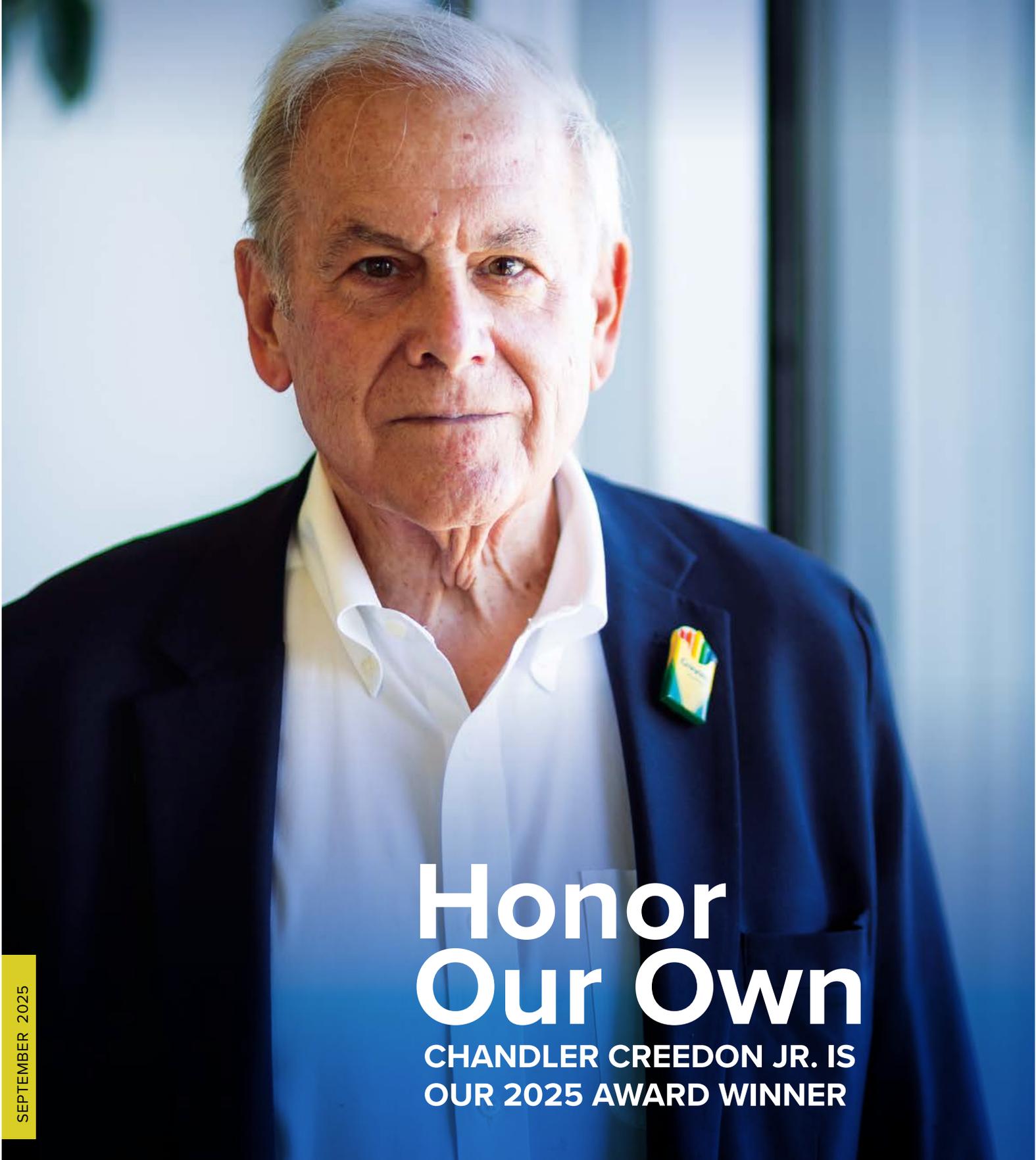


MTA

The voice of
our retired
members

REPORTER



Honor Our Own

CHANDLER CREEDON JR. IS
OUR 2025 AWARD WINNER

SEPTEMBER 2025

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The Retired Members Committee and organizer Lisa Lemieux met in July for a retreat.

IN BRIEF

Message from the Co-Chairs

Kathy Greeley and Rick Last

As part of our effort to be fully transparent with retired members, for this edition of the Message from the Co-Chairs, we decided to provide an overview of the past year based on our annual report to the Board of Directors. It offers a window into the activities of the Retired Members Committee over the past year, while also pointing toward future goals. As always, we welcome feedback from members on anything we're doing. Please contact us at the email addresses at the end of this message.

Committee Meetings

As in previous years, the Retired Members Committee met monthly via Zoom to accommodate members from across the state. We held our annual in-person Strategic Planning Meeting in July, focusing on topics including reaffirming our mission, reviewing bylaws, strategizing ways to spur retired member engagement in MTA initiatives, setting annual goals and forming subcommittees for more targeted work.

