

- STRS Update from Executive Director
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## CONGRATULATIONS, CHAPTERS!!!

### ***ORTA Announces Local Chapter Incentive Awards for 2018:***

As many will recall, ORTA offered an incentive program for local chapters that increased their membership to ORTA by 10%. Three local chapters were able to grow their membership to ORTA by **10%**. Congratulations to:

**Allen County Retired Teachers**  
**Clinton County Retired Teachers**  
**Holmes Co. Retired Teachers**

Each of these local chapters will receive \$100 from ORTA.

Five other local chapters of ORTA also saw significant growth and are to be congratulated for their efforts:

**Jefferson County Retired Teachers**  
**Lake County Retired Teachers**  
**Lorain County Retired Teachers**  
**Ottawa County Retired Teachers**  
**Tuscarawas County Retired Teachers**

The incentive program remains in place for 2019. ORTA encourages all local chapters of ORTA to spread the word about the work ORTA does on behalf of STRS retirees across the state. If your local chapter is interested in a membership drive, please contact Robin Rayfield at the ORTA office for assistance. Recently, ORTA has developed the capability to provide contact information of STRS retirees in each county in Ohio. Additionally, we have developed a list of 'new retirees' for each county. Give the office a call and we will send you the list of people that retired during 2019.

# FROM OUR PRESIDENT



2018-2019 ORTA President,  
Bee Lehner

May Greetings, ORTA Members!

Earlier this week on Monday, May 20th, **Northeast Regional** liaisons, **Carol Kinsey, Kendra Burger**, and newly appointed liaison, Susan Harris, and chapter presidents of ORTA's Northeast Region, gathered at the First Christian Church of Alliance for a meeting to hear important information on legislation, as well as to share concerns and accomplishments in their own chapters.

To open the meeting, **State Senator Kirk Schurring**, Republican from Canton, Ohio, and Chairman of the Ohio Retirement Study Council, shared the background of the "COLA path" and the positive direction it may be taking us in the next few years.

Then, **Sudi Nararine, Regional Vice President for AMBA**, spoke about the "Lunch & Learn Seminars," which AMBA is holding in each county, informing retired teachers about the "holes in Medicare" and the

benefits AMBA is offering our retirees. These seminars are open to ORTA members and non-members! **PRESIDENTS:** You should be hearing from your AMBA representatives about this offering. Coshocton County held its seminar the end of April and gained several new members – it's a great opportunity for **YOU** to gain members too!

During the "Chapter Chat," chapter officers focused on increasing membership in their chapters. Several chapter leaders stated that the "pre-retirement planning program" they offered to new retirees last summer, was very beneficial. It was suggested that ORTA chapters need to get the "ORTA name and mission" out to the teachers several years **BEFORE** they consider retiring. ORTA Director, Dr. Robin Rayfield, noted that fewer teachers are retiring because of changes made by STRS concerning age and length of career! He also stated that if chapter membership can "stay steady" with "losses equaling gains" in membership, then those chapters should be recognized for their efforts.

The Northeast Regional meeting ended with a delicious lunch catered by the church members. Hats off to Carol and Kendra for planning and facilitating this beneficial meeting! Out of 20 chapters, they had 16 chapters being represented - that was **WONDERFUL!** **THANK YOU**, to those chapter representatives for attending!

As we approach the end of our "2018-2019 ORTA year," remember, it's all about choices. I hope as a chapter, you have made **good** choices in leadership, **good** choices in programs, and **good** choices in venues this year - all these areas give you choices! Think outside the box!! Chat again in June!

Thought for the Day: ***"True leaders always practice the three R's: Respect for self, Respect for others, Responsibility for all their actions!"- Anonymous***

Yours truly,

Bee Lehner, ORTA President

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA  
Executive Director

Greetings ORTA Members!

## ***STRS Update***

The discussion by STRS Board of Trustees on STRS' policy of achieving a 100% funding level is encouraging. At each of the last three meetings of the STRS Board of Trustees this policy has been debated with a few of the Board of Trustees asking questions about the possibility of offering retiree benefit increases prior to the system reaching a level of 100% funding. As a reminder STRS calculates the funding level by determining the 'assets' and the 'liabilities' and comparing these two figures. One might ask 'What makes up the assets'? and "what makes up the liabilities"? Assets are calculated by adding the amount of money that STRS has as of the close of any fiscal year. The STRS fiscal year ends in June each year. This is a known and concrete number.

