

# ECHOES

Vol. LVI No. 4

The Prince George's Public School Retirees Association Newsletter

March 2022

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

Happy New Year again to all! Here's hoping that we all will have a healthy and peaceful year. We are making it through another winter. Let's look forward to what's around the corner. Hopefully, the snow and cold temperatures will be yesterday's news, replaced with Springtime. Can you believe we made it through two years of COVID? My, how time flies!

Thanks to those members and guests who participated in the January meeting. It was truly informative and enjoyable. Our guest speaker, John Sisson gave a very outstanding presentation on his many travels around the world. He encouraged us to engage in invigorating social, intellectual, and physical activities during retirement. One way to accomplish this can be through travel. He discussed many ways in which we can travel safely. He left us with the theme, "It's not always the destination, but the journey that counts." John Sisson's slides will be posted on the PGPSRA website.

Sue Finan, our Legislative Chair informed us that the opening of the 2022 General Assembly is officially underway. After the retirement of Nancy Kopp, the Maryland State Legislators elected Dereck Davis, former Delegate of the 25th Legislative District to replace her as our Maryland State Treasurer. Davis is a graduate of Prince George's County Public Schools. He has served as delegate for 27 years. We thank Sue for keeping us informed on all legislative issues that affect our organizations.

Thanks to Addie Martin, Board of Education Liaison/Trips Chair for planning the outstanding trip to the Kennedy Center for us to see the smashing hit, "Ain't Too Proud". This was a powerful story of the Temptations, the vocal group from Detroit, Michigan who released a series of successful music in the 1960s and 1970s. We all enjoyed the performance.

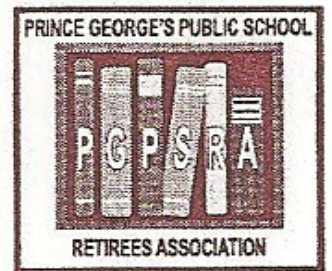
I am so proud and thankful for our PGPSRA membership. With past careers dedicated to educating and serving others, our members continue to impact our community through volunteer work, tutoring, caregiving for the elderly, babysitting grandchildren, second careers, church work, and more. Retired educators are the busiest people I know! Our members truly make a difference in our service to others.

On a somber note, I want to express my gratitude for the loyal and outstanding work of our former board member who recently passed away. MaryLouise Isbell was an active board member who served as Bylaws Chair for PGPSRA. We will be forever grateful for the inspiration and knowledge MaryLouise brought to education, our organization and to the community.

I hope to see you at the March meeting.

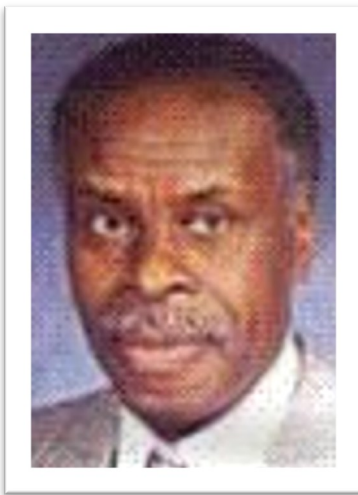
Please bring a friend.

Oretha Bridgewaters-Simms, President



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## Dotson Burns, Jr.



### Officers and Committee Chairs of PGPSRA

President: Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms  
(obridge@verizon.net)

President-Elect: William Barnes (billbarnes2011@gmail.com)

Past President/Nominating: George Denny

Recording Sec.: Gretel James (gret22@verizon.net)

Treasurer: Dr. Edward Vest (homevest552@comcast.net)

Corr. Secretary: Courtney Pringle (pringc@aol.com)

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

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

Bylaws: Vacant

Comm. Service: Courtney Pringle (pringc@aol.com)

Consumer Ed.: Norma Martof (nmartof@verizon.net)

Historian: Don Conway (donconway5@icloud.com)

Inspirations: Dan Williams (hapycmprs@mac.com)

Legislation: Sue Finan (sfinan77gmail.com)

Membership: Maryann M. Royall (maryakaroyall@aol.com)

Newsletter: Bonnie Brose (bcbrose@comcast.net)

