



## 2026 Annual Business Meeting Celebrated

### *Our Journey*

The 2026 Annual Business Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at Turf Valley Resort in Ellicott City. Over two hundred delegates and guests attended. Vice President Tillie Barckley presented the Memorial Ceremony which included a poem and an MRSPA staff created slide show honoring our members who passed away this year. Wanda Molock, Caroline County, and Richard McNeal, Queen Anne's County, placed a rose in a vase representing each local association as the names were called.

The meeting Program and Memorial book covers, name badges, Memorial, in-meeting slide shows, and leader remarks reflected the celebratory theme of *Our Journey*.

Dr. John Bowman, II, Allegany County was elected Vice President by acclamation. Wanda Molock, Caroline County, and Dr. Wanda Robinson, Prince George's County, were elected by acclamation as non-board members of the Nominating Committee. The new and returning officers were installed by Tillie Barckley, Anne Arundel County, Vice President and Nominating Committee Chair.

Individual and Local Association project Community Service Awards were presented during the meeting. Jonathan Martin, Acting Executive Director of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, brought greetings and shared the status of the pension system and presented COLA information. Mr. Martin spoke of state

legislation that allowed the pension system to properly calculate the COLA for this year when they could not get data from the federal government because it was shut down. He thanked MRSPA for supporting this legislation.

Three *MRSPA Foundation* classroom grant winners and three *MRSPA Foundation* scholarship winners shared messages of gratitude and explained the importance of the grants and scholarships to their success and to that of their students. *MRSPA Foundation* raffle and door prize winners were drawn.

MRSPA thanks our benefit providers AMBA, Academy Financial, ESFCU, FastPark and Relax, Stress Free Solutions for Seniors, and United Legal Benefits who attended and supported the event with a table, swag, and door prizes.

The 2027 Annual Business Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11, 2027.



Tillie Barckley, Nominating Committee Chair; Dr. Stephen Raucher, Treasurer; Betty Weller, Past President; Alice Mitchell, President; Dr. John Bowman II, Vice President; and Sharyn Doyle, Secretary



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Alice Mitchell

I bring you greetings with a smile! A smile for every hour, day, month, and year as we experience new situations. Situations may include but are not limited to family, community, weather, employment, or vacations. A smile for my affiliation with MRSPA!

A smile because I am looking forward to working together with our membership. We can take steps for our pensions and our futures. We spent years taking care of others, advocating for students, parents, school personnel, and our communities. We were there!

Now MRSPA is here for you! I am excited to serve in this new position and carry out the **A, B, C'S** of our Mission Statement. **A**dvocate for pension protection. **B**ring reliable information. **C**reate member connections. **S**upport school communities. Remember, there is strength in numbers.

## Advocate, Serve, Connect

### Emeritus Membership - New Dues Option!

During the 2026 Annual Business Meeting, delegates voted to allow Emeritus members (those 90 years of age or older by June 30, 2026) who would like to continue supporting MRSPA financially, to continue to pay annual dues. Emeritus members who would like to continue to support MRSPA by paying their annual dues should contact the MRSPA office at [mrspa@mrspa.org](mailto:mrspa@mrspa.org) or at 410-551-1517 by July 6, 2026, to let us know.

Those of you who will become Emeritus will receive a letter and/or email from MRSPA informing you of same, and offering you the option to continue supporting MRSPA by paying dues. **IF** you will reach Emeritus status by June 30, 2026, and you do not receive an email/letter from MRSPA, it is likely because we do not have your birth date on file. Contact the MRSPA office as written above to verify your birth date and tell us your dues payment choice.

MRSPA currently has over 800 Emeritus members with another 123 becoming Emeritus for the 2026-2027 membership year. Congratulations on turning 90!

### MRSPA News

is published five times each year by the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.

#### Editor

Debbie J. Hance

#### Officers

President.....Alice Mitchell  
Past President.....Betty Weller  
Vice President.....Dr. John Bowman II  
Secretary.....Sharyn Doyle  
Treasurer.....Dr. Stephen Raucher

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### It's Time to Pay Your Annual Dues

MRSPA annual dues remain \$50 for the 2026-2027 membership year, which begins on July 1, 2026. Members paying via dues deduction from your state pension will see the deduction (including owed local dues) from the July 31, 2026, pension check/deposit.

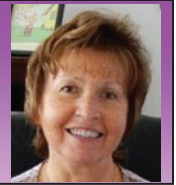
Members paying by check or with credit card will receive your annual billing notice by US Mail or email in late June/early July. If you mail a check to MRSPA, please allow at least 4 to 6 weeks for processing. A final billing notice will be sent to those who remain unpaid in August.