Liabilities are more difficult to calculate and requires the assistance of an actuary hired by STRS. The actuary determines how much money is needed to 'pay off' all people vested in the system. This includes retirees and active contributors to the system. Of course, the liability of retirees is calculated by determining what each retiree will collect during his/her retirement to an age that is determined by the actuary. This is an estimated number as we don't know how long a retiree will collect his/her pension benefit. The actuary estimates the life expectancy of retirees and provides this number. For active contributors the actuary estimates the liability that each individual adds to the total based upon what they have contributed and what their individual benefit will cost at the end of any fiscal year.

By comparing the assets to the liabilities STRS is able to determine a 'funding ratio'. Our current funding status is about 77%. In other words, STRS has 77% of the required assets to pay off what the pension system owes. A review of this 'funding ratio' shows that our level of funding is typical to prior years; as far back as the 1960s. The current question the STRS Board of Trustees is wrestling with is whether or not benefit increases (COLA) are prudent. Historically, STRS has paid COLA increases despite never being 100% funded. Since the defined benefit program came into existence in the 1940s STRS has offered increases to retiree benefits. It is only since the economic downturn that took place in 2008/2009 that retiree benefit increases were reconsidered. The question ORTA members ask is 'Since STRS is at or above the level it has always been at, why are COLA benefits suspended?' Common sense would indicate that if STRS could pay COLA benefits when the funding level was at 66% or 70%, they can pay these benefits now.

The answer, according to people at STRS includes at least two components:

- 1.** The assumed rate of return on our investments is lower than previous years. STRS investment folks tell me that getting an 8% return year ago was rather common and involved much less risk. In today's investment market the investor must be willing to risk more to make the returns that were easily achieved only a decade ago. STRS informs me that 'much was learned' with the great recession. As a result, STRS has attempted to achieve a reasonable rate of return while reducing risk.
- 2.** Our pension system is becoming more mature. This means that we have more retirees and fewer active contributors than in previous years. A more mature system means that the long-term safeguards must be strengthened.