RMC Subcommittees and Initiatives

We have structured our work through dedicated subcommittees and task forces. They report back to the full committee on a monthly basis and are open to participation from any retired member.

Racial and Social Justice Subcommittee

This subcommittee has taken proactive steps to engage retirees of color and expand their participation within our union. Through in-depth conversations with more than a dozen retired educators of color, the committee identified key challenges



these members faced throughout their careers. These discussions sparked three important initiatives aimed at fostering greater inclusion and support.:

MTA Retired Reporter contributions:

Retired educators of color are sharing their personal and professional experiences in a regular column in the retired publication, The Reporter. To date, four educators of color have had articles published. If anyone is interested in contributing, please contact Lisa Lemieux, the Retired member organizer, at llemieux@massteacher.org.

Mentorship Program: In partnership with the MTA New Member Committee and the Ethnically Marginalized Affairs Committee, this program connects retired educators of color with early-career educators of color. Currently, nine mentor-mentee pairs are active. Mentors meet weekly and provide monthly updates; unmatched mentees are awaiting mentors. Mentors receive a \$1,000 stipend. Program goals include encouraging educators of color to remain in Massachusetts public

education and fostering meaningful connections between new and retired union members at the local level. If you are interested in becoming a mentor for this program, please contact mtamentoring@massteacher.org.

MTEL Advocacy: Targeted efforts, especially in Springfield, focus on eliminating the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure as a barrier to advancement for Education Support Professionals.

The May 7, 2025, session of the First Wednesday Retiree Speaker Series featured a panel from the mentorship program. It should be available soon on the retired website, at massteacher.org/retired.

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Executive Committee / Board Report

Andrei Joseph

After the 2024-2025 school year came to a close, the Executive Committee and larger Board of Directors continued to meet in June, and again in July, at Summer Conference. We set priorities for union work for the upcoming year. Internally, we committed to increasing our members and organizing them into strong, democratic locals. We are determined to address what is referred to as “density” – that is, the percentage of any given bargaining unit that has actually joined the union. This percentage varies greatly. Some locals remain disengaged. Higher education, with many adjunct faculty, is a particular challenge. Other locals achieve 100 percent membership. The overall density of our 386 locals is roughly 83-85 percent. Obviously, retiree membership is a horse of a different color than active membership, but we have our own challenges as well. This priority is central to our work financially, as dues constitute our budget, and politically, as unity constitutes our power.

Our plans include continued advocacy for expanded bargaining and allocating \$1 million to create an Independent Expenditure PAC as a commitment to winning local and state legislative races. We are rewriting the endorsement process of our Candidate Recommendation Committee to ensure there will be a majority-member voice.

Our second priority is external. We committed to defend democracy, public education, unions and the common good against the escalating federal attacks on our rights and institutions. This will involve advocacy with Raise Up Massachusetts and



Andrei Joseph, left, greets Ashley Adams, the retired former new member coordinator for the MTA.

other coalition partners, lobbying for a state budget that supports public education, engaging in the political education of our members about the history of labor and struggles against authoritarianism and fascism, and defending our students and families who are threatened in the current moment.

Our third major priority will be to mobilize the political power of the MTA and its members to engage in statewide legislative and policy campaigns that advance public education, labor rights and the common good. We want to win material gains for our members. This will include engaging in conversations with our rank-and-file members about the possibility of constitutional amendment campaigns to create a wealth tax. Such a tax could raise billions by requiring those whose wealth exceeds, say, \$50 million dollars, to contribute 1 percent to support debt-free higher education

or high-quality health care for all. We will explore credible alternatives in Massachusetts politics, including the Working Families Party, whose national director, Maurice Mitchell, spoke at Summer Conference. We will continue our efforts to win legislative and educational policy gains, including defending our Question 2 victory by winning improvements to the graduation requirement system, addressing the preK-16 fiscal crisis, achieving safe schools and MTEL reform and improving retiree cost of living.

We received reports from our Grassroots staff documenting our outreach and success, including 35 in-district meetings with individual legislators. We have had robust attendance at hearings including multiple submissions of written and oral testimony. State Chapter

“Internally, we committed to increasing our members and organizing them into strong, democratic locals.”

Andrei Joseph

70 funding for public schools is increasing in this year’s budget by 6.6 percent, an increase of \$460 million. There will be increases in special education funding and regional transportation. In addition, 12 of 16 overrides that we supported were successful, resulting in more than \$50 million of support for public education. Unfortunately, there is less progress in higher education and Governor Maura Healey and the state Senate are trying to increase our health insurance costs.

