

# ECHOES

Vol. LVIII No. 5

The Prince George's Public School Retirees Association Newsletter

May 2025

**PGPSRA Founded and Established June 18, 1964**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

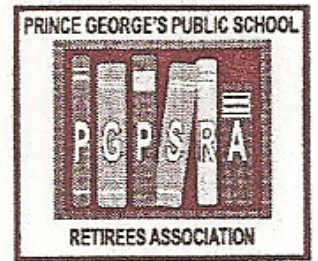
Since my election four years ago, serving as President of this organization has been an awesome learning experience that I have thoroughly enjoyed. I truly believe that we learn something new every day. I hope to continue learning when I become the Past President of PGPSRA.

We have been working closely with the MRSPA leadership. Advocating to protect and enhance our defined benefit pension has been the primary focus of the organization. MRSPA organized membership training sessions to help us grow our membership. This training will continue. As part of the membership campaign, I want to encourage each of you to become ambassadors for our organization. PGPSRA will only be able to continue if new members join us in supporting the retired educators in Prince George's County. So, spread the word, ask other retirees to join PGPSRA and invite a friend or colleague to the meeting on May 28th.

We have been actively working on supporting our public schools by donating clothes, uniforms, notebooks, bookbags, pens, pencils, scholarships and graduation fees through the Community Service and Scholarship Committees. Through our Legislative Committee, we followed Bills and actions taken on them during this 2025 Legislative Session. In addition to supporting our retired educators, PGPSRA is firmly committed to supporting our community.

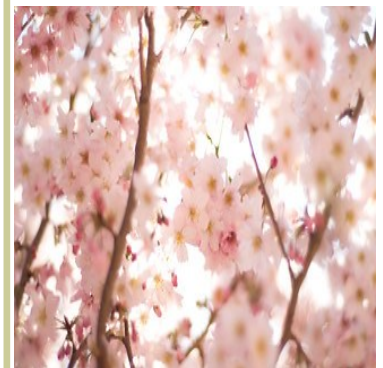
Finally, I urge you to make the commitment as a retired educator to stay informed about your retirement benefits, to stay involved in the community, and to stay connected with other retired colleagues in 2025-2026. I sincerely thank all of you for your support over the past four years. Have a happy and safe summer.

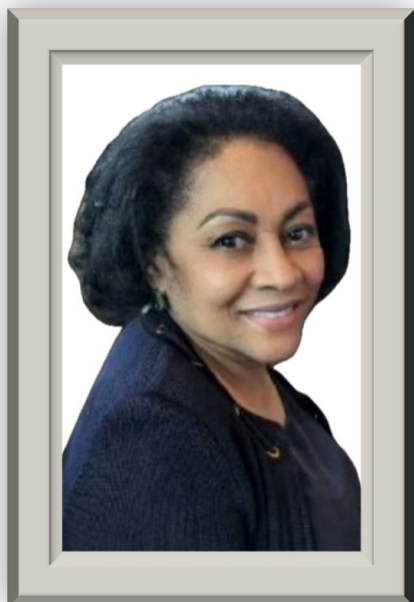
Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, President



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## TREASURER'S

### REPORT

April 2025

#### Account Balances:

Checking—\$31,142.41

Savings—\$145.86

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

It seems amazing how quickly time passes. We are closing out the 1924-25 year, and beginning to plan for the September meeting, when we will come back together to continue our work for all Prince George's school system retirees of protecting our retirement benefits and providing opportunities for us to serve the communities in which we live. We are a very active group, with several committees that would welcome your participation. Also, we come together as former colleagues to share our educator experiences and keep abreast of happenings in the field of education. Our guest speakers at each meeting keep us informed of our county history and current senior activities and benefits. This is an especially vigilant time for us, with the political threat of changes that will likely affect school systems across the country.