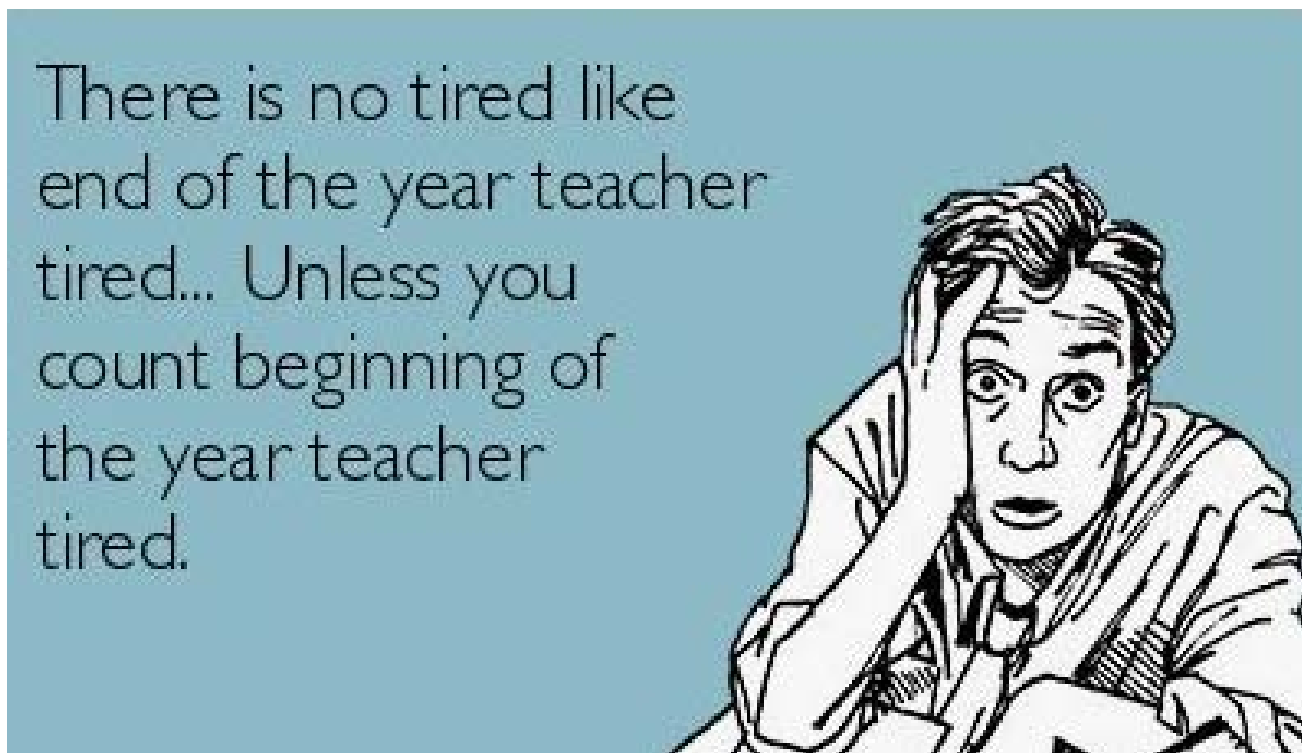
*(con'd from last page)*

ORTA is encouraging STRS to continue to review its newly adopted policy of achieving 100% funding prior to benefit enhancements. ORTA is confident that a middle ground of making progress on the goal of 100% funding while offering benefit enhancements is possible.

Best Regards,  
Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA Executive Director

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## **REMEMBER THIS FEELING AT THE END (AND BEGINNING) OF THE SCHOOL YEAR?**



# NEWS FROM NOBLE CO.

The **Noble County chapter of Retired Teachers** held their regular meeting on April 11, 2019, at Patty's Place.

One main focus of our April meeting is to recognize **PAWS Inc., Humane Society of Noble County**.

Tables were decorated with a pet theme and the centerpiece was a "doggie" flower arrangement made by Archer's Flowers and Gifts.



Above: Don and Delores Ullmann

As members brought in their annual donations for PAWS, they became eligible to win this flower arrangement in a drawing. Monetary donations were collected as well as food for dogs and cats. A 50/50 drawing was held with half the proceeds also being donated to PAWS. Linda Buckey, a member of the April program committee presented a brief update of PAWS recent activities. Information shared indicated what all is being done in our community to help animals in need.

Members enjoyed a delicious lunch followed by our regular business meeting including committee reports.

**Francene Ogden** was the winner of the 50/50 drawing. Francene generously donated her half of the winnings back with all the proceeds of the drawing going to PAWS.

**Don and Deloris Ullmann** (pictured) were the winners of the flower arrangement. Don is currently the president of our local chapter and is one of the Southeast Region Liaisons representing ORTA. He is also a past president of ORTA. Deloris is a past president of our local chapter and is the past webmaster of ORTA, instrumental in helping many chapters create their websites.

To learn more about the Noble Co. Chapter, please visit their [website](#).



# PAST NEWS, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

*We originally missed publishing this when it was originally sent in to us, back in 2018. We honor this chapter by bringing it to the attention of ORTA and Muskingum Co. Members.*

**Tina Wickline** presented the **Muskingum County Retired Teachers Association's Scholarship Awards** to two \$500 scholarship checks each. **Payton Dearth** who graduated from Philo High School and is attending OUZ majoring in middle childhood education will do his student teaching at Philo Junior High, and will also coach football. **Cole Pennington** graduated from Zanesville High School and is attending Harding College, majoring in music education, aspiring to be a band director. To learn more about the Muskingum Co. chapter, please visit their chapter [website](#).



Cole Pennington, attending Harding College



Payton Dearth, attending Ohio University Zanesville



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# THE LATEST IN LOGAN CO.



Margaret and Joyce share photos of the Opera House and its progress over the years

The **Logan Co.** chapter of **Ohio Retired Teachers Association** met in April for their first meeting of the year.

The program was presented by **Joyce Woodruff** and **Margaret Piatt**, who shared interesting information on the current projects of the West Liberty Historical Society. Joyce discussed the three phases the group is working through on the Opera House Community Center in West Liberty. Joyce informed the group that most of the exterior work on the building has been completed. Also, most of the interior of the first floor has been completed. They are now anxiously awaiting for the new elevator to be installed so the Opera House will be handicap compliant. If the goal is met, by the end of 2019 the Opera House will be usable, but not entirely finished.



Pat Holt, treasure, signs in member Carol Hartly for the luncheon



Joyce and Margaret take questions on the Opera House project

Margaret Piatt discussed the building that is located near the Opera House which is the Bailey House, that will house a history center. All content in the history center will reflect West Liberty and surrounding townships while also relaying information in broader themes within American History. Joyce and Margaret did an excellent job of presenting the projects and invited all the members to become involved with Historical Society, if interested.

