

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Larry D. Ridgeway, AURA President, 2017-2018

Your board of directors is excited about AURA's upcoming twenty-third annual meeting at Saughatchee Country Club on May 24. We hope you will

plan to join us for a great lunch and informative meeting. Please note the details for making your reservations elsewhere in this newsletter.

For the first time in more than ten years, this year's legislative session yielded an increase in our retirement benefits through a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$1 per month for each month of service. While some will complain that the increase is small and not a permanent increase, it is nonetheless an acknowledgement that our costs of living continue to rise while our pension payments remain static. We appreciate that the Legislature recognizes our past contributions and the fact that we are deserving of increases in our pension benefits. AURA will continue to advocate for true cost-of-living adjustments in the future.

Much of the credit for this retiree "bonus" belongs to Senator Gerald Dial, who was the primary sponsor of the legislation in the Senate. The AURA board is pleased to present this year's Wilford S. Bailey award to Senator Dial in recognition of his many years of support for education in Alabama. Since Senator Dial is retiring from the Legislature this year, it is a fitting recognition of his many contributions.

We are pleased that Ms. Jill Jackson, executive director of the Alabama Education Retirees

Association (AERA), will join us on May 24. Jill assumed her position earlier this year upon the retirement of Janice Charlesworth, AERA's long-time executive director. While Janice will certainly be missed, we are looking forward to getting to know Jill and benefiting from her leadership. Jill will provide some words of introduction and a brief update on the activities of AERA.

Four members will be rotating off the AURA Board of Directors after our annual meeting: Gerald Johnson, Sandy Johnson, Karen Sharpless, and Barbara Witt. All of these members have been very conscientious in their attendance, participation, and contributions. When you see these individuals, please take the time to thank them for their service to our organization.

In addition to the four persons nominated for the board in this newsletter, the board has elected the following officers for the 2018-19 year: Kim Trupp, president; Michael Fitzsimmons, secretary; and Marcie Smith, treasurer. These officers will be installed at the conclusion of the annual meeting.

As some of you are aware, I am completing a two-year stint as president. In the middle of my first year, the board asked me to extend for a second year to enhance leadership continuity. We are pleased that Kim has agreed to this commitment as well. At this time next year, an individual will be elected by the board to serve as president-elect for one year before succeeding Kim as president. I will remain on the board for another year as past president.

I hope to see many of you at our annual meeting on May 24. Please make your plans, and let Kim know you will be joining us. ♦



REPORT OF AURA LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

“Education retirees get one-time payment”

Gerald W. Johnson, Ch., AURA Legislative Affairs Committee

The Alabama Legislature adjourned *sine die* March 29 with four days left on its calendar. While

the calendar provides for 30 legislative days in a regular session, with budgets adopted and primary elections some ten weeks away, the Legislature adjourned early, as expected.

The legislative process, by design, is a difficult process that lends itself to the fundamental concept of limited government. Few bills introduced are enacted into law. In this session, 922 bills were introduced, not counting bills that never got out of committee. Two hundred and six were enacted, including 15 Constitutional amendments pending public referendum.

Fortunately, for education retirees, bills of interest to retirees made it through the process. Both the General Fund and the Education Trust Fund budgets passed and were signed by the Governor. Both budgets include significant increases that get them closer to 2008 pre-recession budgets. Of importance to education retirees, a one-time payment for education retirees was enacted.

Retiree One-Time Payment

After three years of work by AURA and AERA and advocacy by Senators Gerald Dial and Tom Whatley, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed the first increase in education retiree income since 2007. While the increase is minimal and is not a COLA, the legislation is significant in that it recognizes education retirees, even if largely symbolically.

Senate Bill 215 was sponsored by Sen. Dial. SB215 grants a one-time, lump-sum bonus of one dollar per month for each year of service to Employees' Retirement System retirees whose effective date of retirement is prior to May 1, 2018, or their beneficiaries. A teacher who retired after

25 years of service will get a \$300 check. A thirty-year employee will get a \$360 bonus check. This one-time bonus will be granted during Fiscal Year 2018.

Governor Kay Ivey stated, “We cannot have an effective state government without excellent employees. I am proud to have proposed the first raise for state employees to pass in close to a decade, and I appreciate the work of the Legislature in approving the pay increase, as well as a one-time bonus for retired state employees.”

Future Education Retiree Legislative Agenda

AURA and AERA worked with legislative leaders over the past decade to achieve a modest one-time bonus payment for retirees. While modest, the payment costs the ETF some \$24.7 million, all in competition with other education needs. Such is the legislative process.