We thank you for your membership in PGPSRA and MRSPA (our state organization). Please invite any newly retired educators you know to join us. You are encouraged to pay your yearly dues by the **due's deduction** method. If you bring in a new member, who agrees to have their yearly dues deducted by this method, both you and the new member will receive a \$10 gift card. Since we receive a COLA in our retirement check each July – and the dues for the coming year are deducted in July - you will barely miss the payment. And, we THANK YOU for joining our Prince George's Public School Retired School Association!

The two winners of the March Meeting door prizes were: Liz Burley and Diana Kendrick.

Jannette Wundrow – Membership Chair

## Officers and Committee Chairs

**President and Past President/Nominating:** Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms (obridge@verizon.net)

**President-Elect:** Susie Proctor (proctorsrs@gmail.com)

**Recording Sec.:** Alonia C. Sharps (asharps@icloud.com)

**Treasurer:** Dr. Barbara J. Atwater (barbaraatwater703@yahoo.com)

**Corresponding Secretary:** Sharon Collins (Sjcollins1908@yahoo.com)

**Auditing:** Susan Fortgang (sfort@msn.com) & Leah Fowble (pepper3495@aol.com)

**BOE Liaison and Trips:** Addie Martin (amartin668@aol.com)

**Bylaws and Nominating:** George Denny (George.dilden@yahoo.com)

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**Consumer Ed. and Scholarships:** Brenda L. Barnes (blbarnes128@aol.com)