In our most recent meeting, we dealt with lots of leftover New Business Items from the 2025 Annual Meeting. Decisions included the continuing defense of our curriculum resources on the Middle East, which will be reviewed continually by a task force of members. We divested our investments and staff pension fund from weapons manufacturers and voted to send a letter to the PRIM Board asking them to take similar action. We instructed the staff to create strong model language to protect members of marginalized groups from discrimination. And, in a closely contested decision, we approved a motion that would allow members to request a field rep-organizer if 25 percent of members in a building/school or 10 percent of the total local membership signed a petition. This changed our older model that required all statewide MTA services to be channeled through the local president. I changed my mind on this one. At the Executive Committee, I voted no, thinking that it might produce disruption and chaos. The extended debate at the Board convinced me otherwise, stressing the opportunity for disenfranchised

members to have a voice and support. I changed my vote to yes. This motion narrowly passed, 24-22, with several members taking no position, only voting “present.”

In other matters

- We will be extending our lease in Quincy with considerable savings negotiated as we consolidate our footprint, largely onto the 9th floor. In need of more space, the Print Shop will move to 3 Batterymarch Park, a commercial office building in Quincy.
- We cleaned up language, dropping the word “issues” from the name of the LGBTQ+ Committee.
- We passed new guidelines regarding guest speakers at our meetings, intended to ensure access, equity and respect to all who wish to speak.
- We attempted to encourage more participation in Annual Meeting. This will include outreach to presidents of locals who haven’t sent anyone and the distribution of sample contract language that would allow for release time.
- We expressed solidarity with UniteHere Local 26 and its labor struggles at Fenway Park and with Republic Services, as well as with Teamsters Local 25, which is involved in a garbage strike in several communities.
- We updated language regarding expense reimbursements.
- We elected Deb Gesualdo, the Malden local president, to serve on the Advisory Budget Committee, William Karvouniaris, of Wakefield, and Roxanne Campbell, of Revere, to serve on the Workplace Equity

Committee and Brian Fitzgerald, of Wareham, to serve as a point of contact for guest speaker conduct referrals or complaints.

- We revised the salaries of the president and vice president positions. Previously, the president’s salary was set at three times the average teacher’s salary and the vice president’s at 2.5 times. But the state is not reporting the average salary data in a timely fashion. So, we passed a motion that the president will receive \$268,728 and the vice president \$223,940, to be reviewed every three years by an ad-hoc committee of the Board.
- All Board members will be getting dedicated massteacher.org email addresses.
- Annual Meeting pre-convention gatherings will be virtual.

In Executive Session, we dealt with personnel and labor relations matters. I am also allowed to report great news: A judge has dismissed the entire complaint of parents who had brought a tort action against us following the Newton strike. Our opponents will appeal, but we remain confident in our ability to prevail in the future.

Full details on all Board actions taken are available on our website, at massteacher.org/mta-membership/meeting-agendas-and-actions. ■

Contact Andrei Joseph at ajoseph@rcn.com.

MTA AWARD

Chandler Creedon Jr. 2025 Honor Our Own Award Winner

By Mary MacDonald Photography by Eric Haynes

When you're the oldest of eight children, working with children comes naturally. Chandler Creedon Jr. estimates he's been working since age 7 and he's not likely to stop soon. Although retired for eight years from the Franklin public schools, Creedon has continued to work since then for various districts when needed.

A 32-plus-year school psychologist, Creedon recently was named the 2025 Honor Our Own Award winner. He will be honored at a luncheon on Oct. 7 at the Publick House Historic Inn and Lodge in Sturbridge. (See registration information on page 7.)

He became interested in education and counseling while a student in college, and he's been at it ever since. "Education is the basis for everything," Creedon said.

In Franklin, where he worked with middle school students for most of his career, Creedon created a week-long summer program for incoming sixth graders called "Middle School Magic." It was designed to ease the transition for students who might be struggling and introduced them to the routines and new environment.

No matter where he worked, he approached the job the same. Building relationships with students was always his first goal. "What is it that they need and how do we develop the tools that they need to be successful?" he said.

Chandler Creedon Jr. worked as a school psychologist for more than 30 years.



“Education is the basis for everything.”

Creedon served for eight years as the president of the Franklin Education Association, stepping into the leadership role when he saw an opportunity. He learned quickly on entering the public education profession that educators needed a collective voice.