AURA and AERA are appreciative of the legislative leaders who successfully sponsored the retiree bonus bill and gave recognition to education retirees. The legislative effort to establish a COLA Trust Fund for annual retiree COLAs was carried over to the next legislative session. The next session will be a new Legislature with considerable turnover in its membership—a new process.

AURA, through its Legislative Affairs Committee and in collaboration with AERA and its Local Advocacy Network, will begin preparation for the 2019 session. That must include the active interest and participation of AURA members and all Auburn University retirees.

AURA is the only organization that exists to support and protect the interests of AU retirees. Membership in AURA and your participation in the efforts of AURA to protect and advocate for retiree interests are essential for success. ♦

Mark Your Calendar

AUBURN UNIVERSITY RETIREE ASSOCIATION (AURA)

**23rd ANNUAL
MEETING**

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2018

SAUGAHATCHEE COUNTRY CLUB

BEGIN GATHERING AT 11:30 A.M. WITH BUFFET STARTING AT NOON

COST IS \$10.00 PER PERSON, PAYABLE AT THE DOOR



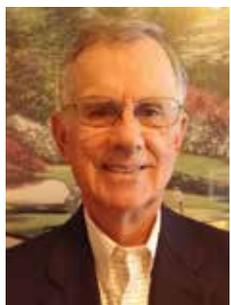
THE PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Presentation of the Wilford Bailey Award to Senator Gerald Dial
- Recognition of Outgoing Board Members
- Introduction of New Board Members and Officers
- AERA Update by Executive Director Jill Jackson

To provide Saugahatchee with an anticipated number for the buffet, please call or e-mail Kim Trupp by May 14 to let her know you will be coming and how many will be in attendance:

Kim Trupp • trupski@auburn.edu • 334-744-3452

Nominees for Board of Directors



Ronald C. Evans

Ronald Evans retired from Auburn University in 2011 after serving more than a decade as a development officer for the colleges of Engineering and Business. Prior to that, he served SunSource, Inc. as the Southeast Region's director of sales and vice president of engineered services in Atlanta. In 1995, he was president of Activation, Inc. In the mid-1960s, he worked as a mechanical engineer for Rust Engineering Co. in Birmingham after graduating from Auburn University with a bachelor of mechanical engineering. His hobbies are golf, reading, gardening, music, and AU sports.

Sherri Fulford

Sherri Fulford, executive director emerita of Auburn Governmental Affairs, retired in 2017 after 35 years of service. Throughout her career, she worked with the Alabama Legislature and state government to address issues and public policies that affected Auburn's four divisions and higher education. She provided leadership to several statewide higher education organizations and initiatives, various community organizations, and university committees. In 2009, Fulford received the Marvin D. "Swede" Johnson Achievement Award, a national award given jointly by AACU, AASCU, APLU, and CASE to recognize excellence in the advancement, quality, and effectiveness of state relations. Before coming to Auburn, she held administrative positions in advancement, university relations, and governmental affairs at Auburn University Montgomery. In addition, she developed and taught an upper-level lobbying course. She worked for two Alabama governors and the Alabama Senate. Her executive branch experience includes being a part of the transition staff that organized the State's Department of Postsecondary Education, which is now the Alabama College System. Over the past 10 years, she has been a governmental affairs consultant.

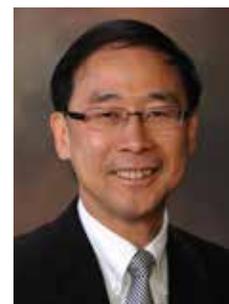


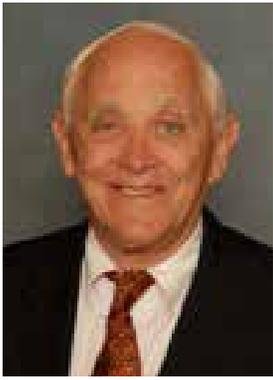
Ramona Browder Lazenby

Ramona Browder Lazenby, professor emerita, retired from Auburn University Montgomery after serving in the School of Nursing for 32 years. After graduating from the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Ramona began her career as a critical care nurse at Baptist South in Montgomery. She began her teaching career at AUM as an adjunct while completing her master of science in nursing at Troy University and then moved into a full-time faculty position for more than 20 years. The last 11 years, she served as associate dean while continuing to teach at the graduate and undergraduate level. She completed a Family Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Alabama in Birmingham and later completed her doctorate in education from Auburn University. Ramona served as interim dean for the newly organized College of Nursing and Health Sciences in 2015. Since retirement, she has continued to work PRN as a registered nurse and a certified family nurse practitioner while also enjoying time with her husband and seven grandchildren.

