

Chapter History

NRTA Award for Distinguished Service

[The National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) is the AARP's Educator Community.]

1970 - Ruth H. Ollhoff, Evelyn Vogel

1978 - Ida H. Hoon, Alden E. Bierman

1979 - Paul E Haring and Mildred Webster

MARSP Award for Distinguished Service

[The MARSP Award for Distinguished Service was initiated in 1980 by MARSP President Dr. Richard N. Percy of Saint Joseph, Michigan.]

1981 – Richard N. Percy

1986 – Mildred Webster

1994 – Stephen Nisbet

1997 – Mary Buesing

1998 – Mildred Ast

2000 – Charles H. Ahnert

2002 – Richard Brame

2003 – Beverly Kaiser

2004 – Gladys Peeples Burks

2005 – Norma Goldner

2007 – Joyce Stockman

2009 – Oline Edge

2010 – Charles H. Ahnert

2014 – Charles H. Long

MARSP-BCC Award for Dedicated Service

1981 – Marianne Bard, Ellen L. Finley, Ida Hoon, and Paul F. Haring

1984 - Alden E. Bierman.

1992 – Mildred Ast, Stephen Nisbet, Richard N. Percy, Frances Schroeder, and Mildred Webster.

1993 – Charles H. Ahnert, Mary Buesing, Maxine Brule, Dwight Brink, Ruth Ollhoff, and Emmalou Wilson.

1998 – Wilbur Dick, Beverly Kaiser, Cliff Machacek, Beverly Pringle, and Mary Wilhelmsen.

2005 – Donald E. Alsbro, Richard Brame, Gladys Peeples Burks, James H. Keech, and Norma Goldner.

2006 – Oline Edge and Joyce Stockman

2007 – Virginia Light

2010 – Francis C. Schroeder

2011 – Charles H. Long

2012 – Patricia E. Wightman-Fisk

2013 – Diane Buczwinski

2014 – Doris DeWitt

2015 – Charles H. Long

2016 – Patricia Snyder

2017 – Rochelle Strunk

2018 – George Pica

2019 – Sinie Bass Wilburn

2020—Earlene Whorton

2021—Craig Molitor

2024—Mary Anne Claywell

Past Presidents

Ruth Ollhoff 1968 – 1970

Evelyn Vogel 1970 – 1971

Ruth Tomlinson 1971 – 1973

Louise Maxwell 1973 – 1975

Richard N. Percy 1975 – 1977

Mary C. Buesing 1977 – 1978

Earl H. Place 1978 – 1980

Mildred E. Webster 1980 – 1982

Dwight Brink 1982 – 1983

Stephen Nisbet 1983 – 1984

Victor Wier 1984 – 1985

Jean Borst Brown 1985 – 1987

Mildred Ast 1987 – 1989

Emmalou Wilson 1989 – 1991

Beverly Kaiser 1991 – 1993

Wilbur Dick 1993 – 1994

Mary Wilhelmsen 1994 – 1996

Richard Brame 1996 – 1998

James Keech 1998 – 2000

Beverly Pringle 2000 – 2001

Gladys Peeples-Burks 2001 – 2004

Doris De Witt 2004 – 2006

Norma Goldner 2006 – 2008

Patricia E. Wightman-Fisk 2008 – 2010

Co-Presidents 2010-2011

Patricia E. Wightman-Fisk

& Norma Goldner

Rochelle Strunk 2011 – 2013

George Pica 2013 – 2018

Chapter Recognition

Silver Seal – 2005 **Gold Seal** 2006—2024

Chapter History Narrative

The Berrien County Chapter has always welcomed all public school retirees. Its purpose has been to help school retirees live in health and dignity and to improve education in Michigan. Though formed as a group primarily to promote the interests of retired school personnel and educational issues in Michigan, one of the most pleasurable aspects of the group is a social one. Meeting and keeping in touch with old friends and colleagues has always been a bonus to attending meetings.

The Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel (MARSP-BCC) began in 1968 as the Berrien County Retired Public School Employees Association when the Kalamazoo Chapter of the Michigan Retired Teachers Association sent a list of Berrien County retired teachers to Mrs. Alice Richie, a retired St. Joseph teacher. She and the other women on the list subsequently met to discuss forming a local chapter.