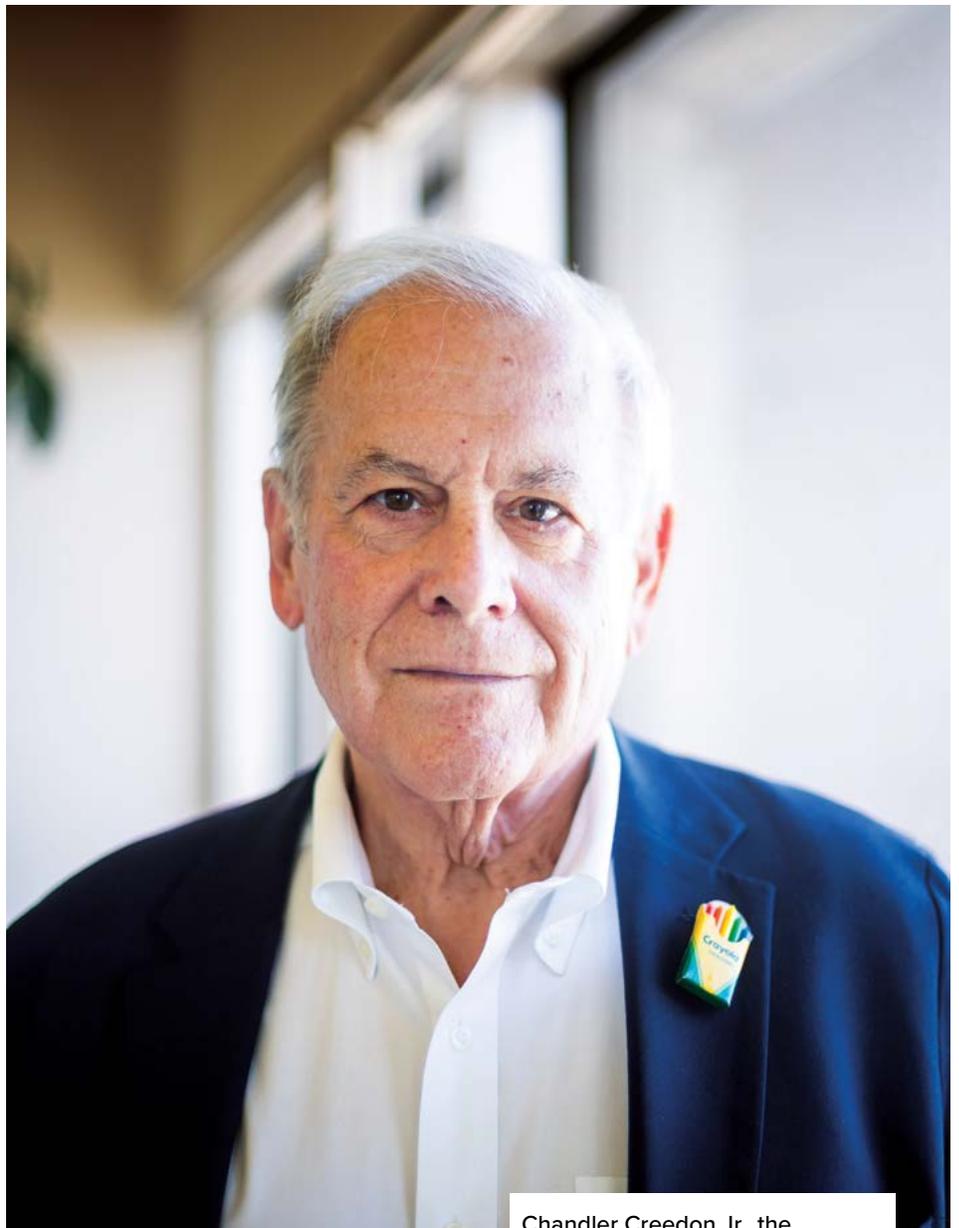
A resident of Worcester, Creedon holds a sociology degree from St. Anselm College and a master’s degree and certificate of advanced graduate study from Anna Maria College.

He was nominated for the Honor Our Own award by Emily Constantine, a speech pathologist with the Franklin public schools.

“Chandler is a person who leads by example,” Constantine wrote. “He was the kind of colleague you could always rely on to lend a hand or offer insightful advice. His commitment to doing whatever it takes to support his colleagues, students and the larger community made him an exceptional asset to our school community.”

Six years ago, when he worked in Clinton, a student asked him why he was wearing a pin of a rainbow-colored flag. Creedon explained that it was symbol of diversity, equity and inclusion and seventh grader promptly told him: “Kids aren’t going to understand that.” She promised him she’d give him a present the next day.

Her gift, a pin of a crayon box, was better at getting the idea across, she said. “Kids will understand that



Chandler Creedon Jr., the former president of the Franklin Education Association, continues to work as needed in public schools.

Honor Our Own LUNCHEON

TUESDAY

October 7

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

LOCATION

Publick House and Historic Inn, Sturbridge.



Registration information will be posted at massteacher.org/honorourown.

you don’t want all the same-colored crayons in your crayon box,” Creedon said, recalling the conversation. “I’ve worn it ever since.” ■

To register for the Honor Our Own Luncheon, please visit massteacher.org/honorourown.

‘Experience is Extremely Valuable; All the More so When it’s Shared’

By Mary MacDonald Photography by Eric Haynes

James Garrison, a philosophy professor at UMass Lowell, is one of the MTA members who is participating in the Mentorship Program this year. He agreed to participate in a Q&A style interview to describe the program and his interest in it. His mentor is Rafael Moure-Eraso, a retired professor of public health at UMass Lowell and a member of the Retired Members Committee.

Q: Tell us a little about yourself. How long have you been in the education profession?

A: I’m in higher ed, working as a philosophy professor at UMass Lowell. I’ve been doing this for about 16 years, with 10 of those being after I received my doctorate.

Q: How did you learn about the mentoring program?

A: I learned of it through my friend and neighbor Josh Levit, who is also an MTA staff member responsible for the program.