Ralph H. Zee

Ralph Zee retired from Auburn University in 2016 with 30 years of service, the last 15 years as the associate dean for research in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering. Prior to his administrative appointment, he was a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. His administrative responsibilities were focused on promoting research for the faculty at Auburn University. His research interest as a faculty member was in high-temperature materials for space, energy, and defense applications. Ralph was born in Hong Kong and completed his secondary education there before coming to the United States for his post-secondary education. He received his higher education training from the University of Wisconsin system with a BS in physics from UW-Whitewater, followed by his MS and PhD in materials science from UW-Madison. Ralph is enjoying retirement with Yvonne, his spouse of 43 years. They spend their time traveling and getting back in shape at HealthPlus, where they meet many Auburn retirees doing the same. Ralph is still engaged with faculty and friends of Auburn to develop (at least trying) an environmentally friendly insect repellent delivery system.





Dial Named to Receive 2018 AURA Wilford S. Bailey Award

Congratulations to Senator Gerald O. Dial who has been named the recipient of the 2018 Auburn University Retiree Association (AURA) Wilford S. Bailey Award. The AURA Bailey Award was established to recognize an individual or organization making a significant contribution to the welfare of public education and public education retirees, thereby modeling the work, commitment, and contributions of Dr. Bailey. The Bailey Award will be presented to Senator Dial at the AURA Spring Luncheon on May 24, 2018.

Senator Dial's contributions to public education and to education retirees are substantial. Over the last three legislative sessions Senator Dial has worked to provide education retirees a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The 2018 legislative year started with the pre-filing of SB21 by Senator Dial to recognize education retirees with a one-time payment. "We've not rewarded these people, and we have not told them in years how much we appreciate their work and the contributions they've made. This is a token of appreciation for our retired teachers," Senator Dial stated.

In addition to Senator Dial's work to recognize education retirees through his advocacy of COLAs for retirees, Senator Dial has worked to ensure the viability of the Education Trust Fund. In a recent article for *Alabama Reporter*, Josh Moon wrote: "It was Dial who blocked efforts to take hundreds of millions from the ETF on multiple occasions. It was Dial who squashed efforts to combine the general fund and ETF budgets, which would have made it easier for lawmakers to funnel money away from education. And it was Dial who pushed for a cigarette tax increase in 2015 instead of a transfer of ETF dollars."

Senator Dial is serving his tenth term in the Legislature, having served two terms in the House and seven terms in the Senate. Dial's professional experience includes Lineville High School teacher and coach, real estate developer and Lineville City Council member. He is a retired brigadier general of the Alabama National Guard and holds degrees from the University of West Alabama and Jacksonville State University. Additionally, Senator Dial has completed graduate-level coursework at Auburn University. He is president pro tempore of the Troy University Board of Trustees and a former chairperson of the Advisory Board for the Alabama Department of Senior Services. ♦



Karen Sharpless, Chair of the Bailey Award Committee

Nominees for the AURA Board of Directors Three-year Terms Starting May, 2018

- Ron Evans
- Sherri Fulford
- Ramona Lazenby
- Ralph Zee

Clip and mail your response by
May 17 to:
AURA
P.O. Box 1436
Auburn, AL 36831-1436

I support the nomination of the individuals named above to serve on the AURA Board of Directors.

Signature _____

Date _____

For your dues status, check the newsletter address label!

If “p followed by a year” shows after your name, your dues have been paid through December of that year. No further action is required at this time.

If you have not paid your AURA dues for 2018, you will find an “n” after your name. Please complete the form below and mail it with your 2018 dues payment:

AU-AUM Retiree AURA Membership Form

Name _____ AU _____ AUM _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|
| _____ Single Retiree | \$25.00 | _____ Surviving Spouse..... | \$10.00 |
| _____ Retiree and Spouse | \$25.00 | _____ Sponsor..... | \$25.00 |
| _____ Retiree & Retiree Spouse | \$25.00 | _____ Gift Contribution \$ | _____ |

If you have any questions, please contact **Sandy Johnson** at sandyjj130@gmail.com or **Larry Ridgeway** at larryridgeway23@gmail.com.

Please make your check payable to AURA and mail to:
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