Programs: Bonnie Brose and Norma Martof

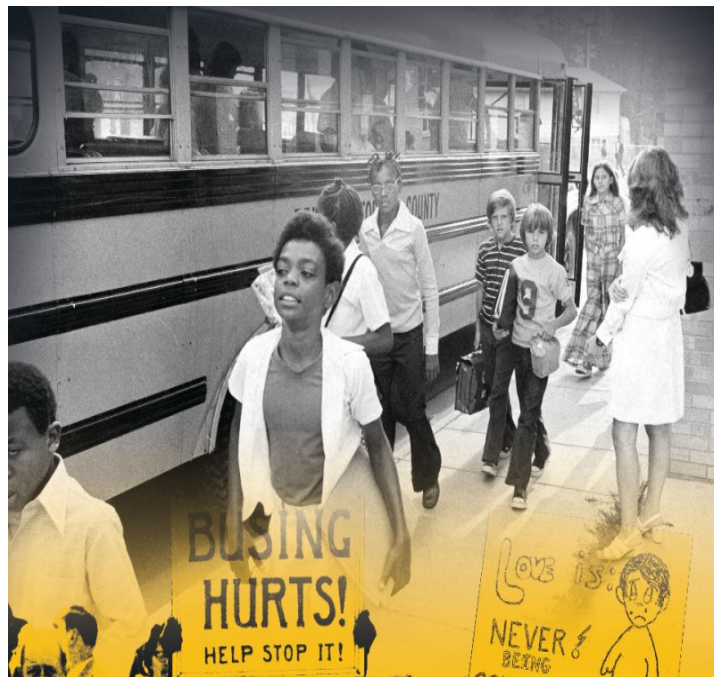
Webmaster/Parliamentarian: Dr. William Brose  
(wmbrose@comcast.net)

Recognition: Vacant

Remembrance: Jayne Johns (jaynejohns@verizon.net) and  
Linda Butler (lidab127@verizon.net)

Scholarships: Vera J. Davis (301 452 350) & Brenda Barnes

Trips: Addie Martin (amartin668@aol.com)



### Look for It!

PBS has been airing this film starring our own Dotson Burns! You will also find other Prince George's faces that you may know or recognize. One of them is our PGPSRA Corresponding Secretary and Chair of the Community Service Committee, Courtney Pringle. Another is Maryland State Delegate Susie Proctor who is also a member.

In the 1970's our schools were in the center of the busing of students that disrupted our schools in an attempt to better provide a quality education for all of the Prince George's County pupils. When Crestview's new black principal was assigned to the all white Crestview Elementary school brought the students and teachers into the center of the discussion.

This is a must-see for all of us in county. When you see Dotson and all the teachers and students who were here for these years of "trying to get it right". Be sure to thank him and his student and the film's director, Michael Streissguth, who made this film happen.

Look for it on your cable channels. Spread the word. Tell your friends.

## BITS AND PIECES

Happy **MARCH** birthday wishes to several of our Emeritus members: **Mrs. Edna Dragoo of Silver Spring will be 103 years-old on the 1<sup>st</sup>**, and **Ms. Ruby Gross of Brandywine will be celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 1<sup>st</sup>**; Ms. Mary Nicholas of Lanham will be having her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 6<sup>th</sup>; Mrs. Margaret Fleet of Brandywine will be marking her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on the 8<sup>th</sup>; Ms. Gloria Martin of Upper Marlboro will be reaching her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 9<sup>th</sup>; Mr. Daniel Chase of College Park will be turning 95 years-old on the 10<sup>th</sup>; **Ms. Carrie Reed of Suitland will be observing her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 24<sup>th</sup>**; and Mr. Carson Smith of Silver Spring will be celebrating his 97<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Happy **APRIL** birthday greetings to other Emeritus members: Ms. Eva Smith of Ft. Washington will be observing her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 1<sup>st</sup>; Ms. Lena Struglia of Salem, OR. will be having her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 2<sup>nd</sup>; Ms. Frances Herbst of Ashburn, VA. will be marking her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 7<sup>th</sup>; Ms. Mary Lou Williams of Silver Spring will be reaching her her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 10<sup>th</sup>; **Mrs. Dorothy McGinniss of Wilmington, N.C. will be 103 years-old on the 12<sup>th</sup>**; Ms. Guyneth Eigenbrode of Cheverly will be turning 92 years-old on the 17<sup>th</sup>; Ms. Catherine Brooks of Aquasco will be observing her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 19<sup>th</sup>; Ms. Jane Larson of Spring Hill, FL. will be celebrating her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 21<sup>st</sup>; Mrs. Alveta Jones of Landover will be having her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup>; and Mrs. Mary Younger of Cheltenham will be marking her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Rhonda Bennett of Bowie retired in 2019 from Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High School. Since then, she has enjoyed cooking, reading, and completing jigsaw puzzles. Rhonda is a missionary at her church and, serves on the Scholarship Committee. She and her husband, Edgar, celebrated their 26th wedding anniversary on December 29<sup>th</sup>. They have two adult sons, one who lives in North Carolina and another who lives in Georgia, and two grandchildren, a boy age fourteen and a girl age nine.