Q: What interested you in it? Was it the idea of having someone to bounce ideas off of, or to gain perspective?

A: It seemed worth having a broader perspective, especially of the tenure track and of the challenges that come with navigating academia as a minority.

Q: When were you matched with Rafael Moure-Eraso?

A: I was matched with him in the fall of 2025.

Q: Is it easy to fit this into what is probably a busy schedule? How have you done that?

A: I do have a busy schedule, and it has been somewhat difficult, making

his role more difficult. Rafael has been good about being proactive and flexible and we’ve also taken advantage of MTA events to meet up.

Q: What have you gained from being a mentee? Can you give a few examples of things you now handle or approach

differently as a result of having a mentor? Has it helped your confidence or made you think differently about the profession?

A: I’ve gained confidence that my professional track is feasible, more than anything. I am approaching my



Rafael Moure-Eraso, right, is a retired professor at UMass Lowell who is a mentor to James Garrison, left.

upcoming tenure application with more ease of mind than I might otherwise have.

Q: Would you recommend this to another early-career educator of color, and if so, why?

A: Yes, it's a relatively easy way to get the lay of the land, which is especially useful if you're not from the area like me.

Q: How would you describe the program to someone who is considering it?

A: I would describe it as low commitment and potentially high impact if you want it to be the latter. It's just talking about how things are on one level, but if you're invested in quality conversation (both speaking and listening) those conversations can guide the next generation for those who are providing guidance.

Q: Why do you think Retired members should participate in this?

A: Mentors should consider this because experience is extremely valuable; all the more so when it's shared. You've likely faced challenges working in education that are at least similar to those facing MTA members today. Because of this, you can have a major ripple effect with a bit of informal mentoring on those doing more formal work in education today. ■

Get Involved!

The Dignified Retirement Subcommittee is looking for members who want to make a difference.

JOIN TODAY.



[I.lead.me/DignifiedRetirement](https://lead.me/DignifiedRetirement)

CONFERENCE

Keeping Retired Members Connected to Union Priorities

By Mary MacDonald

Retirement isn't an end to activism for many educators, but a continuation of their involvement.

MTA retired members are strategizing how best to activate members who want to help pass legislation that supports public education and educators.

Operating under the MTA Grassroots umbrella, Senate district coordinators are assigned to work with retired members in their respective districts, helping to build capacity for letter writing and testifying at State House hearings.

For the first time, the 2025 MTA Summer Conference had a session aimed at organizing retired members. "Retiree Activism in Times of Political Turmoil," facilitated by retired MTA members Bill Forster, Rick Last and Kathy Greeley, considered the varying ways that retirees are organizing, and focused on ongoing projects.

Forster, 81, who retired 23 years ago after a career in Cambridge Public Schools, said he continued his activism in retirement by starting the Cambridge Retired Teachers Network. Not primarily social, but instead political, the 480-member group takes positions on legislation and local school issues, Forster said, in a recent interview.

He organizes people by email lists, sending targeted emails to people on issues they're interested in, and by spreading the word on important actions to all members. "We have managed to keep retired people connected to the union," he said. "When we scatter to the winds, we lose our power."

State legislation to increase the pension COLA for retired educators is one recent example of an issue that can

turn out large numbers, he said. Retired members will remain involved with local or statewide unions if they can see it benefits them, he said. That's why the COLA matters, he said, because it's a boost to counter inflation.

“When we scatter to the winds, we lose our power.”

Bill Forster

"I paid \$10 for a tin of coffee at the grocery store," he said. Many older retirees are living on limited pensions, he noted. "I retired on \$42,000. That was my pension."

Sheila Hanley, a Senate district coordinator, is another retiree who has remained active since leaving her full-time job in education. The SDCs have regular meetings with their assigned senator and representatives, she said, and maintain contact and build relationships over time to advocate for MTA legislation.

The SDCs also cultivate lists of members and encourage active people and retired members to participate in actions. Getting involved can include letter writing, appearing at committee hearings, making phone calls or sending emails. Educators who were politically active when they worked often remain active in retirement, she said.

"They're interested in the COLA, but also what is happening inside the schools, how their former colleagues are affected by legislation," she said. ■

A Report From the 2025 NEA RA in Portland, Oregon

By Jackie Gorrie



Jackie Gorrie is an NEA-RA delegate.

Again, our retired members were well represented at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA-RA held in Portland, Oregon. Your elected delegates, in the order of their vote finish, were: Jackie Gorrie, Steve Gorrie, Dennis Naughton, Richard Shea, Claire Naughton, Tim Sullivan, Sue Doherty, Mary Weeks and Sue Fielding.

The NEA Retired conducts its Annual Meeting prior to the NEA Representative Assembly. Retired delegates participated in the two-day Annual Meeting, voting for officers and on Bylaws, Standing Rules and New Business Items. Not only was Massachusetts well-represented, with eight of our nine delegates attending, but Tim Sullivan opened the meeting by singing the National Anthem. Steve Gorrie also was an integral part of the Retired Annual Meeting, as he serves as the elections chair for the NEA-R.