**Historian:** Vacant

**Inspirations:** Gretel James (gret2349@gmail.com)

**Legislation:** Judith Davis (jfintakdavis@aol.com) and Laura Downey (laura.downey@verizon.com)

**Membership:** Jannette Wundrow (jannettewundrow@comcast.net)

**Newsletter and Programs:** Bonnie Curry Brose (bcbrose@comcast.net)

**Webmaster/Parliamentarian:** Dr. William Brose (wmbrose@comcast.net)

**Remembrance:** Linda Butler (lindab1217@verizon.net)

### Awards and Recognition:

**Scholarships:** Brenda Barnes (blbarnes128@aol.com) and Vera Davis (davisvera5080@gmail.com)



## Bits and Pieces

Happy **MAY** birthday greetings to some of our Emeritus members: Jeannette Yates of Odenton will be having her 94th birthday on the 4th; **Virginia Hobble of Princess Anne will be marking her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 6<sup>th</sup>**; two ladies will be celebrating their birthdays on the 13<sup>th</sup> namely: **Mary Martinez of Mt. Rainier will be turning 100 years -old**, and Harriet Sunderhauf of Annapolis will be reaching her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday; Marie McCaskill of Laurel will be observing her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 14th, and Joanne Rowe of Upper Marlboro will be having her 92nd birthday on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Happy **JUNE** birthday wishes to other Emeritus members: Barbara Conley of Winston-Salem, N.C. will be having her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 6th; Carolyn Davis of Rancho Verdes, CA. will be marking her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and June Readen of Ft. Washington will be reaching 91 years of age on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Happy **JULY** birthday greetings to Elizabeth Vanden Heuvel of Annapolis, who will be having her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on the 1st; Robert Forrest of Broomfield, CO. will be turning 99 years - old on the 5<sup>th</sup>; Alma Pinkney of Brandywine will be reaching her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday on the 15<sup>th</sup>; two ladies will be celebrating their birthdays on the 21<sup>st</sup>, when Gloria Curry of Washington, D.C. will be observing her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday and Mary Grafton of Clinton will be marking her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday; and Eva Williams of Harve De Grace will be celebrating her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Happy **AUGUST** birthday wishes to more Emeritus members, including Carolyn Dade of Suitland on the 1<sup>st</sup>, when she will be marking her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday; Donald Cooke of Huntingtown will be turning 92 years of age on the 16<sup>th</sup>; Robert (Bob) Miller of Ft. Washington will be reaching his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday on the 19<sup>th</sup>; Kitty Walker of Dunkirk will be observing her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday on the 21<sup>st</sup>; Sarah Lent of Silver Spring will be having her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 23rd; and Claudine Eastburn of Gainesville, GA. will be celebrating her 96th birthday on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Happy **SEPTEMBER** birthday greetings to other Emeritus members, including Hilda Norwood on the 4<sup>th</sup>, as she celebrates her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday; Beatrice Marshall of Washington, D.C. will be having her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup>; **Marguerite Simpson of Ft. Washington will be celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 6th**; Linnie Marshall of Beaufort, S.C. will be observing her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 12th; Frank Pearlman of Silver Spring will be turning 93 years of age on the 14<sup>th</sup>; Ruth Dory of Upper Marlboro will be having her 93rd birthday on the 17th; Lorraine Griggs of Bridgeville, DE. will be marking her 96th birthday on the 23<sup>rd</sup>; and Wanda Antonacci of Riverdale will be celebrating her 95th birthday on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Rita Womack retired in 1995 as Supervisor of Instruction for Reading and Language Arts from the Central Office. As the primary caregiver for her husband, she immediately devoted her attention to his needs. Sadly, he died the next year. When Rita resumed her life, she traveled with family and friends to London, Paris, and Rome, and fondly remembered living in Germany as the wife of an Army officer. She enjoyed cruises to Alaska with her son and granddaughter, and to several islands in the Caribbean with friends and/or family. Rita says that one of her most significant travels was in 2000 as a member of a Reading Delegation to China that was sponsored by the by the People-to-People Ambassador Program. Participants visited classrooms, interviewed students with interpreters, visited teacher education programs, observed instruction and met with professionals of all levels, who were involved in teaching children literature in China; plus, they also had guided tours of many historical sites and tourist attractions. As an adjunct professor of Bowie State University, Rita met the students who are the future of the profession. She served on the Board of Christian Education for 15 years at her church, Alfred Steet Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA., where in recognition of her contribution there and professionally, the ASBC Foundation has established the Dr. Rita Womack Legacy Scholarship. Rita lives in Bowie with her daughter and son-in-law, Carol and Jessie Holland, and their teenagers. Her son, James and daughter-in-law Diane, granddaughter and great-granddaughter live in Seattle, Washington.

\*\*\*To contribute to BITS & PIECES, contact: JannetteWundrow@comcast.net



## PGPSRA Community Service Committee

January - March 2025

The Community Service Committee (CSC) is working hard for our Association! We are excited to share the projects we have conducted at the various schools we have adopted for this year, and the Shepherds Cove Shelter for Women and Children project, as well as the Bowie State University Nutrition Lounge.

### Service in our Community

Session four at the Shepherds Cove Shelter was held on January 23, 2025, and featured a culture pride, self-esteem building interactive performance by "The Culture Queen", Jessica Smith Hebron. Ms. Smith-Hebron engaged the students in songs and dancing focused on embracing their cultural heritage as kings and queens. She read her book *I Like the Me I See* to the children and each child was given a book, purchased by the CSC, as a gift. The Women parents participated in this session as well. The Culture Queen engaged them in honoring their children and reading affirmations that recognized their importance in their children's life.



On February 20, 2025, the CSC facilitated session five at the Shepherds Cove Shelter. This session was focused on Financial Literacy for the women residents. Educational Systems Federal Credit Union representative, Ms. Loran Looney and a co-worker, engaged the women in a focused talk on how to manage their finances, debt reduction, various types of checking and savings accounts, and much more! Ms. Looney is scheduled to return for another session with the women residents on April 17, 2025.



The photos below feature CSC committee members facilitating activities with the children focused on Dr. Seuss. Our fifth session at Shepherds Cove Shelter was held on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Lillie James read a Dr. Seuss book titled *If I Ran the Dog Show: All About Dogs* and asked the 8 to 10 children in attendance about the story. After this, the committee involved the children in a *Cat in the Hat* Math Activity and Dr. Seuss Character Bingo. Each child received a *Cat in the Hat* bag filled with the following: Dr. Seuss activity book, character pencils, pencil sharpener, bookmark, a character plastic drinking glass, and a Dr. Seuss character mask. Additionally, each child picked a book to add to their personal library. The women residents engaged in another session with Dr. Nicole Ford, founder of *Yoga with Soul*. She led them in seated yoga and mindfulness as well as discussed information on the positive effects that yoga has on the body, mind, and spirit. Two lucky women residents won yoga mats!



