

The AERA Voice!

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2017 AERA Annual Meeting...One of the Best!

By Janice J. Charlesworth, AERA Executive Director

When you change a meeting venue and move the date to April, you always run the risk of the meeting being a flop! Well not this year! The meeting location for the Alabama Education Retirees Association’s (AERA) Annual Meeting was changed to the Pelham Civic Complex and moved from late March to early April. All these changes contributed to a great meeting and now this venue is the designated host site for future Annual Meetings! In case you didn’t attend the meeting, here is an overview of what you missed.

AERA President Joe Ward opened the meeting. After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance led by Wayne Boswell, Butler County; Grace Wood, Clay County, did a beautiful job of singing the National Anthem a capella. Then, President Ward introduced the Business Meeting guest speaker, Representative Mac McCutcheon, Speaker of the House. Speaker McCutcheon shared that his daughter works in public education and provides insight into the daily life of a public education employee. His wife, Debbie, keeps him humble and at home she is the “Speaker of the House!” In regards to the House of Representatives, Speaker McCutcheon said he was proud of the work they did on the recent impeachment proceedings and that it was not a “witch hunt.” Once the facts were gathered, they were vetted and issues were put forward. Speaker McCutcheon later met with then Governor Bentley and asked him to consider resigning. In his words, “There was a cloud hanging over Montgomery and now a fresh new breeze is blowing and the clouds are gone.” In his

role as Speaker of the House, McCutcheon is working along with Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh. They are doing this for the good of the children and know they also need to take care of public education employees

and retirees. The question is “How do we pay for everything?” The legislative body is committed to keeping benefits affordable. Speaker McCutcheon closed by saying, “We haven’t forgotten you...the legislature is sitting at the kitchen table working to balance the checkbook.”

The Moments of Remembrance by Lynn LaFoy, Tuscaloosa, came next. During this time, a tribute was given to members who had passed away since last year. “These members made many contributions and have enriched our lives,” stated Mrs. LaFoy. “It is bitter sweet.” She closed by saying, “Let’s all rejoice for those who touched our lives!”

President Ward introduced the board of directors he has proudly worked with for the last two years and thanked them for their service. He also thanked Shelby County retirees who assisted with registration. They did a great job!

AERA Executive Director Janice Charlesworth presented the Unit of Excellence Awards with assistance from the area coordinators. (See article on page 7.) The Community Service winners followed and were announced by Mrs. Charlesworth. (See article on pages 8 & 9.)

Attendees welcomed AEA Executive Director Dr. Brenda Pike to the podium to provide an update from the Alabama Education Association (AEA). She stated that she was envious of all those sitting in the audience

(See Annual Meeting, page 6)



The new Speaker of the House, Mac McCutcheon, addresses retirees at the 2017 AERA Annual Meeting in Pelham on April 11.

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