Your elected delegates began the second part of their responsibilities at the meeting by attending the MTA morning caucus meetings and the NEA-RA. Like me, many of you have attended numerous RAs and know the schedule well. We have always had four full days of voting, business, speeches and elections and have at times worked way past 9 p.m. on NBIs that were submitted, numbering in the hundreds. Well, I am here to tell you that NEA RA 2025 was not your mother's RA. Many changes were adopted by the delegates that changed how we conducted business.

The changes made were in alignment with NEA President Becky Pringle's message of "Educate, organize, mobilize, litigate, legislate, elect and communicate." For the first time, all NBIs were arranged, discussed and voted on — not in the order that they were submitted — but by "thematic buckets" in these categories:

- Elevating the profession and advancing student learning. (31 NBIs)
- Ensuring equity by advancing racial, social and economic justice. (16 NBIs)
- Growing our union. (7 NBIs)
- Demonstrating and strengthening democracy. (22 NBIs)
- Promoting peace. (3 NBIs)
- NEA operations. (14 NBIs)

Not only did it make for richer discussions on the NBIs, but it also moved the business along quicker, leaving us ample time to complete

our other business on Standing Rules, Bylaws, Constitutional Amendments, Legislative Amendments, Elections and the Budget.

With this change, we were able to complete our business in three days, leaving the opportunity to engage in another first at the NEA RA and that was "NEA's Day of Teaching, Learning and Organizing for Power." Delegates had the opportunity to participate in two of five provocative sessions:

Kids not cuts: Social Media and Advocacy Skills to mobilize and fight for our students.

Not on our dime: A Strategy Lab of taking action against vouchers and privatization. (MTA President Max Page was a panelist in this session.)

Building Power for the Common Good: Tools and strategies for organizing and action.

Promoting Racial, Social and Economic Justice through Inclusive Education: Vision, Values, Victory.

Countering Authoritarian Overreach: Making Attacks on our Democracy Backfire. (Hardy Merriman, the featured speaker on an MTA webinar shortly after the RA, was a powerful presenter for this session.)

This year's RA was a new beginning of sorts. We looked at how we do business and aligned our changes to meet the troubling times in which we find ourselves. Lessons learned and shared at this RA are a positive step forward. ■

FIRST
WEDNESDAY

RETIREE SPEAKER SERIES



All events are virtual,
on Zoom.
3 - 4:30 p.m.
Registration is
required. Zoom link
will be sent a few days
before the event.

OCTOBER 8 **Dignified Retirement and History and Future of the COLA**
Sean King, MTA Government Relations &
Frank Valeri, Mass Retirees

Review and discuss legislation, House Bill 2812 and Senate Bill 1817, that will ensure increased economic security for retired public employees, including raising the base on which the annual state pension COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) is calculated. The COLA base has not been raised in over a decade.

NOVEMBER 5 **Educators' Response to Immigration Issues and ICE Raids**
MTA Statewide Organizing Committee

Come learn about a statewide response effort led by fellow educators to address the impact of the immigration crisis in our schools, communities, and college campuses. Learn, exchange tools and resources, and join with fellow MTA members who are actively organizing around this issue.

DECEMBER 3 **Federal Attacks on Public Education and the Dismantling**
of the Department of Education
MTA Training and Professional Learning staff & Journalist
Jennifer Berkshire.

Discussion will include the ramifications of federal actions, including the withholding of federal grants and the impact on international students and higher education.

Registration
information will
be posted at
[massteacher.org/
retired](https://massteacher.org/retired).



**STAY TUNED
FOR UPCOMING
SESSIONS!**



Fall for Travel & Save with MTA Benefits

By Diamond Coleman

As the air turns crisp and the leaves begin to change color, fall becomes one of the most magical — and affordable — times of year to travel. For MTA members, it's also one of the smartest times to book a trip, thanks to exclusive savings through MTA Benefits on everything from hotels and flights to car rentals and vacation packages. Whether you're planning a quick weekend escape or a longer getaway, these members-only discounts make it easier than ever to turn

your travel plans into reality without overspending.

Whether you're dreaming of a scenic, New England road trip or a sunny getaway to Florida or Las Vegas, fall offers the perfect opportunity to explore without the peak-season prices or crowds. And with up to 50 percent off top destinations around the country this season through Access Nationwide Discounts, your fall adventure doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag. From cozy inns

and big-name hotel chains to family-friendly attractions and must-see tours, members can enjoy deals that fit every style and budget. Planning a romantic escape, a family trip or a solo retreat? With discounts on vacation packages, theme parks, and even dining and entertainment, you'll find countless ways to make your getaway unforgettable — while keeping more money in your pocket.