If you'd like to switch to dues deduction for dues payment, complete the form on the back of your billing notice or complete the **Switch and Save** form on our website [www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org), click **Switch and Save**. You will save \$10 off your MRSPA dues this year by switching to dues deduction.

*From the*

*Executive Director*

**Wanda Ruffo Twigg**



The following is excerpted from my remarks to the delegates at the Annual Business Meeting on May 5, 2026. The theme of the meeting was *Our Journey*.

...First, I want to thank the interview committee and the Board that hired me back in 2017. They got me started on my MRSPA Journey. I was pleased to be selected, and I am still honored to hold the position. I thank Fay, Lorraine, Ann Marie, Charlie, George, Debbie, Carla, Nancy, Betty, and Tillie for your leadership and for your patience with me. I thank the other George for his help with parliamentary questions and for his wonderfully dry sense of humor, Steve and Alicia for your help with everything monetary, and Janet, Nancy, and Sharyn for your excellent meeting minutes and tolerance of my picky attention to detail.

I thank all the area directors, committee chairs, committee members, newsletter editors, pension system trustees, and our Legislative Aide over the last 9 years for all you have done, do, and will continue to do for MRSPA, our members, me and for the new director when the time comes. I thank all our local presidents and your Boards and committees for keeping this ship afloat.

In short, I thank each and every one of you who said yes. I learned decades ago in my previous association life that if I was going to be successful in my leadership, I needed a whole lot of yes people. Differing and opposing ideas are important for proper decision making but our organization would only succeed with the yes people to support me and my ideas. Yes people to help carry out our goals. Yes people to step up when asked. Yes people who have your back. And yes people who listen when times get tough, and who understand and honor traditions while they move ahead with changes that are needed to drive the association forward. And the same is true at MRSPA. I thank each of you who said yes when I asked you to

do something – especially when you didn't really want to – when someone in your local asked you to step into a leadership role or even if you simply said yes when they asked if you wanted to come to the ABM today. I am grateful to all of you who said yes and who will continue to say yes to MRSPA and to your local associations. Your yes equals our collective success.

As I take my leave from MRSPA, there are a few things I/we did not get done that perhaps someone with fresh eyes and ideas may consider. One is purchasing the software (and learning how to use it) that will enable our Legislative Committee and members to quickly contact legislators via email about legislation. Another is to consider a new association management system – or a new database. This may not be necessary, but it doesn't hurt to investigate it. A third item is investigating communicating with members via text message like most other companies do now. And lastly, I am hopeful that we will turn the page toward positive membership growth. I know how hard we have been working on this for 9 years! I feel strongly that the actions built into the Strategic Plan, along with the advertising campaign and other initiatives we are already pursuing - will help us move in the right direction. I wish the new director, Board, and local associations much success moving forward. The membership growth journey must always be a top priority.

As I end my remarks, I again want to thank all of you for your patience listening to me today. I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to serve as your executive director. It truly has been interesting, educational, rewarding, exhausting, and mostly fun – and it has been an honor to represent you and your interests. I wish you and MRSPA nothing but success as *Our Journey* continues.

Thank you.

#### **Vision Statement**

*The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association envisions members enjoying the peace of mind of a well-earned, secure, stable, informed, dignified retirement.*

#### **Mission Statement**

*The ABC'S of Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) are to:*

- *Advocate for pension protection*
- *Bring reliable information*
- *Create member connections*
- *Support school communities*

#### **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 Foundation Raffle and MD Food Bank Drive



The MRSPA Foundation Board of Directors thanks all the generous members, friends, and family who supported our *Foundation* by donating or purchasing raffle tickets! Our fundraising campaign raised \$5,350 this year, an increase of \$520 from the 2025 fundraising campaign.

Donations support classroom grants for teachers, sponsored by our MRSPA Community Service Committee, and scholarships for school personnel seeking teacher or another certification, sponsored by our MRSPA Scholarship Committee. We know the need for financial support for our current school employees is great. This year we received 80 grant applications and over 200 scholarship applications! Donations can be made to the *MRSPA Foundation* anytime by mailing a check made payable to the *MRSPA Foundation* to MRSPA at our Odenton address.



Additionally, the MRSPA Community Service Committee again sponsored a virtual food drive to support the Maryland Food Bank in honor of our Annual Business Meeting with the theme of Helping Our Neighbors Along the Way. We were able to surpass our \$2,000 goal with donations of \$3,860.18 from our amazing members, and friends. The Community Service Committee sincerely thanks everyone who donated!

Food insecurity and hunger remain rampant across our state. Watch your email for the next MRSPA invitation to donate to the Maryland Food Bank in November during the Community Service Committee's National Day of Giving campaign.

THANK YOU

## Local Association Community Service Project Awards Announced

During the May 2026 Annual Business Meeting, the MRSPA Community Service Committee recognized two local associations with awards for local service projects. Winning locals were presented certificates and \$150 to support their projects.



