



# The ADVISOR

TEACHERS, EMPLOYEES, and JUDICIAL



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SERVING OVER 370,000 MEMBERS

September 2020



## Named #3 Best Historic Hotel

**U**SA TODAY announced the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa has been named one of the top three historic hotels in the country, as voted on by their readers in an online poll.

“This is the second consecutive year for the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa to be named a top historic property by USA TODAY,” said Scott Tripoli, general manager at the resort.

“We were ranked number four last year and are delighted to move up to number three in 2020. We continue to offer the Grand experiences our guests desire. The Retirement Systems of Alabama invested in our property to ensure we continue offering world-class hospitality experiences in one of the most beautiful places in the world.”

### 2020 USA TODAY 10 BEST READERS' CHOICE BEST HISTORIC HOTELS (OPENING YEAR):

1. **The Peabody Memphis** – Memphis, Tennessee (1869)
2. **Historic Hotel Bethlehem** – Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (1922)
3. **Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa** – Point Clear, Alabama (1847)
4. **Mission Inn Hotel & Spa** – Riverside, California (1876)
5. **The Francis House** – Calistoga, California (1886)
6. **Deer Path Inn** – Lake Forest, Illinois (1929)
7. **Grand Hotel** – Mackinac Island, Michigan (1887)
8. **The Hermitage Hotel** – Nashville, Tennessee (1910)
9. **Congress Hall** – Cape May, New Jersey (1879)
10. **The Langham, Huntington** – Pasadena, California (1907)

Source: [10best.com/awards/travel/best-historic-hotel/](https://10best.com/awards/travel/best-historic-hotel/)

In addition to the USA TODAY honors, the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa was named the Best Large Historic Hotel in 2019 by Historic Hotels of America. The Grand Hotel has also been featured as one of the South's best resorts by *Southern Living* for the past two years. Additionally,

Fairhope has been featured as one of the best small cities to visit by *Southern Living*. The resort has also been honored by several national meetings publications including *Successful Meetings*, *ConventionSouth* and *Meetings South*. ●

## My Health and Your Health

BY DAVID G. BRONNER

**F**or decades, I have written about the serious challenges, victories, and great potential of the RSA and our state. If avoidable, I tried to keep myself from being the story. Today is the exception. I need to say a big **Thank You!** to all of you who encouraged me and said a prayer for me.

After difficulties with governors, board members, politicians, and mobsters, I might say those difficulties seem almost normal to high-level conflict compared to the diagnosis of cancer on my left tonsil. Medical staff at cancer centers in Birmingham and Montgomery were fascinated that I exhibited no signs or symptoms. Two different doctors actually shouted out, “How was it discovered by you?!” But it wasn't me – my dentist is the hero. After six weeks of radiation, five days per week, plus your prayers, the mold on my tonsil had not moved to other areas, which is unusual. Happily, I can say the nasty little “lifetime mold” is dead! I tell you this personal story to ask you to read the following.

As CEO of the RSA, I am required to be a board member of the State Employees' Insurance Board (SEIB). When Mr. J. Stanley Frazer was Chairman of SEIB and State Personnel Director, I asked and made the motion for SEIB to cover mammograms. In addition, Dr. William C. Walsh – my first Deputy Director at the RSA – convinced Dr. Paul Hubbert of AEA that PEEHIP could greatly help teachers and staff as one large pool with better benefits at less expense, instead of individual local plans.

Remember the old saying “use it or lose it?” In healthcare, you can lose your life if you do not use the benefits provided for you. If I had not kept my six-month dental check-up, it would have been a train wreck for me. If you skip your physical, blood tests, cancer checks, or screenings, you are truly asking for an early exit from this world.

Our state and teacher healthcare programs cost more than the pension program because of the excellent benefits they provide. I implore you to utilize these excellent screening benefits to enjoy a longer, more productive life for yourself, your family, and your state. ●

# RSA's Investments in Commercial Real Estate

BY DR. MARK FAGAN

Since 1973, the RSA has developed 16 buildings (15 in Alabama and 1 in New York City), 8 resort hotels, 22 golf clubhouse/maintenance buildings, and 6 spas all totaling 12 million square feet (sf). In that time frame, the RSA has developed 14 parking decks (10 in Montgomery and 4 in Mobile) with approximately 3 million sf. The RSA's commercial real estate totals 15 million sf.