Members can also save up to 35 percent on car rentals with Avis and Budget, which is perfect for when you're hitting the road on a fall trip. Enjoy bonus perks like a complimentary upgrade, dollars off, or even a free weekend day — ideal for a spontaneous escape or an extended weekend away. Having a car is essential to fully experience the backroads, scenic byways and hidden gems that make fall travel so special.

With these exclusive, member-only deals, you can travel smarter, spend less and make the most of the autumn season. All it takes is a few clicks to start saving and start planning. So go ahead — grab your sweater, pack your bags and fall into savings this season with MTA Benefits. Your next unforgettable trip is closer (and more affordable) than you think. ■

Details on all the benefits and discounts mentioned in this article can be found at mtabenefits.com.



IN MEMORY

BILL COLEMAN

By Mary MacDonald



Bill Coleman was an educator, a community activist and a strong believer in unions. A member of the MTA Retired community, he was one of the first people who invested their time and thoughts into creating a mentorship program that matches new educators of color with retired educators of color.

The beauty of that program, which has 10 pairs as it enters its second year, is that the conversations are confidential. The retired mentors don't work for the school systems or universities. They offer insights and a helpful sounding board, not judgmental observations.

Bill, who died on July 20 at age 70, was the first retired educator to write about some of his experiences as a retired educator of color for the MTA Retired Reporter. In April 2024, he shared that he felt his opinions and proposals were dismissed because of his race and gender by many administrators throughout his career, (initially as a nutrition educator for the UMass Amherst Extension Program, later as a substitute teacher for the Worcester Public Schools).

“Less than 5 percent of teachers are educators of color, according to national education statistics.”

Bill Coleman

He wrote frankly of his experiences: “Educators of color who are looking for opportunities to advance may pay a price if they advocate for righteous working conditions, as I did. I was the only male in an environment with supportive women colleagues, but the administrators were not happy with my activism. I would be called on the carpet for suggesting changes.”

After retiring, he went on to continue his education career by working as a substitute. There too, he encouraged his colleagues to advocate for themselves and their students.

“Less than 5 percent of teachers are educators of color, according to national education statistics,” Coleman wrote. “When you run into students when they are older and you hear that you made a difference in their lives when they were at a low point – that’s when you get the feedback you needed during your career but didn’t get. Educators shouldn’t be afraid to write thoughts down and share with a mentor. Team up with a mentor. We need to encourage others to stand up for their rights with the backing and support of a union contract. We must establish a support system that invites educational professionals to share and be supported.”

Coleman’s participation in the MTA mentoring program was just one aspect of his community building. He was recognized by the Worcester Telegram & Gazette for

his community advocacy and political activism, in a news obituary.

According to the article, Coleman ran for elected office several times in Worcester, first appearing on the ballot in 1979 and then, most recently, in an unsuccessful bid for mayor two years ago. He served in other capacities, and led an organizing effort, Save Our Summer, after budget cuts threatened to close city pools.

Born in Philadelphia, Bill moved to Massachusetts to join the seminary at LaSalette in Attleboro. He later attended what is now Worcester State University, where he earned multiple bachelor’s degrees, after which he attended Holy Cross College and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Coleman’s passing resulted in numerous tributes on social media and by the city and region’s elected officials. Mayor Joseph M. Petty told the Telegram & Gazette: “He was a familiar face at City Hall and in our neighborhoods, always pushing for a better Worcester.” ■

To read the complete obituary for William “Bill” Coleman, visit [telegram.com/obituaries/pneo1241047](https://www.telegram.com/obituaries/pneo1241047). His writing for the MTA Retired Reporter can be found online at [massteacher.org/news/mta-reporter](https://www.massteacher.org/news/mta-reporter), in the April 2024 edition.



Message from the Co-Chairs

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First Wednesday Retiree Speaker Series

Held monthly via Zoom, these 90-minute sessions on a variety of relevant topics typically draw 40 to 80 participants. Each features expert speakers, followed by participant dialogue.

Topics we discussed this year included: Media Bias, Caregiving for Caregivers, Dignified Retirement, Climate Change & Heat Stress, MCAS Ballot Question: YES on 2, Education & the Rise of the Right, Memory & Aging, Challenges Facing Educators of Color and Threats to Democracy and Education.

To view our preliminary schedule for 2025-2026, please see Page 11 of this edition.

Retirees Against High-Stakes Testing Subcommittee

This group has been meeting every other week for a few years. Involving at least 12 to 15 regular attendees, the group continues to lead opposition to high-stakes testing, particularly MCAS, and supports MTA's broader assessment reform goals.

While members are participating in the Governor's Graduation Commission hearings to establish new high school graduation standards, this group has formed its own grassroots "People's Commission" to propose alternative recommendations. Working in collaboration with Citizens for Public Schools and local organizations, two People's Forums have been held so far, in Cambridge/Somerville and New Bedford/Fall River.

The Worcester event is up next, scheduled for Sept. 29, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Worcester YWCA. Register at citizensforpublicschools.org. At least three more forums will be held in the fall. Registration information will be posted at massteacher.org/retired.