The first meeting of our organization was held on Wednesday, March 13, 1968, in the auditorium of the Maud Preston Palenske Library in Saint Joseph, Michigan, with Miss Marianne Bard presiding as temporary chairman. The first elected president of the Berrien County Retired Public School Employees Association was Mrs. Frederick Ollhoff, who accepted the Charter for the Berrien County group at the annual meeting of the Michigan Retired Teachers Association (MRTA) held on May 2nd, 1968 in Lansing. The retirees attending were:

From Benton Harbor: Alice Canfield, Emma Clemmens, Ruth Courtright, Shirley Denton, Florence Getzlaff, Eulah Glade, Lela Kittel, Mildred Ochs, Evelyn Vogel, Mabel M. Willmeng.

From Millburg: Gladys Fricke.

From Saint Joseph: Marianne Bard, Madge Bartz, Isabel Geik, Margaret Hanna, Ruth Ollhoff, Alice Ritchie, Margaret Robb, Grace Stanford, Ruth Tomlinson, Loretta White

From Watervliet: Mildred Cronin, Wilma Schaus.

The group appointed Marianne Bard to serve as temporary chair and Mildred Ochs to serve as temporary secretary. Dorothy Dunbar, the first treasurer, served for two years. Mrs. Frederick

Ollhoff, who accepted the Charter for the Berrien County group at the annual meeting of the Michigan Retired Teachers Association (MRTA) held on May 2nd, 1968 in Lansing.

In 1974, the Michigan Retired Teachers Association became the Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel and we were then a chapter of MARSP. In 1988, Berrien County's name was listed in our program book as Berrien County Association of Retired School Personnel. Since the first meeting in 1968, the organization grew to 800 members in 1997. In 2008, the name was changed to Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel-Berrien County Chapter (MARSP-BCC).

The Chapter's first newsletter was started by Emma Lou Wilson and the first membership newsletter was published in August of 1989. Since that time there have been four newsletters published each year. The first volume was entitled *Emmalou's Inkings*. The second volume's name was changed to *Beverly's Bulletin* and very soon to see the third volume since the name was changed again by the Executive Board at the July 1992 meeting to *MARSP-BCC Newsletter*.

In 1971, the organization sponsored a program to help school personnel prepare for retirement. Since then, annual workshops have provided valuable retirement information to school personnel planning to retire and to those already retired. In 1991, the scholarship program to help students become teachers was established. And at about the same time on the social front, the Chapter began having summer picnics. The first ones were held at a park in Berrien Springs, with Wilbur Dick's orchestra providing the music.

In 1991, a committee was organized to promote a scholarship to be presented to a junior or senior in a four year institution who is studying in the field of education. This committee worked very hard over the year and presented the first \$500.00 scholarship to Amy Lynn Rambo at the May 1992 general meeting. As of June 10, 2014, \$22,750 has been given in scholarships. The list of scholarship recipients and scholarship amounts are available in a separate document.

In the early 1990s summer picnics were organized and Wilbur Dick and his Orchestra provided the music.

The 25th Anniversary of BCC was held at the Mendel Center, Lake Michigan College, on May 4, 1993. Over 300 members and guests attended the celebration, including MARSP State and MARSP Area officials as well as officers of many surrounding chapters. Many of these individuals were recognized and some spoke to the gathering.

The 30th Anniversary of BCC was celebrated at the Saint Joseph Kicker's Club in Arden, October 6, 1998. The featured speakers were Bonnie Carpenter, MARSP Executive Director, and John Proos, representing U.S. Congressman Fred Upton. Other distinguished guests were MARSP President Clarence Miller, MARSP Vice - President John Caldwell and Dr. Penny Carlson - Carmichael, MARSP Area 22 Director. Two Charter Members, Ruth Ollhoff and Margaret Hanna were honored. All past presidents, including our first president Ruth Ollhoff, were honored, as well as former MARSP Distinguished Service Award recipients, and former BCC Dedicated Service Award winners. There were some 240 members and guests in attendance.

March of 2003 marked our 35th year.

We anticipate moving forward and changing with the times guided by our goals and the purpose of the organization.

In December of 2005, Blue Cross/Blue Shield stopped using Social Security Numbers on ID Cards and all other correspondence.

