

The AERA Voice!

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THE 2018 AERA ANNUAL MEETING WAS INFORMATIVE AND EXCITING!

By JILL JACKSON, AERA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We had a wonderful Annual Meeting at Pelham Civic Complex this past May 8, 2018. The location was well suited for our record-breaking attendance with over 700 members! The meeting began with the pledge and invocation given by *Ken Megginson, president of Mobile Retired Educators Association* followed by the National Anthem, which was beautifully sung a capella by *Joe Thomas of Selma/Dallas County Education Retirees Association*. Next, *President Teresa Noell* introduced AERA’s guest speaker for the Business Session--*Dr. David Bronner, CEO of the Retirement Systems of Alabama*. Dr. Bronner stressed to members that they needed to be active in the Primary Elections and elect legislators who were public education friendly. In Dr. Bronner’s words, “we need to help, be patient, be vocal, and be involved” in the affairs of the State of Alabama. He noted that the Retirement Systems of Alabama was healthy and that we were fortunate to have affordable health care still available to our retirees. He stated that, “In Oklahoma, a teacher with 26 years of service



Above, over 700 AERA members attend the 2018 Annual Meeting at the Pelham Civic Complex in Pelham on May 8, 2018.

makes \$1,803 per month before taxes, but [she] and her husband’s health insurance premium costs them \$1,447 per month. This leaves the Oklahoma retired teacher only \$155.00 a month.” He noted that we need more sources of revenue in Alabama and that there was currently a financial strain stemming from prison budgets and the state mental health crisis. Dr. Bronner was well received by our members and we thanked him for being the guest speaker.

The Moments of Remembrance was presented by *Sharon Snell Cole of Dothan/Houston County Education Retirees Association*. Afterwards, President Noell introduced our Board of Directors and thanked them for their exceptional service to AERA. *Shelby County Education Retirees* were also given warm thanks for their extensive efforts in managing the registration of attendees. President Noell personally thanked all local unit presidents in attendance acknowledging their hard work in laying the foundation of our state association efforts. A round of applause was also given to our state committee members for their hard work and volunteer service. In addition, President Noell

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