### Service in Our Schools

The Community Service Sub-committee assigned to **Princeton Elementary** participated in the school's STEM Fair as judges on March 14<sup>th</sup>. The Princeton sub-committee, Lillie James, Sandra Boswell, and Deotha Bobo, also donated Kleenex, uniform skirts, slacks and other requested items for the classrooms.



The **Suitland Elementary Community Service Sub-Committee** donated Disinfecting Wipes, Kleenex, and Hand Sanitizer to all classrooms. Pictured below, Dorothy Caster, CSC sub-committee member with the community school's coordinator and Principal Dr. Preston-Boylan

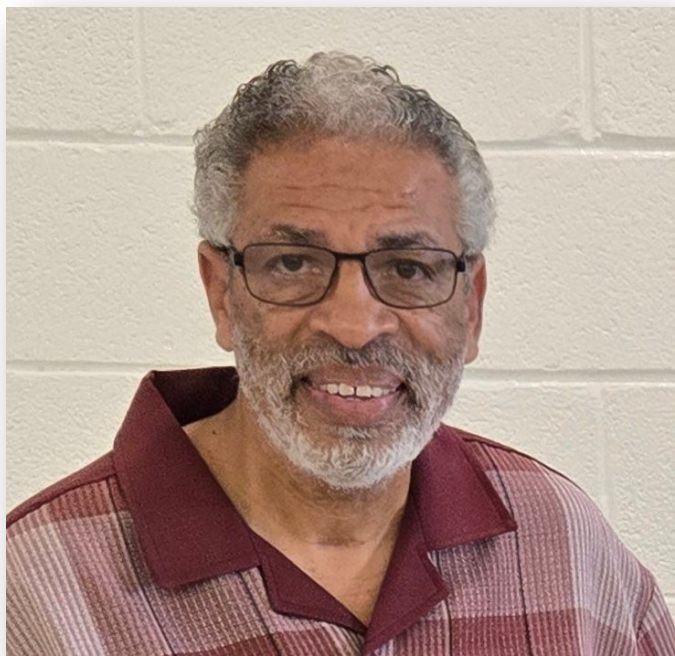
The **Panorama Community Service Sub-Committee** supported the school by donating 12 packs of pull-up diapers and two boxes of one-thousand count baby wipes for the school's regional center on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Tawana Lane, Community School's Coordinator is pictured with Dr. Wanda L. Robinson, CSC co-chair. Ms. Don Yvonne Harvey, CSC committee member, participated in Panorama Elementary's African American Read-out in February 2025.





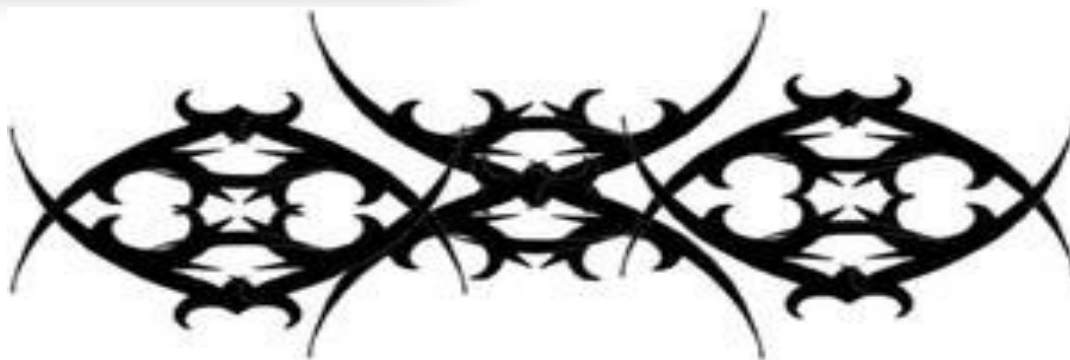
### Service in Higher Education

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, the Community Service Committee delivered over 400 individual food items and 45 personal care items donated by the PGPSRA Members to the **Bowie State University Nutrition Lounge!** We had an opportunity to talk with several of the students who were excited and thankful for the donations. They were even more excited when they learned we were retired employees of Prince George's County Public Schools. Many of them were graduates of our school district. Thank you to all members who donated to make this project a success!



