

MRTA

E-News

A NEWSPAPER FOR RETIRED EDUCATION PERSONNEL

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MRTA Proudly Welcomes Martha Schatz (Region 10) as MRTA Board President

MRTA welcomed a new board president at the September Annual Meeting. But never fear! Our new president is a long-time member and leader, dedicated to MRTA's ongoing work on behalf of the Missouri public education community and defined benefit plans for our teachers, school personnel, and education retirees.



Martha Schatz has what it takes to continue MRTA's mission to serve active and retired Missouri public school educators and staff. She is passionate about protecting Missouri public school educators, the schools where they work and their retirement systems. She understands the importance of public schools, teachers, and educational personnel in our local communities.

Martha is ready and excited to get started as president. "I have always been someone who wants to be involved," she said. "I have never been the one to sit back and let others handle things." Martha is an experienced MRTA member who joined the association upon her retirement in 2006. She has since served as her local unit president and Region 10 vice president. Her achievements while in

those positions have led to the goals she now has for the organization as a whole.

When discussing these goals, the overarching theme that emerges is a focus on the importance of good communication and having customizable training information and resources available throughout the association. MRTA leaders need to have a clear vision and mission so they can better serve our communities and Missouri's school children.

She is committed to helping improve communication and training at the local and regional levels, to help those groups be more effective. As you listen to her talk about the many tasks faced by local MRTA units, you are reminded that, as its core, MRTA is a grassroots organization comprised of education employees who are passionate about their local communities. Public school teachers, administrators, and personnel are the heart of their local communities. And because Missouri is so geographically, economically, and culturally diverse,

units across the state face a wide array of communication and economic challenges.

"Units are charged with disseminating information in local schools and communities, including information received from the MRTA executive office," she said. "It can be quite a challenge, especially in rural areas of the state where internet and cellular phone service can be spotty. We need to provide our units with information, training resources and guidelines they can tailor to their specific needs," she said. "Flexibility is key."



A Region 10 member, Martha lives in Billings, Missouri with her husband of 36 years. They have one daughter and one granddaughter.

During her work with Region 10, Martha has been involved in successfully creating a handbook for new regional vice presidents, as well as training materials for new unit committee chairs. Her hope is that similar materials can be created, adapted, and used by the various regions to help officers and committee members better under-

stand what is expected of them.

“We want a unit in the bootheel to have the same information and resources as one in St. Louis and members all around the state to understand what is going on in the Jefferson City office.”

Her focus on improving communications among the membership of MRTA includes making sure members understand the hierarchy of the local, regional, and statewide levels of the organization so members know how to get the information they need. “It’s about keeping us informed and cohesive as a group,” she said. Martha’s commitment to public education has

led to her passion for MRTA and the role it plays. “When you are a teacher, you have to have a passion for what you want to teach and do as an educator – it’s what gets you through the hard times and headaches.” In Martha, it’s clear to see her desire to help others has carried over to her work with MRTA. “When I see problems, I want to try to change things for the better.”

Martha began her yearlong presidency on September 9, 2022 and is excited to create a little magic with MRTA. We are excited to see the great things that are going to happen at MRTA in the upcoming year.

Martha is no stranger to helping with communications challenges. Her last 20 years she was a speech/language pathologist. Martha spent half her day doing itinerant service helping students with reading, writing and language skills. The other half of her days she had a developmental speech and language classroom.

“We are excited for Martha’s presidency. She has the ability to look at a problem and most importantly provide a solution. We are looking forward to her presidency and making a difference for MRTA, public schools and our active teachers.”

MRTA 2022 Annual Meeting Provides Fellowship and Inspiration **Newly Elected Board Begins Work on Behalf of Missouri Public School Educators and Staff**

Osage Beach, MO – The Missouri Retired Teachers Association (MRTA) held its 2022 Annual Meeting September 7 through 9 at Margaritaville Lake Resort. More than 260 MRTA members from around the state attended the busy three-day event, which included a stellar lineup of speakers, including author and nationally recognized speaker Dr. Brad Johnson; Governor Mike Parson; Hank Kim, Executive Director & Counsel of the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS); Bob Wilson, Executive Director of the Missouri Local Government Employees Retirement System (LAGERS); MRTA Executive Director Maria Walden; Outgoing MRTA Board President Nancy Craig; 2022 Missouri Superintendent of the Year Dr. Curtis Cain of the Rockwood School District; and corporate coach and leadership consultant Chad Carden.