Claire K. Beth retired from Rogers Heights Elementary in 2014. Immediately afterward, she became the Director of College Park Nursery School, until 2019. Sadly, Claire's adult daughter passed away in 2018, leaving her eleven-year old son, James, whom Beth and her husband, Richard (Rick) have taken to raise. In their mid-70's, they are finding this a challenge, but also a blessing. In her free time, Claire enjoys crossword puzzles, knitting, and swimming to support her mental and physical health. Prior to Covid, Claire and her husband travelled to the British Isles with Viking Cruises. They have stayed local since 2020, but hope to continue exploring the world soon. The Beths, who live in Takonma Park, will be celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in May. They have another married daughter, who has a four year-old son. Since they live nearby, they can get together often for grandparent/grandkid fun. Beth loved teaching in the county and appreciates all of the dedicated teachers who have endured these past two years of being front-line educators.

Francoise Bidiki of Washington, D. C., retired from the school system in 2019 as a food service worker. She has since taken a new job as a care-taker for individuals in their homes. Francoise has a very interesting background, having grown up in the Republic of the Belgium Congo. After completing school (primarily conducted by the Roman Catholic Church throughout the country), she along with other graduates, was given a choice by the government to join the military or pursue a career in teaching. She chose teaching. She also raised a family of four children, and she has two grandchildren. Francoise left her family to pursue an opportunity to migrate to the United States in 1997. She has enjoyed travels back to the Republic of the Belgium Congo to visit family a few times since.

\*\*\*To contribute to BITS & PIECES, contact [JannetteWundrow@comcast.net](mailto:JannetteWundrow@comcast.net) or 301-390-7324



### TREASURER VEST IS RECOGNIZED

Dr. Vest has been highlighted in a publication from his Alma Mater, George Washington University, for his work with the university. In the 1990s, he set up a scholarship for students in honor of his parents. What does he get from this? He says that working with the students and counselling them through their schooling is what he enjoys.

When they ask what they can do to thank him, he gives them advice to Pay it Forward and to establish scholarships when they have a chance to do so one day. We can thank him when we next see him at our meetings. Meanwhile,

**Thank you, Dr. Vest from all of us here at PGPSRA!**

### TREASURER'S REPORT – JANUARY – 2022

#### OPENING BALANCES:

Checking Account	-	\$34158.93
Savings Account	-	
		126.86

#### ACTIVITY: CHECKING ACCOUNT

Receipts	-	1275.31
Expenditures	-	1017.95

#### NO ACTIVITY IN SAVINGS ACCOUNT

#### CLOSING BALANCES:

Checking Account	-	34416.29
Savings Account	-	126.86
TOTAL ASSETS	-	
		\$34543.15

Edward N. Vest

### REMEMBRANCE

Alice Myers	12/29/21
Beverly B. Shute	01/02/22
Joy L. Blair	01/05/22
Margaret j. Farrell	01/07/22
Paul H. Miller	01/07/22
James Robin Gray	01/04/22
Elizabeth BI Chaney	11/18/21
Vincent Kordack	09/06/19
Joanne Thompson	11/09/20
Mary X. Chapman	12/05/21
Gerald Howie	01/22/22

Submitted by Jayne Johns and  
Linda Butler, Co-Chairs


**Happy**  
**St. Patrick's Day**

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## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Scholarship Committee sends their heartfelt condolences to all who have lost a loved one during this period of isolation. Unfortunately, we are still very much in isolation after two years, but we will be elated when we can meet face to face again.

Good News! Our committee was able to take a small step towards returning to face-to-face meetings. In December, for the first time in two years, we were able to meet safely at Silver Diner in Glenarden. They have a new filtration system and their personal spacing was perfect for our small group.

Again, our goal is to increase the number of applicants who have a desire to be an educator. Our committee members are reaching out to each counselor in Prince Georges County public high and charter schools to find students who plan to major in education. If you have a family member or know of a high school senior who needs a scholarship, please refer them to our website. [PGCSCHOLARS.org](http://PGCSCHOLARS.org) or [PGPSRA.org](http://PGPSRA.org) for an application.

In addition to the scholarships for students we have four winners our mini-grants for Prince George's County School Staff members!

This year our winners are from James Harrison, Lake Arbor, and Woodmore Elementary schools. Benjamin Tasker Middle also had a winner. These grants of \$300.00 each are for school-based projects that are not covered by the school budgets.

