



## MESSAGE *from the* PRESIDENT

*Nancy Bernard*

Happy Fall to all! I hope you are enjoying the cooler temperatures and the many activities (including in person football!) that are happening now. I am honored to serve as your AURA president and look forward to working with the board of directors and all of you to continue the great work that has been done up to this point. I want to thank Lynne Hammond, outgoing president for her leadership during the past year. As we were forced to suspend in person activities and meetings due to the pandemic, Lynne made sure we all stayed in touch and conducted our meetings over Zoom. Thanks Lynne!

The purpose of AURA is to represent the interests of Auburn University and Auburn University Montgomery retirees by communicating with representatives of the universities, the Alabama legislature, the Retirement Systems of Alabama, and other groups to promote the welfare of the membership. This is accomplished by advocating for protecting and enhancing the funding (e.g., cost of living adjustments, bonus checks) for the pensions of the membership provided funding is available; advocating for maintaining quality health insurance at the lowest possible cost to the membership; keeping the membership informed of relevant issues; and sponsoring educational and social programs of interest to members. As you can see, the work of the association is important to all of us

and our futures and I encourage you to continue as a member and become involved.

We welcome your participation in AURA. As noted in the membership report, because of COVID and the lack of social and educational engagement we have had a 30% reduction in AURA membership since 2019. **Dues for the 2022 year are being accepted now and can be mailed to the address on the membership form included here. I hope you will strongly consider renewing your membership in AURA.** Our goal is to gain back those members we have lost and encourage all new retirees to join. If you know fellow retirees who are not currently a member of AURA, please encourage them to join by completing the membership form available on the AURA web site, <http://ocm.auburn.edu/aura/index.php>, under the How to Join tab and mailing it in along with the \$25 annual dues.

There are opportunities to serve on committees and I encourage you to reach out and volunteer to be on or chair a committee. A description of the committees is included here for your information. Also, several board positions will become vacant in the spring, and I hope you will consider serving if you are interested.

The annual Fall Dinner meeting is back and will take place on Tuesday, November 2nd from 6:00-8:00 pm. Dr. and Mrs. Gogue have graciously offered to host our group again *continued on page 2*

# A LETTER FROM Jill Jackson, Executive Director of AERA

**F**all and Auburn Football go hand in hand! War Eagle! I begin by bringing greetings to each of you. I commend the Auburn University Retirees Association (AURA) for being an active and thriving association of retired higher education professionals. AURA is only as strong as its members, and you strengthen AURA with your support and membership. Your new AURA President, Nancy Bernard, is certainly leading the way! I also applaud AURA Past President, Lynne Hammond, for guiding this association through challenging and uncertain times during the pandemic.

In addition to supporting AURA, I want to encourage each of you to join the only state association advocating for your retirement security, the Alabama Education Retirees Association (AERA). AERA works tirelessly at the state level to protect your hard-earned retirement benefits while seeking additional benefits from the Alabama Legislature. We also advocate to keep your PEEHIP health insurance costs affordable and fully funded at the Teachers' Retirement System's requested level each session.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, AERA was successful in lobbying the passage of the Education Retirees' Trust Fund (also known as the ERTF). This newly established trust fund is designed to generate additional money for public education retirees in the form of ongoing bonus checks once the trust corpus is reached. Lee County State Representative, Mr. Joe Lovvorn, was the House sponsor for the ERTF and helped move this bill to passage. AERA thanks Representative Lovvorn for his supporting efforts. Although AERA has enjoyed this recent legislative success, the 2022 Legislative Session will have its own AERA legislative agenda to be accomplished. During this session, AERA will seek additional money for retirees with the passage of a "Bonus Check" bill. This bill will request that every public education retiree receive an additional pension check totaling \$3.00 per month, multiplied by each retiree's years of employment. This supplemental check is very necessary considering the average Teachers' Retirement System's pension is only \$22,000 annually. AURA can help us reach our legislative goal by speaking with your representative and senator and making this legislative request known.

AERA needs your support by joining as a state member. You can join now at [www.aerainc.org](http://www.aerainc.org). Numbers matter in state politics and we need each of you to join AERA as we fight for you!

