

2016 Teachers' Retirement System Candidates

Dr. Pat Norton was born in Decatur and attended school there, in Falkville, and in Huntsville before moving to Iowa. She received her BA in English from The University of Alabama in 1980 and was employed at UA as secretary in HPER for 10 years. After receiving her Master's in Library Service in 1991, Pat served as the Medical Education Project Coordinator for Family Medicine and Director of the Senior Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) for 10 years. After earning an EdD in Higher Education Administration, she transferred in 2002 to the University of Alabama School of Medicine, serving as Program Director for the Introduction to Clinical Medicine courses and Director of OSCEs. After retiring, she pursued coursework toward a Master of Arts in English, specializing in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. She has been a part-time temporary instructor for UA's First-Year Writing Program since 2008. Pat is a sustaining member of the Junior League of Tuscaloosa. She was a Board Member and Volunteer Coordinator for the Friends of the University of Alabama Arboretum. She was inducted into Kappa Delta Pi and Alpha Epsilon Lambda honoraries and received the 1998 Outstanding Doctoral Student in Higher Education Award.

Mr. Joe Ward, incumbent, taught in the classroom for seven years before joining the Alabama Education Association staff. With over 33 years of service with AEA, Joe spent 17 years as Director of Field Services. He also represented Postsecondary employees for many years. Since retirement, he has been active in Madison County Education Retirees Association. Joe is currently serving as President of the Alabama Education Retirees Association (AERA). He volunteers on the AERA Advocacy Team and works closely with elected officials. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Southern Mississippi and Master's Degree in Administration from Mississippi State University. Joe is a member of the Silver Haired Legislature and was inducted into the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Joe is currently serving his first term as a member of the TRS/PEEHIP Board and pledges to continue to represent all members, both active and retired. It is important to protect the benefits that educators of all levels, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, secretaries, teachers, administrators, postsecondary, and higher education personnel have earned.

Dr. Douglas Ragland retired as Superintendent of the Midfield City School System in 2010 after 34 years of service in education in four respective school systems in the state of Alabama. Prior to being appointed to Superintendent of the Midfield City School System, Dr. Ragland served as Superintendent in the Greene County School System from 2004-2007. Dr. Ragland served in the Birmingham City School System as Hearing Officer Supervisor (2003-04), Personnel Coordinator (1998-2003), Assistant Principal (1989- 90), and Teacher (1978-89). Dr. Ragland served in the Eufaula City School System as Principal of Western Heights Elementary School from 1990-98, during which time he gained national recognition when he was selected as the 1998 Alabama National Distinguished Principal. Dr. Ragland received his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and University of Alabama. He also holds Bachelor's, Master's, and Education Specialist Degrees, as well as Class A and AA Certifications, from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in Elementary Education and Educational Leadership. Dr. Ragland espouses and contributes his success to the six P's: Prayer, Principles, Perseverance, Patience, Progress, and Planning. Dr. Ragland is married to the former Ms. Teresa Wiggins, and they reside in Birmingham.