The conference was packed with informational and motivational sessions, as well as working sessions for the MRTA Board of Directors and a Delegates Assembly. Outgoing Board President Nancy Craig wrapped up her term and passed the gavel to 2022-2023 Board President, Martha Schatz. Other administrative highlights of the conference included the installation of new officers and a meeting of MRTA’s newly elected board.



“It has been a busy and rewarding year,” said outgoing President Nancy Craig. “I have enjoyed every minute. One of my goals as president was to grow the MRTA membership, and I think I’ve influenced people to join at the local level, as well as at the state level. After all, it’s the membership that keeps the organization strong and makes the organization great.”

As for newly elected President Martha Schatz, she is ready for the challenges that come with her *Continued on next page.*

new role. "I have a lot of ideas, many related to helping improve communication among, and with, our members," she said. "I know it's not all going to get done in my one-year presidency, but I am ready to get started."



Above: MRTA Distinguished Retiree of the Year John Pohl, his wife Judy, and daughters Kristin and Kathleen.

During the annual awards luncheon, MRTA recognized the accomplishments of distinguished educators and former educators for their dedication to working on behalf of Missouri public schools, public school educators and students.

The 2022 Distinguished Retiree of the Year award was given to John Pohl. Mr. Pohl was chosen from the 13 MRTA Regional Distinguished Retirees by a committee of education and retiree group representatives. He continues to epitomize the MRTA vision and mission statement. He is actively involved in both MRTA Regions 8 and 14, which encompass the greater St. Louis area. John is still a member of many education organizations and has a long

history of working to improve public education in Missouri. "John is a true friend to MRTA, public education and his community. He has served in many positions in MRTA leadership, including as MRTA President," said Dr. David Baker, Region 8 Vice President. "In addition to his dedication to education and teacher retirement, he also supports his community in various civic and community organizations."



Above (l-r): Richard Phillips, Retirement Education Committee Chair; Senator Karla Eslinger, and Maria Walden, MRTA Executive Director.

This year's Legislator of the Year Award was given to Senator Karla Eslinger. Senator Eslinger is a lifelong educator with more than 30 years of experience in a variety of educational settings. She most recently served as a senior analyst for education services with the AEM Corporation and provided technical assistance to the U.S.

Department of Education in Washington, D.C. Previously, she served as an assistant commissioner of education for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. She began her career as an elementary school teacher and went on to work as a building principal and a superintendent of schools in Ava and West Plains. She is a member of MRTA. "Senator Eslinger has experienced firsthand the challenges, as well as the rewards, experienced by our public school teachers," said MRTA board member Richard Phillips. "We are fortunate to have her at the Capitol working on behalf of the Missouri public school community."



Above Special Guests (l-r): Kelly Hinshaw, Gayle Willey, Kim Cranston, Maria Walden, Commissioner Margie Vandeven, Clark Mershon, and Chris Hoene.

MRTA was honored to have several special guests in attendance at the awards luncheon including Commissioner Margie Vandeven from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Kelly Hinshaw from The Missouri Association of School Administrators, Gayle Willey from the Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education, Kim Cranston from the Missouri Association of School Business Officials, and Clark Mershon and Chris Hoehne from the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals.

"I can't express enough how much I appreciate the tremendous effort and time contributed by everyone on my team, our membership, MRTA leadership, and all of our amazing speakers and guests. They made this conference a resounding success," said MRTA Executive Director Maria Walden. "This was a record-breaking year for attendance. We appreciate you and thank you for your patience, work ethic, dedication and passion to our members and public schools. Our retired teachers have made a difference in the lives of the over 800,000 Missouri school children and continue to do so."

MRTA has successfully advocated for Missouri public school teachers and personnel since 1960. MRTA works together with other Missouri educational associations to strengthen and improve public education in Missouri, and the state's public school and education employee pension system.

MRTA 2022 Annual Meeting



Above: MRTA President Martha Schatz, Governor Mike Parson, and MRTF President Karen Miller.