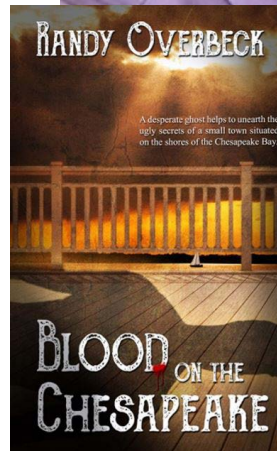
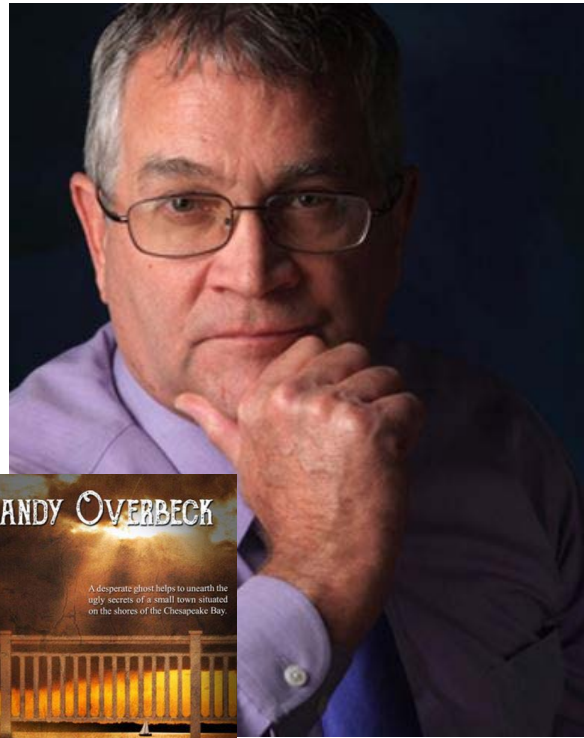
President Emerson Brown led the business meeting after the presentation which included information about upcoming programs and entertainment for the year. The next Logan Co. meeting will be held on June 13, at 6:00 p.m. at the Masonic Center in Bellfontaine.

To learn more about the Logan Co. chapter, please visit their [Facebook](#) page.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

One of our own, **Dr. Randy Overbeck**, has written a new novel, which was released this spring by the Wild Rose Press. Dr. Overbeck is the longest serving member of the ORTA State Board and Executive Committee, completing his role as Past President this July. Not one to let any grass grow under his feet, Randy completed his latest novel, a ghost story/mystery entitled ***Blood on the Chesapeake***. The novel has been out less than a month and has already earned rave reviews. *"Timely and original...genuinely entertaining."*—**Hank Phillippi Ryan**, award winning author of *Trust Me*. *"Overbeck has an uncanny way with words...well plotted and skillfully written."*—**ReadersFavorite.com**. *"Kept me turning pages right up to the totally surprising conclusion."*—**KLM News and Review**. *"A spooky, atmospheric mystery."*—**James Benn**, author of the *"Billy Boyle"* historical mystery. ***Blood on the Chesapeake*** is available in print or e-book at all the usual book-sellers, **Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, Kindle or Apple Books**.



Above: Dr. Randy Overbeck; Left: Dr Overbeck's latest book, "Blood on the Chesapeake"

In conjunction with the release of his new ghost story/mystery, ***Blood on the Chesapeake***, Dr. Overbeck is offering ORTA chapters an interesting and thought-provoking presentation entitled, **"Things that Go Bump in the Night."** This program pulls back the veil on common beliefs and misconceptions about "the spirit world" and even features some controversial photos and video of ghost sightings. It is sure to intrigue your members and they will be able to pick up an autographed copy of his new novel.

Dr. Overbeck's programs are always popular and more than a dozen chapters and clubs have already booked dates for **"Things that Go Bump in the Night."** He is reserving dates for ORTA chapters in 2019 and 2020. If you're looking for an interesting program that will leave your members talking contact him at [randyoverbeck@authorrandyoverbeck.com](mailto:randyoverbeck@authorrandyoverbeck.com), or **513-633-2838**.