## THE KEY TO RSA REAL ESTATE: THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE MORTGAGE.

The RSA owns 8 office buildings (2.5 million sf) in Montgomery. They include the Alabama Center for Postsecondary Education (70,000 sf), built in 1977 as the RSA Administration Building; RSA Plaza (150,000 sf), 1991; Alabama Center for Commerce (300,000 sf), 1991; RSA Union (340,000 sf), 1995; RSA Tower (617,000 sf), 1997; RSA Criminal Justice Center (378,000 sf), 2002; RSA Headquarters (300,000 sf), 2008; and RSA Dexter Avenue Building and Datacenter with Internet Hub (345,000 sf), 2011. Also included in the RSA's commercial real estate investments are the Helen Hunt Early Learning Center (20,000 sf), 1998; RSA Activity Center (12,000 sf), 1998; RSA Pavillion Park, 1999; and the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center (340,000 sf), 2008.

The RSA leases 1.5 million sf of office space in Montgomery to the state of Alabama. The RSA leases more space to the state than any other entity. The remainder of RSA's office space (1.3 million sf) in Montgomery is occupied by the RSA, the State Employees' Insurance Board, and private entities.

The RSA has 4 office buildings and 2 luxury hotels (1.3 million sf) in downtown

Mobile. These are the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel (256,400 sf), 2005; RSA Battle House Tower (470,000 sf), 2006; The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa (177,800 sf), 2007; RSA Trustmark Building (335,000 sf), 2011; RSA Van Antwerp Building (58,000 sf), 2015; and 2 North Royal (20,000 sf), 2016.

The RSA developed the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama with 11 sites (Auburn-Opelika, Birmingham, Dothan, Glencoe, Greenville, Hoover, Huntsville, Mobile, Point Clear, Prattville, and The Shoals) and 8 hotels (Hoover, Mobile (2), Montgomery, Opelika, Prattville, Point Clear, and The Shoals) from 1990-2008. There is a total of 540,000 sf of clubhouse and maintenance building space at these sites. There are 2,200 rooms (1.6 million sf including 320,000 sf of meeting space) in RSA's hotels. There are also 6 spas with a total of 77,000 sf.

In 2009, the RSA completed one of the largest and most modern manufacturing facilities for railway cars in the world in The Shoals. This building has 2.2 million sf on a 700-acre site. When in full operation, annual capacity is in the 8,000 to 10,000-unit range, providing employment for 1,800 people.

The RSA partnered with Daniel Corporation to develop a retail center near Leeds, Alabama, in 2010. This retail center has 75 retailers in phase one's 330,000 sf. Phase two will have 160,000 sf. It serves as an anchor for a 6,500-acre planned community combining residential neighborhoods with shopping and entertainment. Thousands of homes and office space are planned to develop over the next 15-20 years.

The RSA owns the largest commercial



55 Water Street, New York

office building in New York City (55 Water Street). It is the second largest privately-owned building in the U.S., after Chicago's Willis Tower (formerly Sears Tower). It has around four

million sf of rentable space along with an underground parking garage. It was built in 1970 and purchased out of bankruptcy by the RSA in 1993.

Some of the world's most widely recognized corporations are tenants at 55 Water. They include Hugo Boss, S&P Global, Emblem Health, The Teachers' Retirement System of New York City, New York City Department of Transportation, NYC Health and Hospital Corp., L Brands, Justworks, Chubb, and QBE of Australia.

This commercial real estate comprises 9% of RSA's financial assets, which helps to diversify and stabilize RSA's financial investments and brings steady cash flow for paying RSA benefits. The RSA uses revenue from rentals to pay for buildings that provide cash flow on a perpetuating basis.

These investments in Alabama have helped revitalize the downtown areas in Montgomery and Mobile and make Alabama state government more effective and efficient. These valuable investments have also assisted with industrial recruitment and provided an economic impact by greatly increasing revenue and job growth. ●

## NTT DATA to Manage Datacenter for the RSA

NTT DATA, a recognized leader in global technology services, announced an agreement with the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) to manage and operate its state-of-the-art, 44,000-square-foot datacenter, located in downtown Montgomery, Alabama. Owned and operated by the RSA since 2012, the 300-rack capacity datacenter

currently provides hosting services for more than 50 companies.

NTT DATA will offer clients Smart Hands and Remote Hands services and leverage the company's global partnerships to provide cloud transformation support with Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud, and AWS, as well as local private cloud options. "This agreement will

benefit the citizens of Alabama, as well as the pensions for the thousands of Alabamians who trust us to secure their future," said Dr. David G. Bronner, CEO, Retirement Systems of Alabama. "In addition, NTT DATA's operation of the local datacenter will enable Alabama businesses

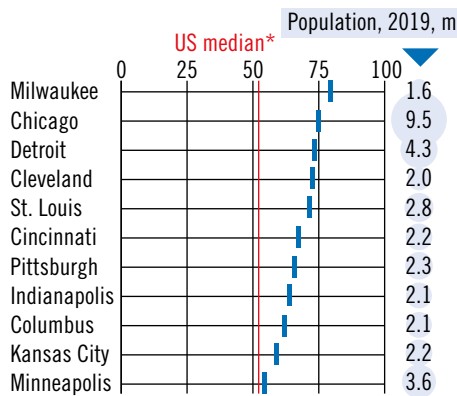
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## The Economist Says

“Chicago can feel almost as segregated as South Africa just after apartheid.”

