members as we continue to *Advocate, Serve, and Connect*.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller;
Tom Slater, MRSPA Legislative
Committee Chair



US Senator Angela Alsobrooks;
Tom Slater, Legislative Committee Chair



Virginia Crespo, MRSPA Legislative Aide; Delegate
Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Prince George's/Anne Arundel

IN MEMORIUM

Kenneth Knight (Ken) Muir



Kenneth Knight Muir, age 92, died peacefully on August 20, 2025. Ken was a past Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair, and Board Member of Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.

Ken was raised in Montgomery County. He earned a master's degree in education from the University of Maryland, and a doctorate in education from George Washington University. He retired in 1990 after 33 years in public education.

As treasurer of MRSPA, Ken was instrumental in setting up our Retiree Health Insurance Trust, and in ensuring local associations understood the importance of being incorporated. Ken was also a friend and mentor to many on the MRSPA Board of Directors, including current MRSPA treasurer, Dr. Stephen Raucher. Ken brought Steve into the association, encouraging him to be an active member of our leadership team.

MRSPA sincerely thanks Ken for all he did for our association and our members. We miss you.

It's MRSPA Foundation Raffle Time!

The MRSPA Community Service and Scholarship Committees provide tremendous support to students and staff in our schools across Maryland. Therefore, we are seeking **donations** to the *MRSPA Foundation* so that we can continue our work. Again this year, raffle tickets will be purchased solely through the MRSPA newsletter and through local association newsletters using the form below. All donations are tax deductible and come with our thanks and appreciation!

Your name will be entered into a drawing upon receipt of your donation based on this criterion: Donations of \$10 will earn 1 raffle ticket while donations of \$25 will earn 3 raffle tickets incrementally. MRSPA staff will write your name on the correct number of tickets and send your ticket stubs to you in the US Mail when we receive your check. The drawing will take place at the May 2026 Annual Business Meeting, whether held in person or virtually. You can win the \$300 cash first prize, a Maryland-themed basket valued at \$175 second prize, or one of 5 third place themed baskets valued at \$125: Cooking, Game Night, Wine Lover, Book Worm, and Sports Lover. Out-of-state winners will receive gift cards in lieu of basket contents.



Entering the drawing is fun and easy!

1. Make your **check payable** to **MRSPA Foundation**.
2. Write **MRSPA Foundation Raffle** on the FOR line.
3. Date and **sign** your check.
4. **Mail** check and completed form to MRSPA at 8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Suite A, Odenton, MD 21113 **before March 20, 2026**.

Will you send a donation today?



MRSPA Foundation

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

MSCHF Hall of Fame Inducts New Members

Six members of MRSPA were inducted into the Maryland Senior Citizen's Hall of Fame, Inc. on Thursday October 16, 2025, during a luncheon ceremony at Ten Oaks Ballroom in Clarksville. The event honors Marylanders 65 and older who volunteer regularly in the community. Twenty-five seniors were inducted during the ceremony.

Presentation of certificates and congratulatory remarks were made by Maryland Secretary of Aging Carmel Roques; Todd Sullivan, Associate Executive Director of Oak Crest Senior Living; and Parker Koons, MRSPA Emeritus member and President of MSCHF. Donna Copenhaver, MRSPA member and member of the MSCHF Board of Directors, served as Master of Ceremony.

The six MRSPA member inductees into the 2025 MSCHF class are: Louise DeJesu, Anne Arundel County; Mary McCleary, Cecil County; Dr. Debra Munk and Kathryn Murdock, Montgomery County; Eugene Ruhl, Baltimore County; and Alonia Sharps, Prince George's County. Congratulating the winners for MRSPA were President Betty Weller, Vice President Matilda "Tillie" Barckley, and Executive Director Wanda Twigg.



Kathryn Murdock; Eugene Ruhl; Tillie Barckley, MRSPA Vice President; Louise DeJesu, Dr. Debra Munk, Mary McCleary, Betty Weller, MRSPA President; Alonia Sharps

Inductees make exceptional contributions as volunteers to improve the lives of others while demonstrating leadership as a volunteer with skills in management, creativity, and program service administration. They qualify by providing educational or humanitarian service.



Donna Copenhaver; Carmel Roques; Dr. Debra Munk, GERI Award Winner; Todd Sullivan

Dr. Debra Munk, Montgomery County, won one of three prestigious GERI Awards also presented during the ceremony. The GERI Award is presented to those honorees demonstrating extraordinary community service. The GERI symbol depicts the intrinsic value of service to others regardless of race, creed, national origin, or handicapping condition. It is a symbol of the fundamental value of giving and serving.

MRSPA congratulates our inductees and thanks them for their exemplary volunteer service in their communities! If you would like information about nominating someone for MSCHF, please contact us at mrspa@mrspa.org or contact your local president. This year's nominations are due on April 7, 2026.



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“It’s simple. At Osher, I learn new things from excellent instructors and make new friends with similar interests. What could be better?”

DEBBY VIVARI



“I belong to Osher at JHU because I like nurturing my mind and interacting with peers who share my interests. Through Osher, I’m exposed to different viewpoints from people locally, and from as far away as California... and even England!”

BILL LEWIS



“In-person classes provide an invigorating opportunity to socialize with other members, not only in class but over lunch or coffee. The Zoom classes are convenient and allow us to learn from instructors who are outside the Washington metropolitan area—as far away as Pennsylvania and California.”

MILLIE ROGERS

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins offers enrichment classes, field trips, and travel opportunities for adults. Memberships include one, two, four, or six classes per semester. Keep your mind active and have fun like these members do.

For program details, visit osher.jhu.edu, call the staff cell phone at 240-595-2219, or email osher@jhu.edu.





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8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Suite A
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MRSPA CALENDAR

- December 9.....Board of Directors Meeting
Hybrid
- Dec. 22-Jan. 2.....Winter Break
MRSPA Office Closed
- January 6.....Executive Committee Meeting
Hybrid
- January 14....General Assembly Session Begins
Annapolis
- January 19.....Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
MRSPA Office Closed
- January 27.....MRSPA Legislative Workshop
*Miller Senate Office Building,
Annapolis*



MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL 2025-2026



Spotlight on London, March 27, 2026, Collette Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel, Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887. <https://shorturl.at/xhHoz>

British Landscapes: England, Scotland, Wales, April 14, 2026, Collette Tours via Travel Leaders/Action Travel, Leigh Ann Keller, 301-843-0887. <https://shorturl.at/wjH4O>

Canadian Rockies via Rail, June 17, 2026, Premier World Discovery, 877-953-8687. <https://shorturl.at/0G70r>

Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice, August 7, 2026, Mayflower Cruises & Tours, Liz Unger at 443-904-4540, or Tim Landoli at 386-569-7365. <https://shorturl.at/ubXSr>

Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, October 2, 2026, Premier World Discovery, 877-953-8687. <https://tinyurl.com/tn8uuasi>

Canada & New England, October 8-17, 2026, Grand American Tours, 800-423-0247. <https://shorturl.at/zBPb5>

Hawaii, October 31– November 7, 2026, Grand American Tours, 800-423-0247. <https://shorturl.at/cwRmf>

Check our website at www.mrspa.org, click **Travel** to locate more information on trips.

All MRSPA trips are open to MRSPA members, their family and friends. Please use **Code: G5-28192 anytime** you travel with Grand Circle Tours to access a special deal for you and MRSPA, even if it's not a MRSPA sponsored trip.