



January 2023

THE WATCHDOG REPORT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF MISSOURI RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AND PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL



MRTA is your pension watchdog!

Message from MRTA President Martha Schatz

Welcome to 2023! MRTA has been working on making 2023 our best year yet and I am so excited to be part of making the magic happen! We just finished a strategic planning process and have started the plans of rolling out the information and strategies. We will be presenting all of the new information at our 2023 Unit President Summit on March 14th & 15th.

I am looking forward to my first statewide meeting as MRTA President, the Unit President Summit. As I said above, the dates are March 14th & 15th and we will meet at Stoney Creek Hotel in Columbia, MO again this year. This event will truly be a magical and inspiring opportunity for members to learn and reconnect. We are working on the agenda and are excited to open this year's meeting up to any MRTA members who would like to attend! More information will be coming to you soon!

One of this month's featured "Inspiring Minds" is Marlin Kinman, the Unit President Summit will include the annual announcement of how many volunteer hours and hunger relief items and dollars our members donated to the state of Missouri last year. Last year the amount was a value of over \$19 million!

Lastly, I want to remind you Missouri Legislative Session started on January 4th and will end on May 12th at 6 p.m.. Please start watching your emails for Call to Actions, sign up for MRTA Phone2Action by texting MRTA to 52886, and plan to participate in MRTA Capitol Blitz Day or Legislative Day which will both be held on February 14th. More information on both these events will be emailed to you soon and on the website. *Please join me in making a little magic for MRTA!*

Martha

Inspiring Minds You Want to Know

MRTA Board Members Share Insights, Future Plans and Inspiration for All

MRTA is indebted to the 26 members of our board. Our elected officers, committee chairpersons, and regional vice presidents provide steady, reliable leadership for MRTA at all levels and in all parts of the state. Their service helps ensure we can successfully meet our goals to promote the professional, social, and economic welfare of all retired school employees, protect pensions for our public school teachers and educational staff, and support Missouri public schools.

This month, let's get to know two of our inspiring and influential leaders: Marlin Kinman, Community Service Committee Chair and Idella Warden, Membership Committee Chair.

Whistling His Way to Work

Marlin Kinman, Community Service Chair



While MRTA's mission is to advocate for Missouri public schools, educators and retirees, the positive impact made by MRTA and its members goes beyond that to include helping all Missourians in need.

Local community service is an integral part of the work done by MRTA. The Community Service Committee coordinates local Unit efforts to make a difference. Led by Marlin Kinman, the state Community Service Committee encourages MRTA members to engage in public service in their local communities. And they do – in a very impressive way.

The MRTA Show Me Hunger initiative includes collecting and donating food items, household necessities and money for community food banks. Members also collect beverage can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House and food labels for local schools. In 2021 alone, MRTA's 14 regions volunteered almost 700,000 hours, donated more than 51,000 food items, and collected more than \$950,000 in cash donations to help local community food banks.

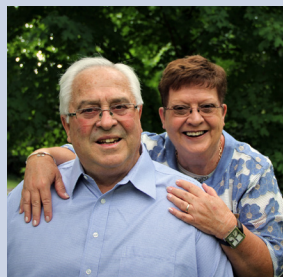
As the man responsible for this effort on a statewide level, Marlin Kinman is a perfect fit.

"We serve, that is our purpose," he said when asked about his thoughts on this immense and important

undertaking. "The people in MRTA who are taking part in our community service outreach are accomplishing so much more than they sometimes realize."

His work with MRTA began shortly after his retirement. A lifetime member of MSTA during his education career, Marlin joined MRTA as a way to be able to continue to serve the education community. Upon attending two state meetings, he was asked by the then-community service chair to take over the position.

In addition to his work as state Community Service Chair, Marlin also is Community Service Chair of his local Unit, Maryville, in Region 1, and he serves on the board of the Missouri Retired Teachers Foundation (MRTF).



Yet Marlin still finds time to serve his community in other ways. "I have a strong support network at home that helps me have the time to do this type of service," he said.

He and his wife, Trudy, herself a retired educator, are active in the Optimist Club of Maryville. Marlin also works on behalf of the Group Home Association of Nodaway County and is on the board of the Nodaway County Health Department. He is a musician and is actively involved at Nodaway Church.