Wisdom Warriors

Now in its seventh year, the Wisdom Warriors is a direct-action group

supporting MTA locals and broader MTA initiatives. The retired members of Wisdom Warriors provide union solidarity by showing up to support locals in need. We have 228 retired members on our Wisdom Warriors email list.

They have shown up statewide to support the elimination of WEP-GPO and participated in actions in Chicopee, Bridgewater-Raynham, Barnstable, Northampton, Beverly, Marblehead, Revere and at MCCC in Framingham. Wisdom Warriors also supported the contract efforts for Plymouth Nurses and attended the Fitchburg Day of Action and attended both the Boston and Holyoke actions for Labor Day.

An ongoing collaboration with MTA Grassroots continues to be highly effective.

Education Support Professionals

This new subcommittee is focused on organizing ESPs who are nearing retirement to foster their engagement within the MTA. As the union has increasingly raised up the importance of ESPs, the Retired Members Committee wants to support that.

This is our first subcommittee being organized by a non-RMC member, with the help of Lisa Lemieux, the retired members organizer. This work is still in early stages. Stay tuned for more information.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

MTA Retired Reporter

Our quarterly newsletter remains the primary communications tool with retirees, featuring important updates and member submissions. The Communications Division has done an excellent job of redesigning the magazine to give it a more modern and engaging look.

Website and Social Media

A task force is revamping the RMC website, at massteacher.org/retired. Members have been working with MTA staff to streamline and expand the information on the website so it is easily available to retirees. While this work is still in progress, great

improvements have been made already. Email and Facebook also remain important tools for sharing information and building community. In addition to the MTA Facebook page, facebook.com/massteacher/, the retired members have their own Facebook page. Please join at facebook.com/groups/mtaretired/.

We continue to outreach to soon-to-be-retired educators and retirees who have not joined as MTA Retired members. Regional meetings and personal communication, led by our MTA staff assistant, Rene Gatewood, Jameela Malcolm, support this effort.

Legislative Advocacy & Dignified Retirement

Our legislative advocacy remains important to the RMC mission. This year, we focused on raising the COLA base from \$13,000 to \$18,000, with indexing for cost-of-living increases, reopening RetirementPlus enrollment for active members and protecting our great victory eliminating WEP/GPO. For more information, visit massteacher.org/legislation.

EVENTS

Honor Our Own Luncheon

The Honor Our Own Award is designed to recognize MTA retirees for their contributions to public education.

Our 2025 honoree is Retired member Chandler Creedon Jr., a 30-plus-year school psychologist, who spent the bulk of his career in Franklin. The Honor Our Own luncheon this year will be held Oct. 7. Read more about Chandler in the story in this edition on Page 6. Don't forget to sign up for the luncheon at massteacher.org/honourourown.

Retired Member Breakfast

At the 2025 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates, the RMC hosted a breakfast with updates from committee members and candidate presentations (four people ran for two seats on the Board of Directors.) For the first time, we held small-group discussions, inviting people to give feedback on retiree issues. We ended with a song by the Wisdom Warriors.

NEA Annual Meeting

MTA retiree delegates attended the NEA Annual Meeting in July, contributing to national retiree advocacy.

MTA Annual Meeting

The delegate entitlement for 2025 for State Retired delegates was 176. A total of 145 retired delegates were elected by waiver.

Looking Ahead

As we look back on all this activity, our goals for the future become more clear. The RMC is committed to

keeping retirees engaged with their union and connected to each other within the MTA. In the year ahead, we aim to:

- Expand our outreach programs.
- Deepen digital engagement.
- Strengthen legislative advocacy and defend retiree rights.
- Engage retirees in our continued support for MTA's mission. ■

Contact Kathy Greeley at kgreeley@gmail.com. Contact Rick Last at ricklewislast@gmail.com.

PENSION COLA UPDATE

A public hearing was scheduled for Sept. 17 on legislation that would increase the base for the COLA for retired educators from \$13,000 to \$18,000, as the Retired Reporter went to press.

The hearing, before the Joint Committee on Public Service, will be covered in a story to be published on the MTA website at massteacher.org/mtatoday.

The bill now before the Committee would increase a retiree's pension of 3 percent on the first \$13,000 of pension earnings, to \$18,000. Over time, it would increase to align with the maximum Social Security benefit for an individual worker retiring at full retirement age.

The MTA has made increasing the COLA a legislative priority. ■

WISDOM WARRIOR Lead the Way on Labor Day



Members of the Wisdom Warriors turned out in Holyoke for a Labor Day action organized by a coalition of labor unions.

IF YOU HAVE SOME NEWS from your local retired group that you wish to share, please send it to Lisa Lemieux at LLemieux@massteacher.org.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR NEWS, make sure to visit and bookmark massteacher.org/retired.



Lisa Lemieux, the retired members organizer, joined Wisdom Warriors in Boston.



Boston's Labor Day Parade drew hundreds of members.



Retired member Chandler Creedon and Donna Grady, Franklin Education Association president.



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