Montgomery County Public Schools Retirees Association (MCPSRA) was recognized for its *Coats for Kids* project. With 43% of the 157,000 students in MCPS qualifying for free and reduced-priced meals, MCPSRA stepped in to provide winter coats to over 100 students at Title I schools through a partnership with Costco. MCPSRA member Dr. Dick Lipsky provided help by matching the donations made by the other MCPSRA members.

Prince George's Public Schools Retirees Association (PGPSRA) was recognized for



its *Forestville Healthcare Center*

project. Members saw the needs of the residents at the facility and stepped up to meet those needs. Residents were visited and were provided with toiletries, word search books, colored pens, greeting cards, calendars, water bottles, scarves, and journals. Members read to the residents and played *Name That Tune* with them. Plastic clappers were provided to celebrate the performers.

Congratulations to MCPSRA and PGPSRA and the communities they support!

# Membership Awards 2024-2025

As we were reviewing past newsletters for items that should be included in this edition of the *MRSPA News*, we noticed that we had neglected to recognize last year's Membership Award winners in any edition last year. We know how hard our locals work to recruit, retain, and regain members, so recognizing that effort is necessary and right! For this oversight, we sincerely apologize!

Membership Awards are given annually to the small (up to 199 members), medium (200-899 members), and large (900+ members) local associations who have increased membership the most numerically and by percentage. **The 2024-2025 Membership Awards were proudly presented to the following associations.**

- Small Local: Queen Anne's County – Numerical Increase – 8  
Percentage Increase – 4.3%**
- Medium Local: Howard County – Numerical Increase – 7  
Percentage Increase – 1.18%**
- Large Local: Montgomery County – Numerical Increase – 18  
Percentage Increase - .84%**



All of you who work on membership for your local know how hard it is to increase membership. For every member you lose, you must recruit 2 to get back on the plus side. This makes the numbers you see for the winning locals even more special. They all experienced losses and were able to recruit more than they lost. A remarkable feat!

On behalf of the MRSPA Membership Committee, we thank and congratulate all our locals for their work recruiting, retaining, and regaining. And we extend our sincere thanks and congratulations to our local association winners!

Winners for the 2025-2026 membership year will be announced at the July Local Presidents' Meeting and should be included in the fall or winter *MRSPA News*.



## MRSPA Foundation Raffle Winners Announced!

Following the MRSPA Annual Business Meeting in May, winners were drawn for the *MRSPA Foundation* Raffle. The beautiful baskets were created by MRSPA Secretary, Frankie McDonnell with every item being hand-selected to fit the basket theme. Tickets were drawn and prizes awarded by MRSPA Community Service and Scholarship Committee Chairs, Kathy Campagnoli and Caroll Visintainer, Ed.D., respectively. First prize was \$300 cash, second prize was a \$175 Maryland-themed basket, and five third-place prize baskets of various themes valued at \$125 each.

### Congratulations to all the winners!

- First Prize – Trish Bendler, Montgomery County
- Second Prize – Duncan Adams, Harford County
- Bookworm – Eleanor Fisher, Frederick County
- Sports Lover – Wendy Campbell, Frederick County
- Cooking – Barbara Meyers, Baltimore City
- Game Night – Cindy Smith, Anne Arundel County
- Wine Lover – Ronnie Bohn, Howard County



Caroll Visintainer, Ed.D., Scholarship Committee Chair;  
Kathy Campagnoli, Community Service Committee Chair;  
Trish Bendler, First Prize Winner, \$300 cash jar!

Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets or who otherwise donated to the *MRSPA Foundation* this year! Thank you to the local associations who donated to offset the cost of the raffle prizes! We cannot continue our work without your support and generosity. Raffle tickets for the 2027 *MRSPA Foundation* fundraiser will be available soon. Watch the December 2026 *MRSPA News* for the form. Thank you in advance for your new or continued support!



Eleanor Fisher, Bookworm Basket



Kathy Campagnoli; Cindy Smith, Game Night



Ronnie Bohn, Wine Lover Basket; Kathy Campagnoli;  
Caroll Visintainer, Ed.D.



# Building Stronger Communities Through Financial Empowerment

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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.

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### MRSPA CALENDAR

- July 1.....2027 Membership Year Begins  
*MRSPA Office*
- July 3.....Independence Day (observed)  
*MRSPA Office Closed*
- July 22.....Local Presidents' Meeting  
*Virtual*
- August 12.....Board of Directors Meeting  
*Hybrid*
- September 7....Labor Day  
*MRSPA Office Closed*
- September 29...Leadership Workshop  
*Virtual*



### MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL 2026



**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/tn8uuasj>

**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](http://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.