In closing, stay healthy and active with all aspects of retired living. ♦



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued...

this year at the President's Home on campus. This is always a wonderful event and invitations have been mailed to all members who have paid their dues for the 2021 year and beyond, and to those who retired in 2021. You must RSVP as instructed on the invitation to attend. I hope you will be able to join us. Other events are being planned for the 2022 year and we hope to offer some interesting and fun programs and activities for members to take advantage of. More on those later, but please let me know if you have any ideas for opportunities for us to get together.

In this newsletter you will find an update from Jill Jackson, Executive Director of the Alabama Education Retirees Association; a list of our current board members; committees and descriptions of each; an update from Debbie Lane, District 10 Director; and a membership report.

I encourage you to contact me or a board member with any ideas or questions you may have. You can contact me at the AURA email address: [auretireeassoc@gmail.com](mailto:auretireeassoc@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you. ♦

# COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

AURA members interested in serving on one of the following committees are encouraged to contact Nancy Bernard, at [auretireeassoc@gmail.com](mailto:auretireeassoc@gmail.com).

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

*Solicits nominations and recommends recipients to the Board for the Wilford S. Bailey Award and arranges appropriate recognition for the outgoing President and AURA Board members.*

**Nancy Bernard, Chair** ([auretireeassoc@gmail.com](mailto:auretireeassoc@gmail.com))  
**Lynne Hammond**

## LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

*Monitors legislative action that impacts RSA pension and health insurance programs and provides updates to the AURA Board and membership.*

**Chair: vacant**  
**Karen Killian**

\*If you are interested in chairing this important committee, please contact Nancy Bernard.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Develops and implements strategies to increase AURA membership and participation with emphasis on recent retirees.*

**Anne Adrian, Chair** ([mimsann@auburn.edu](mailto:mimsann@auburn.edu))  
**Joe Albree, Karen Killian, Melvin Owens**

## MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

*Assists the AURA newsletter editor in preparing three newsletters annually and additional correspondence electronically and by mail, as needed.*

**Jim Killian, Chair** ([killijl@auburn.edu](mailto:killijl@auburn.edu))  
**Furman Smith**

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Solicits and recommends candidates for membership on the AURA Board of Directors*

**Larry Teeter, Chair** ([teeter@auburn.edu](mailto:teeter@auburn.edu))  
**Lynne Hammond, Nancy Bernard**

## SOCIAL AND PROGRAM COMMITTEE

*Plans and executes social activities and programs of interest to the membership including the fall dinner and the annual meeting in May.*

**Lynne Hammond, Chair** ([hammolb@auburn.edu](mailto:hammolb@auburn.edu))  
**Art Chappelka**

## Membership Report **Anne Adrian, Treasurer**

It seems like a cliché to say that the last year and a half was different, hard, and stressful. Like many organizations, AURA canceled events, and then we adjusted. In 2020, we wanted to be cautious and protect our members, so we did not host our annual Spring luncheon, nor did we host the usually well-attended Fall dinner. We also adjusted by hosting an online seminar, rather than an in-person seminar. “Your Life in Retirement” was presented by VALIC in webinar-style in March 2021. With precautions, we had a Spring luncheon honoring the new Wilford Bai-

ley awardees in May 2021. And of course, we look forward to seeing colleagues at the Fall dinner, hosted by President and Mrs. Gouge in November.

Unfortunately, because of COVID and the lack of social and educational engagement we have had a 30% reduction in AURA membership. Currently, AURA membership includes 198 paid members and 15 new retirees who have taken advantage of their free membership in 2021. Since 2019, approximately 30% of our membership did not renew membership in 2021.

Financially, we are viable and

have accumulated more income than we have spent in the last two years because we held no in-person events in 2020. However, the trend of the loss of membership is concerning. Over time, the loss of membership could affect our overall impact and member support.

We ask that you consider renewing your AURA membership in 2022. Your membership supports educational opportunities, staying connected through social and informative events, and our efforts—in conjunction with the Alabama Education Retirees Association—to protect our state retirement. ♦

# BAILEY AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Wilford S. Bailey award was established in honor of the pioneering work of Dr. Wilford S. Bailey, former AU President, who recognized the need for an organization to advocate on behalf of Auburn University retirees.