Marlin and Trudy live near Maryville on the farm where he was raised. They have two grown sons and two beautiful granddaughters. When asked about

his daily routine, he cites farm chores, his work, and his coffee as motivators.

Marlin holds a bachelor’s degree in music education from Central Methodist University and a master’s degree from Northwest Missouri State. He attended high school at Northeast Nodaway County R-V.

He began his teaching career at South Nodaway County R-IV and retired in 2003 from Northeast Nodaway County R-V, his alma mater, after a 30-year career first as a music teacher and later as a high school principal. Marlin’s desire to work in public education stemmed from a love of school that started when he was still a student. His favorite parts of being an educator were the students and being able to successfully help with changes in education. “I loved school as a student,” he said. “I wanted more.” Music remained a big part of his love of public education. “Even as a principal I never lost touch with the music,” he said. “My office was near the music room and when they asked for help, I always was there.”

It comes as no surprise, then, that a having a happy tune plays a role in Marlin’s philosophy on finding everyday satisfaction. In a classic twist on the advice we got as children from the seven dwarves, Marlin advises without hesitation, “Whistle your way to work. Love your job. If you can’t whistle on the way to work each day, you need to get another job. Don’t make yourself miserable.”

This practical approach clearly works for Marlin, who, after a full career of service as an educator and school administrator, has worked full time for Price Funeral Home in Maryville for the last 19 years in a successful second career, with no sign of slowing down. “I’m still going!” he said with a smile.

He takes inspiration from his family, his co-

workers, and even the people he meets every day. “I like to meet people and share ideas. You don’t have to always agree, but just having the conversations helps you grow.”

“Marlin is just so personable, he is a joy to be around,” said Maria Walden, MRTA Executive Director. “His positivity and matter-of-fact way of organizing and getting things done are incredibly valuable to our organization especially in his role as chair of Community Service Committee. But I think it’s his commitment to serving others that makes him so remarkable. His desire to help is inspiring.”

When asked what advice he might offer a new retiree considering joining MRTA, Marlin replied, “There is no pressure when you join, but serving our fellow educators and doing community service are important. As a retired person, and a member of MRTA, you can make a great impact for both.”

As for his future with MRTA, he says, “I am still growing.” And while his full-time job and other responsibilities may keep him from taking on more, he has no plans to stop serving. “The people at MRTA – the members, those in leadership roles and the folks in the office are all wonderful,” he said. “I can’t say enough good things about them.”



Marlin and Trudy with their family Miles & Erin Kinman, Stuart, Iowa and Monty & Breanna Kinman & their girls, Addi and Taylor, Savannah, MO.



Show them the love!

Give the gift of an MRTA membership for Valentine's Day!



SCAN ME

Growing MRTA Membership, One Member at a Time

Idella Warden, Membership Chair

As a retired Missouri public school teacher, Idella Warden understands the value that MRTA provides for retirees like herself. And as Membership Committee Chair, she has made it her job to spread the word. She leads the effort to help others like her understand how the work done by MRTA and its members make a positive difference for Missouri public school educators and staff, both working and retired.

Idella's leadership journey with MRTA began when she became vice president of her local MRTA chapter in Springfield, in region 10 as a member of Christian County Retired School Personnel. She readily admits that she only took the position because no one else wanted the job. Her outlook quickly changed, however, as she got into the role. "Once I became involved, I realized what a vital organization MRTA is to retired educators."



Idella, who lives in Springfield, retired from the Ozark, Missouri school district in 2010 after a 30-year career in public education, serving at both the Springfield and Ozark school districts. When asked what gets her going in the morning, she replied with a smile, "my dog!" – a response any pet owner will quickly relate to. But, given her work teaching and with MRTA, we suspect Idella has a lot of her own get-up-and-go, too.

She began teaching at a very

young age. "My favorite part of teaching was interacting with the students," Idella recalled. "Some proved a challenge to love, but the majority were clever, compassionate, witty, and delightful." She added, "I was never bored, and I hope my students never were, either."

Her love of teaching was a family affair. Both of Idella's parents, two of her uncles and one of her aunts were all public school

teachers. She witnessed their dedication to the craft, and its importance was not lost on her. "They loved their jobs, their colleagues and their students," she said. "My mother is my inspiration," she continued. "She was born into an incredibly poor fam-

ily, but she and her parents were determined that she get an education. She taught in a one-room school and attended college during the summers. After I was born, she became a full-time homemaker until she finally graduated with her degree the same year I graduated from eighth grade. Teaching was her calling, and despite terrific obstacles, she was able to complete her education and follow her

chosen career."