We have received numerous monetary donations this year, with a special donation from one of our previous scholarship winners thanking us for his Scholarship, in the past, allowing him to attend PG Community College. Calvin Hicks, a 1996 graduate of Largo High School, donated \$1,000.00 to our scholarship fund. He wanted to "pay it forward" to assist the next generation in their educational quest. He was most appreciative for the \$1000.00 he received to start his higher education.

We also would like to extend special thank you to Jannette Wundrow and Ida Patterson for their continuous support each year.

Looking forward to hopefully meeting in the spring. Stay Safe.

Brenda Barnes  
Committee Chairperson



### Mary Louise J. Isbell

We were all saddened to lose an intrical member of our association. Marylouise served on the PGPSRA Board in several positions and could always be counted on to be responsible for completing her job. She was a friend to all and we will miss her.

## Your Driver's License is Secure

According to an article from AARP, there are a few things you may want to know:

To get a Real ID, you will need to present documents proving your age and identity.

- Social Security number and address, birth certificate or passport, social security card or tax form and two proofs of address. In Maryland, residents 65 or older are allowed to submit other documents in place of a birth certificate, including military discharge paperwork.
- If you have changed your name, you will need proof of that (usually a marriage certificate)).
- Your current driver's license is still good for driving, It cannot be used for ID
- So, you won't be able to use it to get through security and onto a plane. Some other forms of ID can be used (a passport is one). For international travel you will have to use the passport.

Now for privacy concerns:

- From the DHS website, "Real ID is a national set of standards, not a national identification card," and that each jurisdiction "maintains its own records, and controls who gets access to those records and under what circumstances."
- Your information is not imbedded in the card.

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

State Treasurer Nancy Kopp has retired, and Prince George's Delegate Dereck E. Davis was elected to become the new State Treasurer.

On January 26, 2022, several PGPSRA members attended the zoom MRSPA Legislative Workshop. Martin Noven has replaced Dean Kenderdine as the executive director of SRPS (State Retirement and Pension System). Mr. Noven spoke about the high quality of SRPS and how happy he is to be director of a quality system. Conservative investments have grown in the last year and the retirement fund is almost 70% funded.

Adam Goldberg, Senior Legislative Representative of AARP, shared how pensions are working or not working in various states and encouraged us to visit [aarp.org/about-aarp/nrta](http://aarp.org/about-aarp/nrta) for information on the benefit of pension systems. Also from AARP, Tammy Bresnahan focused on current senior legislation issues including tax relief for long term care insurance holders and improving quality and accountability in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Money from the pension fund was used for COVID relief and is now being returned to the fund. MRSPA Wanda Twigg encourages us to pay attention and be vigilant. MRSPA Virginia Crespo gave us the 2022 Legislative priorities which include pension protection, long term care tax credit, elder exploitation, concerns regarding photo ID for voting as some seniors find difficulty in access to photo ID. Also, following curriculum bills reflecting teacher diversity and separating legislature and curriculum committees. Finally, any reduction of tax paid on retirement could cause problems such as harming local money and health care for retirees.



Sue Finan, Legislative Chair

**Travelling with John Sisson** was the program for our January meeting. John presented a guide to travel for all—and especially retirees. John has travelled far and near and is glad to show us how. If you missed it, go to our website (pgpsra.org) and you will find the whole powerpoint presentation. He has graciously made it available for all of us. Even if you don't plan to travel, you will enjoy seeing all the adventures this retiree has had these last few years.



When he's not travelling, he is enjoying life at his home in Ocean City, Maryland.

Thank– you, John!



## RESERVATIONS FOR MARCH

Our **March 23, 2022** General Membership Meeting will, once again, be held virtually. Due to the continuing issues with the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to “distance” it is felt that we should be cautious and not try to meet in person, just yet.

**You must let Dr. Ed Vest know that you plan to attend!** Please email him your name and email address **no later** than March 16th. You will be added to the list of attendees and you will then receive the invitation to join the meeting that will be opened at 11 a.m. You will receive the agenda for the meeting by email.

Ed Vest .....[homevest552@comcast.net](mailto:homevest552@comcast.net)

See you on Zoom!

## PGPSRA

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**We're on the web!**  
**[www.pgpsra.org](http://www.pgpsra.org)**

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**VISIT THESE WEBSITES [www.MRSPA.org](http://www.MRSPA.org) and [www.PGPSRA.org](http://www.PGPSRA.org)**

If you have not already done so,  
send your email address to Dr. Vest

To get the latest, quickest news.