

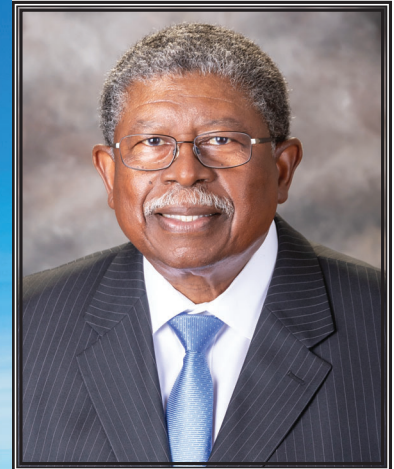
The AERA Voice!

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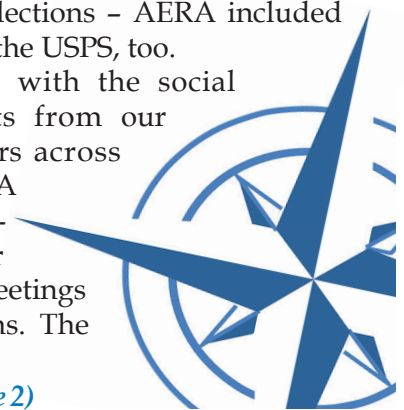


What a spring and summer! When is the last time you can remember that we have had to deal with so many life altering issues at one time? Since March 13, 2020, we have been forced to redirect our lives. *Governor Kay Ivey* issued a social distancing directive, followed by encouragement to stay at home, if possible, and to wear a face mask out in public. These strategies were and still are intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19. To adhere to these directives, we have learned to communicate differently and rely on technology more than ever. Who would have thought that in-person communication would be replaced by virtual communication? Not since the old days of “party telephones lines,” some of you might recall those days, have we had to be concerned about someone targeting our calls as we experienced with some conference calls and ZOOM meetings. The pandemic itself posed the following problems: a shortage of beds and other medical essentials in our hospitals, death without the opportunity to properly say good-bye to loved ones, closing of recreational and religious facilities, a shattered economy and unemployment that mirrored the Great Depression. Now, at the beginning of fall, we are faced with the challenge of educating school

and college students in – what many believe to be -- unsafe environments. Insurance and other benefits have been adversely impacted by these issues. Alabama education retirees, however, are fortunate in that we are dealing with these crucial issues without fear of our benefits being lost or reduced.

Even with email and other forms of social communication, Americans are still dependent on the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Due to the pandemic, many retirees are shopping online. The merchants, however, depend on the Postal Service to deliver their orders, many of which include, medication, bills, exercise equipment, greetings of joy and entertainment. In some instances, our national and state elections – AERA included -- are dependent on the USPS, too.

As we complied with the social distancing requests from our governor and mayors across the state, AERA postponed or cancelled its regular scheduled spring meetings and training sessions. The



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