At first, Idella had career plans outside the field of education. "I initially wanted to be writer for a magazine or newspaper but decided that job opportunities to teach young people were more plentiful."

Her pragmatic career decision turned out to be the right one.



For Idella, working with MRTA is also a somewhat practical decision. "I got involved with MRTA at the invitation of a dear retired colleague," she said. "I have stayed involved because as a widow, my pension is my livelihood."

Idella is aware of the important role played by MRTA to protect Missouri public school teachers' strong and



healthy pension plan. "I am most grateful for the financial security I have as a retired Missouri teacher. I see so many retired friends who constantly feel the pinch of a pension which does not

adequately provide for their living expenses."

The work done by MRTA has a tremendous positive impact state-

wide. But for Idella, her work with the organization has also benefited her on a personal level. "Perhaps the biggest impact MRTA has had on my life is meeting so many retired educators who are passionate about public education and public school teachers, both current and retired," she said. "I never cease to be impressed with the hard-working members of MRTA."



zation," she said.

She's keen on work currently underway to develop a long-term strategic plan for MRTA and how it will impact recruitment efforts. Under the leadership of Executive Director Maria Walden, this plan is designed to help the organization work more effectively toward their goals.

"I am excited about our strategic plan for the future!" said Idella. "I cannot wait to see how this will increase membership and give MRTA a bigger voice in legislative policy involving public education."

"We love Idella's enthusiasm and positive attitude," said Maria. "She is a wonderful representative for us in the role of Membership Committee Chair, and we appreciate all she does to help us get the word out and grow our organization. Her passion and work make us stronger and has a direct impact on our success of our Association."

When asked what advice she would offer current educators, Idella's response is not surprisingly practical in nature, but also especially pertinent today, when teachers and public schools face so many challenges. She states simply, "Be patient. One thing I learned as an educator is that nothing is certain except change."

Idella's role as local, regional, and state Membership Chair keeps her busy with recruitment activities. "I am constantly looking for ways to motivate current members and bring new members to our organi-

Looking Toward 2023 Legislative Session



As the Missouri General Assembly prepares to start the 2023 legislative session on January 4th, lawmakers have filed ##### bills.

The wide array of legislation filed so far covers everything from education to elections and pensions. Many of the bills already introduced this year contain the same language and issues as in past years.

On November 9th, the MRTA Board of Directors approved the [2023 MRTA Legislative Platform](#) which the MRTA Legislative Committee worked on earlier this fall. The 2023 Legislative Platform includes advocacy for pensions and we have added actively supporting public schools.

LEGISLATIVE DAY

MRTA invites our members to attend MRTA Legislative Day on February 14, 2023. For those members that cannot attend in person, we will hold Legislative Blitz Day on February 14th as well. On Legislative Blitz Day we ask members to write, call, or email their legislators. It also includes videos from guest speakers on the importance of staying involved and current legislative issues.

STAY CONNECTED

Please sign up for MRTA [Phone2Action by clicking here](#) or by texting MRTA to 52886 to stay up to date with legislative activity and MRTA Call to Actions. The 2023 legislative Session concludes on May 12th at 6:00 p.m.

Message from MRTA Executive Director Maria Walden

Another year is in the books and thanks to all our membership and leadership for their continued support, MRTA will be marking its 63rd year working on behalf of public education and our retired teachers and school personnel.

The year 2022 has flown by. It was a year of recovery and back to normal for our association and members, a busy year for everyone including the association as we came out of isolation and activity levels in our regions and units returned to normal pre-2020 levels. I hope you celebrated the start of 2023 safely and in good spirits with family and friends.

The Board of MRTA and staff cordially thank all our members, staff, and business relationships, hoping that next year we have many successes and achievements. All of us are so grateful to our membership for their trust and support. Our best wishes to each one of you. Happy New Year.

On this New Year, may this year be abundant with much happiness and may your efforts be rewarding for you and your loved ones. We hope that you have a happy new year ahead.

MRTA has achieved some noteworthy objectives for 2022.