### McKinley Hayes

Here's a face many of you know! McKinley has been active in PGCEA and is now working with us at PGPSRA. We were treated to a video presentation at our last meeting about his experiences in the county from student to teacher to educator, before retirement. We are pleased to have his help and expertise while we strive to keep our organization actively participating in the improvement of Prince George's County's educational experience.



### Legislative Committee

J Davis and Laura Downey attended by Zoom four MRSPA Legislative Committee meetings since the last PGPSRA General Meeting. We also attended by Zoom the MRSPA Legislative Workshop on Jan. 28. Incoming PGPSRA President Susie Proctor has joined us on the MRSPA Legislative Committee.

Over 3400 bills have been filed this year. The MRSPA Legislative Committee considered 31 bills and took positions on 25 bills, many of which have been filed in both the House and the Senate with different numbers. The Committee voted to support 13 and to oppose 12. The MRSPA Legislative Update can be found on the MRSPA website.

The biggest item being discussed by the State legislators is the proposed budget and the estimated budget deficit of \$3 billion. This estimate may increase as the impact of Federal lay-offs and the freeze on Federal grants becomes more apparent. The State Legislature waited until the last half of the session to see what, if any, Federal budget is approved. There may need to be a special session held to deal with the budget or perhaps a three-month extension on budget deliberation.

Governor Moore, as part of his proposed budget, has delayed funding for some planned programs in the Blueprint for Maryland. There has been pushback from many legislators. The not to vote for these delays in funding. These delays, if enacted, could impact school systems throughout the State, especially Prince George's County, which are expecting full funding. A decrease in funding will cause school systems to look for possible cuts in their budgets. Cutting or reducing retiree benefits, such as health insurance, could be on the table.

Bills supported by the MRSPA Legislative Committee and will more than likely pass:

Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2025 (HB0869/SB0372)

Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable and Senior Adults—prohibits theft of property by caregivers, family members or household members (HB0604/SB0466)

Prescription Drug Affordability Board (HB0424/SB0357)

The Committee opposed several bills that limited voter participation or mandated certain statewide curriculum changes. None of these bills are likely to pass.

MRSPA Committee asked the MRSPA Board to approve a chapter appeal to send letters to their delegations

### PGPSRA General Meeting—May 28 , 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

#### PGCEA Center

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM TO THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Dr. Barbara J. Atwater, 2101 Willow Switch Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774-4216

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed - \$35 for each lunch reservation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to PGPSRA.

**(We need the count by the May 21 st mail delivery! Mail it now!!)**

The lunch provided for May will be a buffet. The Menu is: an Entrée of a Salad, Tuscan chicken, short ribs in red wine, and two sides . Rolls/butter and Dessert tray. Sodas and water for drinks.

Note: This is a change from our usual venue and has been made to keep down the cost of the meals.

**Please notify in your reservation if you need a vegetarian choice.**

Your nametag will indicate you are eligible for the buffet.

## PGPSRA

Dr. Barbara J. Atwater

2101 Willow Switch Lane

Upper Marlboro, MD 20774

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BE SURE TO JOIN US FOR THE “END OF THE YEAR” WRAP-UP!



### VISIT THESE WEBSITES

**[WWW.MRSPA.org](http://WWW.MRSPA.org) and [PGPSRA.Org](http://PGPSRA.Org)**

**When you update your email, notify  
MRSPA and this Echoes editor.**

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