### The Big Sort

United States, black-white segregation, by metro area 2013–17, 100=complete segregation



Source: Governing analysis of 2017, five-year American Community Survey

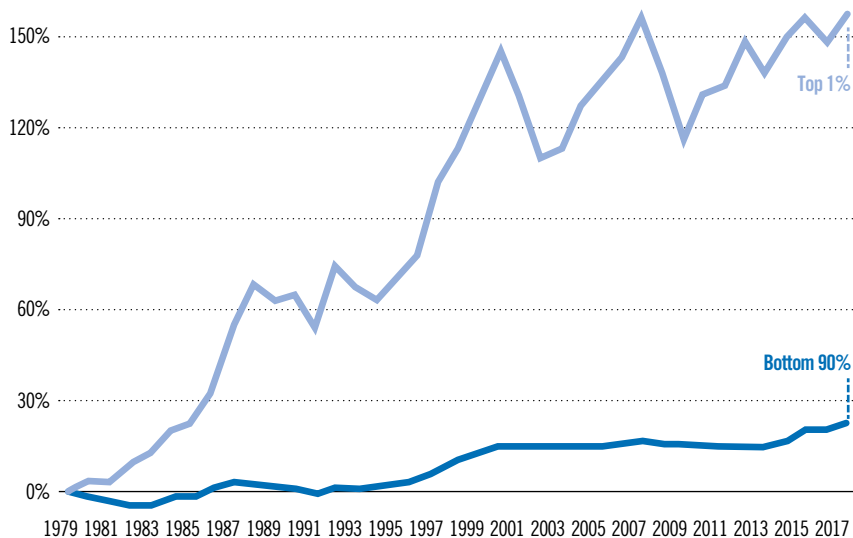
\*Metro areas with black populations over 10,000

## A Problem

Source: Washington Economic Policy Institute

### Wages have soared for those at the top but barely moved for those at the bottom

Cumulative percent change in real annual wages of the top 1% and the bottom 90%, 1979–2017



## John Lewis

BY BRADLEY BYRNE, U.S. CONGRESSMAN

The day I was sworn into Congress, a man I had never met before but had heard a lot about and admired approached me to introduce himself and welcome me to the House. His name was John Lewis. He told me he was born and raised in Troy, Alabama, and though he lived and represented a district in Georgia, he still felt a strong connection to our state. He offered to help me if he could. He was a big help to me because he was a moral inspiration, a priceless gift in this day and time.

If you have never heard of John Lewis, look him up. His story is amazing and should be an inspiration to us all. The youngest member of the leadership in the Civil Rights Movement, John was physically attacked, injured, and jailed on numerous occasions, all because he had the audacity to call for equal rights and voting rights for black people. He served in Congress for over 30 years and was known as the House’s conscience. I held him higher than that: I thought he was the nation’s conscience.

I had the privilege of traveling with John on several occasions. Every spring a group called Faith and Politics leads a civil rights pilgrimage, usually to Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma, where John was always front and center. I participated in several of those. Riding on the bus to Selma with him for the 50th anniversary of the walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, as he pointed out key places and recounted key events along the way, was a real treat. And then there was the amazing trip to South Africa where we saw Nelson Mandela’s jail cell and met Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

He came to Mobile several years ago at my request, met with high school students and community leaders, and left an indelible impression. I’ll never forget his generosity with his time or the humility he showed. He was frequently on my connecting flight between Washington and Atlanta. It was like traveling with a rock star. But, he didn’t travel with staff, he travelled alone. And he always took the time to listen to all who approached him.

John died July 17, 2020, and the world will be a lesser place without him. I used to write down his various sayings and I’d like to share a few with you because they are wise words. “Hate is too heavy a burden to bear.” “There is a spark of the divine in each one of us and we don’t have a right to abuse it.”