Above: 2022 MRTA Distinguished Retirees - Back row (l-r): John Pohl, Region 8; Randall Hoffman, Region 7; Marilyn Parratt, Region 6; Mary Riddle, Region 5; Judy Allen, Region 3; Becky Mitchem, Region 10; Mary Oyler, Region 2; Doyle Farmer, Region 1. Front row (l-r): Vicki Zuhone, Region 13; Bernita Taylor, Region 9; Luris Sansegraw, Region 11, and Diana Henage, Region 4.



Above: 2021-2022 MRTA President Nancy Craig presents a gift and certificate to Gay Dittmore who retired from the MRTA Region 1 Vice President position.



Above: Celebrating MRTA President Nancy Craig's 80th Birthday at the Annual Meeting.



Above MRTA Presidents (L-r): Martha Schatz, 2022-2023 MRTA President; Nancy Craig, 2021-2022 MRTA President; John Pohl, 2017-2018 MRTA President; Jack Poston, 2014-2015 MRTA President; Marilyn Skipper, 2013-2014 MRTA President; and Sandy Applegate, 2016-2017 MRTA President.



Above (l-r): Paige Holtmeyer, MRTA Membership Coordinator; Maria Walden, MRTA Executive Director, Governor Mike Parson; Sarah Hoeller, MRTA Assistant Executive Director; Morgan Piening, MRTA/MRTF Administrative and Nancy Eveler, MRTA Accounting Specialist.



Above - Installation of Officers (l-r): Nancy Craig, Past President; Martha Schatz, President; Maureen Hacker, President Elect; Gale "Hap" Hairston, Vice President; and Julia Platt, Treasurer.



Above: Region 10 was the 2022 MRTA Diamond Region and had a great turnout at the Annual Meeting.

The Talent Behind the Success of MRTA

MRTA has successfully advocated for Missouri public school teachers and personnel since its inception in 1960. Now, under new leadership, the organization is giving itself an upgrade, reinventing itself with a forward-looking vision to collaborate, grow and strengthen MRTA. A key part of this is the MRTA office team. These dedicated and talented individuals are passionate about their mission and uniquely suited to take the organization into the future.

Today's Spotlight: Nancy Eveler, MRTA Accounting Specialist

The MRTA office team's newest member, Nancy Eveler, is quick to point out that she has a lot to learn about the organization. But as she discusses her new role as MRTA's Accounting Specialist, there is a spark in her eyes and sincerity in her voice that leave no doubt she is on-board and ready to go to work for Missouri public school teachers and personnel.

Her first week on the job, Nancy helped out at the 2022 MRTA Annual Meeting, where she had the opportunity to meet many MRTA members and leaders. "The conference helped me understand just how big and important what we do really is," she said. It was an opportunity to learn firsthand about what's happening in Missouri public education and public schools. "I got to speak with many of our members and hear their stories about their teaching careers and their work with MRTA. It was an amazing experience."

Her admiration for the membership is mirrored by her respect for her co-workers in the Jefferson City office. When asked for her first impression, she responded with one word, "Excellent!"

"Maria and the team here truly embrace what they do, the people they work for," Nancy said. "Individually and as a group, they are impressive in how well they work together, trust each other and how much they get done." She observed, "They really care and that's reflected in the quality and quantity of work they do. I am excited to be a part of that."

"I came in new to the association and didn't feel intimidated at all. The staff is always so helpful, sometimes even before you ask! It makes you look forward to coming to work," she said.

Nancy brings 26 years of wide-ranging professional accounting experience to MRTA, from receivables to payables to reconciliations. "We are excited to have someone with accounting experience on staff," said Maria Walden, Executive Director. "Nancy brings a unique skill set and are looking forward to her being part of the team."

Nancy and her husband, Scott moved to the Jefferson City area three years ago. Originally from New York, she then spent 10 years in North Carolina where she met her husband. When he decided to retire from the military, they moved back to Jefferson City to be near family. They have a 10-year-old daughter Sophia, and a Goldendoodle named Millie.

Nancy viewed their move to central Missouri as an opportunity to be closer to her husband's family and to continue to grow professionally. She reflected, "From the very first resume I ever made until today I have always stated my career objective as 'Looking to be a part of something great.' I'm happy to be here at MRTA, I think I've finally found my place."



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