Above: Dr. Randy Overbeck signs copies of his latest book in the Chesapeake Bay area, Maryland



# PICKAWAY CO. UPDATE

The **Pickaway Co.** Chapter of ORTA tried to not spread germs but to spread the word PCRTA recently placed in all 19 local school buildings a “**Pre-Retirement**” packet of ORTA and PCRTA information attached to a box of tissues.

For their April Field Trip, members enjoyed a tour of Adena Mansion and Gardens with lunch at the Paper City Coffeehouse. At the May Meeting, our speaker was PCRTA member **Joanna Liggett** who shared many unusual events that occurred in the history of the Circleville Pumpkin Show.

At the meeting PCRTA honored the memory of recently deceased members **Benis Lutz, Helen Rattray, Polly Thomas, and Sophia Ruth Uland** at our Memorial Service. PCRTA thanks ORTA liaison **Ken Moody** for his presence and support at the May meeting.

During their June meeting members will collect food donations for the Pickaway County Emergency Clearinghouse.

The group has have 5 applicants for their Educational Grant. PCRTA plans to award two grants this year.

To learn more about the Pickaway Co. chapter, please visit their [website](#).



Above: PCRTA enjoying the grounds at the historic Adena Mansion;  
Upper left: Joanna Liggett sharing her presentation

# WHAT'S ORTA UP TO?



Take a look at what's coming up in May around our chapters and organization!  
The calendar is always available on our website.  
Follow the link to view: <http://www.orta.org/>

<b>Monday, June 3</b>	
12:00pm	Morrow Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Tuesday, June 4</b>	
10:30am	Jefferson Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Wednesday, June 5</b>	
12:00pm	Warren Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Thursday, June 6</b>	
11:00am	Fayette Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
11:30am	Allen Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
12:00pm	Shelby Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Tuesday, June 11</b>	
11:30am	Madison Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
12:00pm	Fairfield Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
12:00pm	Trumbull Co Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Wednesday, June 12</b>	
11:00am	Washington Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
11:30am	Pickaway Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting
11:30am	Mahoning Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
12:00pm	Licking Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Thursday, June 13</b>	
11:00am	Huron Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
11:00am	Noble Co. Retired Teachers Association
12:00pm	Muskingum Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
6:00pm	Logan Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting
<b>Friday, June 14</b>	
11:00am	Coshocton Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
<b>Sunday, June 16</b>	
Father's Day	
<b>Monday, June 17</b>	
12:00pm	Lawrence Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting
<b>Friday, June 21</b>	
12:00pm	Hardin Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting
12:00pm	Alliance Area Retired Teachers Association Meeting

# BEGINNING 2019 IN BROWN CO.

The Brown County RTA kicked off their new year with **Kelly Cole**, the Brown Co. Economic Development Director who reported on a variety of programs and projects that have occurred throughout the county. At the June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting the Ohio 4-H Carteens and the Ohio Highway Patrol will be at the meeting on driving safety.

To learn more about the Brown Co. chapter, please visit their [website](#).



Above: Evelyn Yockey BCRTA Vice President is pictured with Kelly Cole

## TIME TO RENEW?

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Street/Apt./Suite #

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Current E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Retirement: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to become a Life Member of ORTA (a \$500 one-time payment)

*Thank you!*

MAY 2019 - ORTA NEWS

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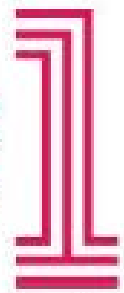
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# WHEN TEACHERS HAVE A WISH LIST...

Teachers in **Columbiana County** who have a wish list for their classrooms can apply to the Columbiana County Retired Teachers Association for an annual \$250 grant.

In a change from the traditional book grant to high school seniors who plan to major in education in college, the organization decided to make grants to active classroom teachers.

Grant applications were sent to all schools and grade levels in the county. These applications were judged by the board of directors assisted by **Sher-ry Seachrist** and **Patty Patrisko**. This initial year four proposals were chosen. At the April membership luncheon, these winners explained how they used the grant money.



Above (l to r): Jennifer Martin (Columbiana Exempted Village Schools), Dorothy Orlo (East Liverpool City Schools), Kelly DeVille (United Local Schools) and Kelsie Markijohn (Salem City Schools).