- MRTA updated our internet cyber security at the Association to provide the best protection for our memberships' information.
- MRTA had a very productive and successful legislation session.
- Second year in a row that the retirees of PSRS/PEERs received a 5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for 2023.
- With our partnership with MRTA Foundation, we were able to reach out and provide \$500 grants to over 126 active school teachers and 20 public school personnel to enhance the learning experience for children attending public schools.
- MRTA volunteered over 690,000 hours to local schools and communities with a value of over \$19 million dollars.
- With the assistance of our business sponsors and members, MRTA hosted our first ever golf tournament to raise funds for our advocacy efforts for public education and public pensions.
- MRTA had our first ever independent audit to ensure the financial integrity of the Association and Foundation.
- MRTA Board and staff went through an intensive strategic planning process with input from our membership (will be finalized in March) to ensure that MRTA's members had a voice in the future direction of MRTA. Our goal was and continues to be to continue our strong advocacy for public education pension systems and expand our mission to include improving the overall perception of public education in the state of Missouri.

I wish you all the success and prosperity in the coming new year. I pray this coming year brings to you all that you wish for your family and friends. Lots of joy and bundles of good cheer to you all.

We would not have achieved this great success without you. Wish you and your family a very Happy New Year.





MRTF President’s Message

By Karen Miller

JUST THE FACTS!

In 2023, Missouri Retired Teachers Association Foundation is awarding:

- Two – that’s TWO – PEERS/Maggie Elder grants in each of MRTA’s 14 regions. That’s 28 total, up from the 20 we were able to award last year. Nine – that’s NINE – Classroom grants in each of MRTA’s 14 regions.
- Eleven – that’s ELEVEN – MRTF grants in each of MRTA’s 14 regions.
- One hundred & fifty-four – that’s ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY-FOUR - \$500 MRTF grants statewide.
- Seventy-seven thousand dollars – that’s SEVENTY-SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS – worth of MRTF grants.

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!! And there are multiple ways you can help RIGHT NOW!

\$10,000 RAFFLE - Raffle tickets are available now! This year we are trying to maximize the number of grants we can provide to our active teachers – we are having you print your own tickets (they are on the website, mortf.com) or [click here](#). If you still want paper copies, call the office at 877-366-6782 and Morgan will fill out tickets for you. They are \$10 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$50.



Help us help Missouri Public School employees help Missouri’s kids succeed.

Your donations mean so much to students and teachers across the state. Thank you!

Raffle tickets are a great gift idea!!

<p>MISSOURI RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION</p>  <p>RAFFLE TICKET</p> <p>\$10,000 IN PRIZES</p> <p>Tickets: \$10 each or 6 for \$50</p> <p>A live drawing will be held on April 14, 2023.</p> <p><i>All proceeds benefit the MRTF Classroom Grant Fund.</i> Please make checks payable to MRTF. MRTF 3030 DuPont Circle, Jefferson City, MO 65109</p> <p>MUST BE 18 TO PARTICIPATE. NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.</p> <p><small>MRTF \$10,000 Raffle prize winners are only eligible for one raffle prize per person with the exclusion of any Allowing Wednesday prizes.</small></p>	<p>MRTF Raffle Ticket \$10 ea. or 6-\$50</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>Please return by April 3, 2023</p> <p>Make checks payable to MRTF 3030 DuPont Cir. Jefferson City, MO 65109</p>
---	---

Missouri Retired Teachers Association

The ABC's of MRTA



MRTA is the best insurance to protect your largest asset!

Missouri Retired Teachers Association and Public School Personnel Membership Form

- Annual MRTA Membership.....**\$44/1 Year** OR **\$117/3 Years**
or join via auto renewal at MRTA.org for \$39/year
- Associate Membership.....\$25
(Anyone who is not currently drawing a public school retirement benefit.)
- New Membership
- Retired Teachers/Administrators
- Renewal of Membership
- Retired Support Staff
- I AM INTERESTED IN AUTOMATIC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES RENEWAL**
(Association dues are not tax deductible) Save \$5 a year

Name _____ Birth Date _____

Street, City, State, Zip _____

Email Address _____ Phone (____) _____

School District Retired From _____ Local MRTA Unit (if known) _____

Make check payable to: MRTA
3030 DuPont Circle
Jefferson City, MO 65109

Pay by Credit/Debit Card: Visa MasterCard Discover

Card Number _____

Name on Card _____ Exp. Date _____

You may join MRTA securely online at www.mrta.org or call the office at 1-877-366-6782