This year the Bailey award was presented to Geoff Statum and David Harer, both firefighters from Huntsville, for their tireless efforts to protect defined benefit plans for state retirees, including those in higher education. Geoff and David are best known for starting the grassroots Facebook initiative, *Save our RSA*, which has been highly successful in keeping retirees informed and calling them to action. If you are a Facebook user, you can join the Save our RSA page for current, timely information about RSA and issues important to all of us.



2021 Bailey Award Recipients David Harer and Geoff Statum



David Harer, Lynne Hammond, Geoff Statum

## 2021-22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**NANCY BERNARD (2022)**

*President*

auretireassoc@gmail.com

**LARRY TEETER (2023)**

*Vice President*

teeter@auburn.edu

**ANNE ADRIAN (2023)**

*Treasurer*

mimsann@auburn.edu

**KALE HILL (2022)**

*Secretary*

hillkal@auburn.edu

**LYNN HAMMOND (2022)**

*Past-President*

hammolb@auburn.edu

**BOB RITENBAUGH (2022)**

britenbaugh3@gmail.com

**JOE ALBREE (2023)**

aalbree@aum.edu

**ART CHAPPELKA (2024)**

chappah@auburn.edu

**JIM KILLIAN (2024)**

killijl@auburn.edu

**MARIE KRASKA-MILLER (2024)**

kraskmf@auburn.edu

**LEANNE LAMKE (2024)**

lamkelk@auburn.edu

**DEBORAH OWENS (2024)**

dbeeowens@gmail.com

**FURMAN SMITH (2024)**

Furman.smith@gmail.com

# 2021 SPRING LUNCHEON

The Auburn University Retirees Association (AURA) held its annual Spring Luncheon Meeting on May 23 at Saughatchee Country Club in Opelika, AL. Approximately 80 members and guests attended the luncheon. This was the first in person event held since the COVID-19 shutdown. Lynn Hammond, outgoing President, presided over the brief meeting and recognized outgoing board members and guests. ♦



**Kim Trupp,**  
President 2019  
**Lynne Hammond,**  
2020 President



**Jill Jackson, Executive Director of AERA, luncheon speaker**

## A LETTER FROM Debbie Lane, AERA District 10 Director

It was such a pleasure to meet so many of you at your annual meeting on May 27, which represented my first official event as the District 10 director. What a great way to start this new endeavor! I'm looking forward to getting to know you and to working with you in the coming year on our common goals.

One of those goals is finding effective ways to bring District 10's considerable expertise and influence to bear as we work with our state legislators to secure and strengthen our pension and healthcare benefits each year. In addition to working with you at the state level, I am looking forward to supporting AURA as you work to achieve your goals and objectives within the Auburn retiree community. A third goal is to work with our colleagues across the state to increase both the number of higher ed retiree organizations and the membership in those organizations.

It's my honor to follow in the footsteps of Mildred Switzer, immediate past director, and to further one of her

primary objectives – strengthening the presence of higher education retirees within the AERA organization. With District 10's knowledge and ability, we have the opportunity and the capacity to build a stronger, more secure future for all education retirees – and, by extension, we can positively impact the health and well-being of the entire state, just as we did as active employees of our institutions.

I am looking forward to participating in and supporting AURA's individual activities and getting to know you as we work together. And, I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas regarding projects and initiatives we can work on together for the good of our members, our communities and our state. You can reach me at [lanedeborah201@gmail.com](mailto:lanedeborah201@gmail.com).

Thank you for the opportunity to serve with you this year. ♦



# AU-AUM Retiree AURA Membership Form

**Dues for the 2022 calendar year are now being accepted.** Please complete the form and mail it along with your dues to: **AURA • P.O. Box 1436 • Auburn, AL 36831-1436**

*Make checks payable to AURA*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ AU \_\_\_\_\_ AUM \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:  Dr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Mr.  Other (*please list*): \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name (*if applicable*) \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:  Dr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Mr.  Other (*please list*): \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Retiree .....\$25.00          | <input type="checkbox"/> Surviving Spouse .....\$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree and Spouse .....\$25.00      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor.....\$25.00           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree & Retiree Spouse.....\$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Contribution \$ _____    |

Please direct questions to **Anne Adrian** or **Nancy Bernard** at [auretireeassoc@gmail.com](mailto:auretireeassoc@gmail.com).

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