We didn’t always vote the same way. He didn’t share my conservatism, and I didn’t share his liberalism. But I always listened to him and he took the time to listen to me. That’s what we’re missing today across America. We talk at one another and not with one another. We make gross generalizations about one another and don’t consider the person in front of us as unique, made in the image of God. John got all of that right because it was deep in his soul. John said Dr. King called him the “boy from Troy.” I’ll remember him as a great man, Congressional colleague, and friend. To me he will always be the moral giant from Troy, and I miss him already. ●

# In July: Missouri & Oklahoma Expanded Medicaid Do We Really Want to Be Last?



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**The Battle House,**

**A Renaissance Hotel \$119**

- September 1-9, 13-16, 23, 28-30
- October 4-8, 11, 18-25, 29-31 • November 5-12, 15-30

**The Battle House RSA Spa Package \$207**

- September 2, 8-9, 15-16, 23, 30 • October 5-6, 19-20
- November 10-11, 17-18, 24-25

**Riverview Plaza \$109**

- September 1-20, 24-30 • October 1, 3-6, 12-25, 29
- November 1-4, 8-10, 18-19, 22-30

**Grand Hotel \$127 plus a 15% resort fee**

- September 1-3, 7-8, 13-17, 20-21, 27-30
- October 1-8, 11-15, 25-28
- November 1-2, 8-12, 15-19, 29-30

**Grand Hotel RSA Golf Package \$199 plus a 15% resort fee**

- September 1-3, 7-8, 13-17, 20-21, 27-30
- October 1-8, 11-15, 25-28
- November 1-2, 8-12, 15-19, 29-30

**Grand Hotel RSA Spa Package \$259 plus a 15% resort fee**

- September 1-3, 7-8, 13-17, 20-21, 27-30
- October 1-8, 11-15, 25-28
- November 1-2, 8-12, 15-19, 29-30

**Marriott Shoals \$109**

- September 7-8, 13, 20, 27 • October 3, 17, 24, 31
- November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

**Marriott Shoals RSA Spa Package \$210**

- September 13, 20, 27 • October 3, 17, 24, 31
- November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

**Renaissance Ross Bridge \$119**

- September 1-3, 7-24, 27-30
- October 1, 4-8, 11-15, 21-22, 25-29
- November 1-5, 8-12, 15-19, 22-26, 29-30

**Renaissance Ross Bridge RSA Spa Package \$223**

- September 1-2, 7-9, 13-16, 20-23, 27-30
- October 1, 4-7, 11-14, 21, 25-28
- November 1-4, 8-11, 15-18, 22-24, 29-30

**Auburn/Opelika Marriott Resort \$109**

- September 1-20, 22, 27-30
- October 4-6, 11-13, 18, 21, 26-27
- November 2-5, 8-10, 15-18, 22-24, 27-30

**Auburn/Opelika Marriott Resort RSA Spa Package \$201**

- September 2, 9-10, 16, 30 • October 21
- November 4-5, 18, 27-28

**Prattville Marriott \$89**

- September 3, 6-10, 13, 17, 27 • October 4, 11, 18, 25
- November 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, 22-29

**Renaissance Montgomery \$119**

- September 3, 5-10, 13, 16-17, 22-29
- October 3, 11-14, 17-18, 21, 25-26, 31
- November 1-5, 7-11, 19, 21-29

**Renaissance Montgomery RSA Spa Package \$209**

- September 3, 5, 9-10, 16-17, 23-26
- October 3, 14, 17, 21, 31
- November 4-5, 7, 11, 19, 21, 25-28

Specific room requests may require additional charge.

Rates available the 1st of the month and are not applicable to groups.

800-228-9290 Ask for RSA rate. **Promotional Code: R2A** on [www.rsa-al.gov](http://www.rsa-al.gov)  
**Book Online and Save RSA \$4.**

## NTT DATA to Manage Datacenter for the RSA CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

to leverage a global IT services leader to effectively modernize and achieve positive business outcomes.”

“Through our end-to-end datacenter partnership, the state of Alabama and the Retirement Systems of Alabama will be able to expand the capabilities and offerings for current and future clients, which will benefit the businesses and citizens of the state,” said Chris Merdon, SVP, Public Sector, NTT DATA. “An optimized, intelligent datacenter managed by NTT DATA will allow state and local organizations and commercial businesses to maximize value from their IT investments and establish a flexible infrastructure environment to scale, grow, and innovate.”

NTT DATA has more than 3,000 professionals in the U.S. serving federal, state, and local governments, and other public sector clients. To learn more about the company’s datacenter services, such as colocation, visit NTT DATA’s website at [nttdataservices.com](http://nttdataservices.com). NTT DATA, headquartered in Plano, Texas, is a division of NTT DATA Corporation, a top 10 global business and IT services provider with 120,000+ professionals in more than 50 countries, and NTT, a partner to more than 85 percent of the Fortune 100. ●

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