



# LOUISIANA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Winter 2024

## *Membership to Friendship*





A MESSAGE FROM OUR  
*Executive Director*



For those of you who have never joined LRTA or have let your membership lapse, you might ask, why should I join the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association?

There are **three important reasons to join LRTA.**

**First**, we are the only professional organization in Louisiana whose primary purpose is to **defend your retirement benefit** through the Teachers’ Retirement System of Louisiana.

**Second**, during my nearly nine years as the Executive Director of LRTA **our organization has**

**blocked or defeated over 24 bills that could have had negative effects on your retirement benefit plan.** Additionally, we have **secured two COLAs** and have **enacted a new law that will eventually provide COLAs every two to three years.**

**Third**, although we’ve won all the battles regarding retirement legislation during the last nine years, we have a *record-breaking number of new individuals* securing positions as legislators in the state of Louisiana. **That means our office and members will be spending an extraordinary amount of time educating and advocating for our current defined benefit plan.**

Your advocacy through LRTA has helped secure our current benefit plan which has grown in solvency from 54.5 % in 2010 to nearly 76% in 2023. Our benefit plan has implemented reforms that are working and provides a better benefit than Social Security.

**LRTA provides its members with resources, talking points, research and contact information to help educate a new wave of legislators that might not otherwise support our current benefit plan or COLA reform.**

*Just by paying your dues of \$30 annually, you help to pay for the advocacy tools and lobbying necessary to sustain and defend your retirement plan.*

I encourage you to join through our auto-deduct payment plan that collects through your TRSL benefit once a year on April 1. **By joining today, you will receive three months’ membership for free and increase our membership of nearly 18,000 members.**

**Please join LRTA today!**

*Rodney Watson*

Rodney R. Watson  
LRTA Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM OUR  
*LRTA President*



Rodney spoke from the organizational perspective of becoming a member of LRTA. Now, let’s look at reasons to join from a social perspective. As you know, we are seasoned individuals who may or may not regularly interact with others socially. Studies show that regular socialization offers a myriad of benefits for seasoned adults. This includes improved mental, physical, and emotional health, as well as a greater sense of belonging and purpose.

Socialization can help seniors maintain a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives.

In addition, engaging with others and contributing to the community can foster a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Emotionally, socializing allows us the chance to form and maintain meaningful relationships. Volunteering is a fantastic way for LRTA units to stay socially active while giving back to our local communities. Offering our time, talents and skills to local organizations not only benefits others, but also allows us to feel valued and appreciated for our efforts. This also puts a face on LRTA!

It is important to recognize that some of our members may face barriers in socialization. They may have difficulty with mobility, safety concerns or health issues. Able-bodied LRTA members can help by visiting and/or assisting

when possible. This could even be attained by sending texts or cards, making a phone call or getting stores to deliver to the person’s home.

For the members who can attend local, district and state meetings, fun activities incorporated into the meetings cause excitement and desire to return for future meetings. We **can** help our members maintain a vibrant and fulfilling life!

I am looking forward to having our current members bring in at least one new member this year. Auto-deduction authorization is appreciated! Please join our TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More)!

*Lazette L. Watterson*

Lazette L. Watterson  
LRTA State President

*Join or Renew Today!*

It’s membership renewal time! LRTA is the **ONLY** membership organization in Louisiana devoted solely to advocating for the needs of the retired education community. We need your support to remain strong and to maintain a unified voice representing all retirees from Louisiana’s educator community. Please consider renewing your dues or joining today!

This mailing from LRTA includes several items. Please check the chart below to ensure that you’ve received all necessary materials. All materials may be returned to LRTA in the enclosed postage paid envelope (if applicable).

Membership Class	Newsletter	Return Envelope	Membership Form
Lifetime Member	X		
Continuing Member	X		
Annual Member	X	X	X
Non-Member	X	X	X
Associate Member	X		



In 2019, the LRTA membership approved an amendment to the LRTA Bylaws stating that in the event that only one prospect for a state office is sent to the Nominating Committee, and that prospect is ultimately nominated by the Nominating Committee as allowed in Article IX, Section 8 of the LRTA Bylaws, that nominee would be declared elected by acclamation and a statewide election by ballot shall not be required. This year, nominees for the offices of LRTA President, LRTA First Vice President and LRTA Second Vice President all fell into that category and were declared elected by acclamation. Therefore, no ballot is included in this mailing.

Officers-elect declared elected by acclamation are Clyde F. Hamner, President; Genevieve A. Gordon, First Vice President; and Alva J. Martin, Second Vice President.

The Spring 2024 Newsletter will feature these incoming officers, who will be installed in April.

# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

## 2024 SPRING DISTRICT MEETINGS



The LRTA Executive Board approved the following dates for the 2024 Spring District Meetings. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for more details about the meetings, which will be published to [www.lrta.net](http://www.lrta.net).

Monday, March 4: District 9  
Tuesday, March 5: District 10  
Wednesday, March 6: District 11  
Thursday, March 7: District 8  
Monday, March 12: District 3  
Tuesday, March 13: District 2  
Wednesday, March 14: District 1  
Thursday, March 18: District 7  
Monday, March 19: District 6  
Tuesday, March 20: District 5  
Wednesday, March 21: District 4



**We can't wait to see our members in 2024!**

Pictured: Ouichita RTA new retirees welcomed at reception on October 19, 2023

**2024 State Fall Meeting:**  
Lake Charles, LA  
October 2024  
Details to come.



**RETIRED TEACHER  
DAY:**  
March 21, 2024

## LRTA Executive Board

### President

Lazette L. Watterson  
[lazettewatterson@yahoo.com](mailto:lazettewatterson@yahoo.com)

### Past President

Janis M. Hernandez  
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### First Vice-President

Clyde F. Hamner  
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### Second Vice-President

Genevieve A. Gordon  
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### District I President

Dr. Levon LeBan  
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### District II President

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### District III President

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### District IV President

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### District V President

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### District VIII President

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### District IX President

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### District X President

Becky S. Solley  
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### District XI President

Emma L. Shepard, Ed.S.  
[ladyemshep@aol.com](mailto:ladyemshep@aol.com)

### TRSL Board of Trustees:

Clyde F. Hamner  
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James A. Taylor, Sr., J.D., Ph.D.  
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### OGB Board: Vacant

AARP Louisiana  
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