

Retired State Biographies

ID #21 - Mr. Bernis O. Hannah graduated with a BS in Physics from Howard College (now Samford University), a MS in Nuclear Physics from Florida State University, and additional doctoral work at UAB. After FSU, he worked at Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in submarine reactor design. Mr. Hannah returned to Samford University as an Assistant Professor of Physics, where he taught all courses required for physics majors. In 1979, he was Senior Radiological Health Inspector with the Jefferson County Health Department, involved in checking medical and industrial x-ray machines for compliance. Mr. Hannah retired from the Department of Health in 1995, as a Radiation Physicist. His responsibilities included Environmental Radiation Measurements and assuring that Emergency Response Plans around the state's two commercial nuclear power plants remained compliant with applicable rules and regulations. From 1995 until 2004, he participated with FEMA in the evaluation of the required demonstration of Emergency Response Plans around all commercial nuclear power plants. From 1995 until 2003, he participated with FEMA in curriculum development and was an instructor in several courses for state and federal responders. These courses were designed to teach responders, using scenarios with actual radioactive material, the correct procedures for safe and effective radiological response.

ID #22 - Mr. James (Jimmy) Rowell, who is completing his second term as the state retiree representative on the ERS Board of Control, retired from the Alabama Department of Finance in 1998 following 38 years of service. In addition to serving as State Finance Director under two governors, he directed the development of the first statewide computer and communications network in his role as Alabama's Chief Technology Officer. Rowell has also served as president of the 20,000-member Alabama Retired State Employees' Association, which represents the needs and concerns of public retirees on a variety of issues before the Legislature. Graduating from Troy University with a degree in Mathematics and Business, he also earned an M.B.A. from Auburn University. Rowell served in the United States Army during the Korea Conflict. A native of Camden, he and his wife, Elizabeth, a retired educator, have lived together in Montgomery for 57 years. Rowell has chaired numerous committees and served as a Deacon at Forest Park Baptist Church and its successor, Heritage Baptist Church, where he has been a member for more than 50 years.
