

2015 NEA Retired Organizing Conference: Organize, Educate and Lead

March 24-26, 2015

Atlanta, Georgia



Conference Highlights

Over 252 retirees from across the country gathered in Atlanta on March 24, to participate in the 2015 NEA Retired Organizing Conference. Speakers, workshop sessions, and networking opportunities were provided to help participants gain the skills needed to build strong local retired associations, develop beneficial internal and external relationships, organize members, and develop the retired members' ability to enhance the cause of public education. The conference included interactive sessions and workshops, award ceremonies, legislative updates, keynote speakers, and more.

Speakers

Attendees were addressed by a diverse group of luminaries. Tom Curran, President of the NEA-Retired welcomed members to the conference, and later gave a fascinating and entertaining presentation as a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Medicare and the 80th Anniversary of Social Security. Additional addresses were made by Dr. Sid Chapman, President of the Georgia Association of Educators, Karen Soheim, President of GAE-Retired, Princess Moss, Secretary/Treasurer of the NEA, and Stephen Forrie, NEA Director for Retired. Keynote Speaker Earl Wiman, a member of the NEA Executive Committee gave an inspirational talk on the role retired members can play in supporting public education and educators, and a very informative and entertaining session was presented by Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, Executive Director for Health Care for All, on "The Affordable Care Act – Law of the Land." Laura Feldman, Grassroots Manager of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare also

informed and entertained attendees with her detailed presentation on these important social programs and Alfred Campos, Federal Lobbyist of the Center for Advocacy of the Government Relations Department of the NEA gave a comprehensive update on current federal legislation of particular interest to retirees.

Workshops

Over 18 interactive workshop sessions were available, on topics of both personal and professional interest to retirees. Some of personal interest included topics such as The Affordable Care Act and You, Senior Fraud Trends, Strategic Investing for Saving in Retirement, and Estate Planning. Many other topics centered on developing strong local retired associations, and included topics such as Growing Membership, Organizing for Power, Hooking Members into Political Action and Reorganizing the Organization.

Fundraising Fun

Several different fun raising events were conducted for attendees. An address was given by Joann Smith and Barbara Matteson of NEA-Retired, on the importance of donations made to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, and how these funds are used to promote political causes important to educators. With the help of the delegates, over \$12,500.00 was collected for the NEA fund. Also available was a bag raffle of small prizes such as gift cards, macadamia nuts, jewelry items, and other treats. Delegates were each awarded 25 tickets, which could be used to bid on over 80 such raffle prizes. In addition, both a silent auction and a live auction were held of some special prizes, including a couple of beautiful quilts, an ironwood sculpture, and some bottles of very exclusive scotches. Between the live and silent auction items, close to \$3,000.00 was raised for the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship fund, and a lot of fun was had by the participants.

After three days of informative and entertaining sessions, great meals and multiple opportunities for socializing and networking, attendees departed re-energized, re-invigorated, and ready to return to their local groups and put new skills to use. For retired members who were not able to attend the conference this year, we hope to see you at future conferences. Stay in touch with your local groups to watch for conference opportunities.