Above: The Columbiana County Retired Teachers Association recently honored the above teachers with \$250 Teacher Grants

**Mrs. Kelly Deville**, fifth grade math and science teacher at United Local, used her grant to ‘gain interest in bringing a STEAM lab’ to her elementary school. Some items she purchased toward this goal include “Oxobots, simple robots that are coded by using regular markers to create a path for the mini robot”, and Bloxels which “utilizes iPad technology that allows students to see their coding projects come to life on iPads.” Two other learning tools purchased were Rubic’s Cubes and Glodie Box Engineering kits.

**Mrs. Kelsie Markijohn**, second grade teacher in Salem City Schools, requested a grant to purchase flexible seating including wiggle cushions, wobble stools, and a chair

ball. The goal is to provide students with seating options that allow them to ‘release their energy in a positive manner which is non disruptive to the general classroom, provide sensory input, increase focus, and give students choices.’ C.C.R.T.A. members had fun trying out the flexible seating first hand.

The sixth grade language arts class at Columbiana Middle School can now enjoy many new picture books thanks to their teacher **Mrs. Jennifer Martin** who applied for a C.C.R.T.A. grant. Mrs. Martin’s stated that there are many benefits of picture books whether read aloud or silently. These include practicing critical reading and analysis of texts, sharing stories of diversity, and creating joyful reading experiences.

**(Columbiana Co. con'd)**

Reading was also the focus of **Mrs. Dottie Orlo's** grant. She is a kindergarten and first grade Title I teacher in East Liverpool City Schools. Mrs. Orlo purchased hands on materials including Phonics Dominoes, Rocket Rhyme Game, Word Families Kit, and Phonics Word Building Puzzles. Mrs. Orlo uses these tools to augment phonics skill building.

All grant recipients emphasized that these purchased items will be a part of their classrooms for many years. Members relished hearing the presentations and were impressed with the dedication and innovations of these grant winners.

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## IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that ORTA reports the passing of **ORTA Past President, Jim Baxter** (94), on March 17, 2019.

Mr. Baxter led the organization during the year of 2001.

Baxter had taught school at Benton Township High School in Graytown, Ohio, Morenci High School in Morenci, Michigan, Anthony Wayne High School, and Pandora-Gilboa High School where he retired in 1982 as superintendent. During his years in education, he coached football, wrestling, basketball, track and baseball.

Jim was a member of the **Puntum Co. Retired Teachers Association**. In his spare time, enjoyed fishing, hunting, golfing, swimming, watching high school sports, traveling, riding his bicycle, reading, volunteering with VOSH and family gatherings. Jim stayed active as a member of the Pandora United Methodist Church, the American Legion, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, BGSU Varsity Club, and Ohio Education Association.

His legacy continues in ORTA, and he will be missed. We celebrate his service and support of our organization.



Above: Jim Baxter



# IN MEMORIAM (CON'D):

## **Columbiana Co.-**

Kathryn M. Spillman- February 21, 2019

## **Franklin Co.-**

Mary Ellen Hull- May 10, 2019

Daniel Baker- April 30, 2019

## **Holmes Co.-**

Edmund Thomas- April, 2019

Brooks Harris- May, 2019

## **Lake Co.-**

Jean A. Stevens- January 30, 2019

## **Mercer Co.-**

Dorothea Brandon Williams- March, 2019

## **Muskingum Co.-**

Donald L. Cain November 6, 2018

Carol E. Shipley- May 10, 2018

Geraldine Mae Wilson- July 3, 2018

## **Stark Co.-**

Betty Shrive - May 16, 2018

Lois Thomas- May 24, 2018

David Stein- July 6, 2018

Susie (Sue) Gabrik- July, 24, 2018

Mabel A. Unkefer- November 26, 2018

Debra Rita Gosphery-Gordon- November 30, 2018

Margaret A "Peggy" McCoy-January 15, 2019

Linda S. Ashby- January 23, 2019

Margaret L. Clapper Hartmann- March 30, 2019

Susan R. Swallen-March 9, 2019

Abbie Jane Belding Rohrer- March 14th, 2019

Katharine A. Osborne-April 19, 2019

## **Trumbull Co.-**

Sarah A. "Sally" Grant-March 2019

Joseph Yurcho- May 11, 2019



**\*Deceased Member submission Policy update:  
If you submit member(s) passing, please forward any  
obituary or funeral arrangements for our records.**

***"When our time on Earth has been  
complete, Our spirit moves on, more  
mysteries to seek. Celebrate what this  
person meant to you, Cherish the  
memories when this life you review."***

**—B.J. Woodruff**

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We can't wait to share your stories!