The BCARSP website started in August of 2006.

In 2007, because of weather conditions, the board changed the December and February meetings to June and September.

On October 1, 2008, the MPSERS Board changed the vision care providers from VSP to EyeMed Vision Care. The chapter's name was changed from Berrien County Association of Retired School Personnel [BCARSP] to Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel – Berrien County Chapter [MARSP–BCC] to meet the Internal Revenue Service requirement that the organization's name indicate that the organization is part of a parent organization.

In March of 2008 we celebrated our 40th year of service to the retired personnel of Berrien County. In 2008, the scholarships given to students from the chapter reached a total of \$15,000.

In April 2009, the Chapter Delegates and members, no longer had to travel to a regional location for the Annual Conference. To save costs and enable more to get the information directly, the business of the MARSP Annual Meeting was conducted during the chapter meeting and included a DVD presentation and discussion conducted by the Area 22 officers.

In 2009, three special programs, "The Railroad Cometh," "Tribute to the Veterans," and "The Misfits" entertained the MARSP-BCC members at the luncheons. The June meeting featured the two \$750 scholarship winners. Program Chairman Don Alsbro won the Margaret B. Upton Volunteer Leadership Award for his work on the "Lest We Forget" tribute to veterans. During the year, the chapter made donations in memory of Mildred L. Ast and Ernie Dear as well as several other members.

In 2010, the four membership meetings included: Florence Wolfanger and her "Therapy Dogs in Hospice," Vietnam veterans presenting "Lest We Forget the Vietnam War," the Annual Meeting which featured a MARSP DVD-Presentation, and finally, the introduction of the two \$750 scholarship winners as well as a "Lest We Forget Tribute to American Veterans." At the Annual Meeting, Charles H. Ahnert—Newsletter editor, Yearbook publisher, and Treasurer—received a MARSP Distinguished Service Award for his 19 years in office. Fran Schroeder was presented a Certificate of Appreciation for her many years of collecting obituaries for the chapter.

During 2010-2011, Jean Cellentani presented "Exercise for Seniors" at September luncheon meeting at Pebblewood Restaurant, and for the November luncheon at Chapel Hill United Methodist Church, Jill Claeys, from Lake Michigan College, provided information on wellness. The April MARSP Annual Meeting with DVD presentation held at the Stevensville United Methodist Church was conducted by Area 22 Director Bob Kucera. Also in April, the retirement seminar scheduled by Richard Brame was held at the Berrien RESA and included sessions on the MPSERS Retirement plan Blue Cross—Blue Shield & Medicare, and Social Security. For the June meeting at the St. Joseph-Lincoln Senior, Center Ray and Shirley Truhn presented a program on the Personal Energy Transportation, Charles Jespersion presented a program on the International Rotary Water Purification Program, our new president Rochelle Strunk was installed as our new president by Doris

DeWitt, \$750 scholarships were presented to Elizabeth Edwards and Meghan Brown, and the new MARSP-BCC sign was displayed. Charles Long became chapter treasurer and took over publication of the newsletter and directory. During the year, we collected and donated eyeglasses and food. We also donated the school supplies that had been used for the luncheon meeting table décor. This year was the 60th anniversary of MARSP, the year that MARSP membership reached a record high, and the year Bonnie Carpenter retired after 28 years as MARSP's executive director. It was also a time of economic change in Michigan—and the nation—that affected both current and retired personnel.

During 2011-2012, Mark Guastella became MARSP Executive Director. With the state and the nation facing economic challenges, MARSP had a busy year working to effect change in legislation that negatively impacted MSPERS retirees. In April, three hundred attended the retirement seminar sponsored by MARSP-BCC and held at the Berrien RESA. In addition to the MARSP Annual Meeting, the programs for the membership meetings included two programs presented by the Region IV Area Agency on Aging and a video history of the House of David. The Program Committee added musical performances to the luncheon meetings. During the June meeting, George Pica was elected vice president and Audrey Antosz and Peter O'Connor received two \$750 scholarships provided by contributions from MARSP-BCC members. Contributions in memory of Vivian Schillio were received to fund scholarships for school speech and language pathologists.

During 2012-2013, two scholarships totaling \$3,000 were given in memory of Vivian Schillo. The \$750 Beverly Pringle Scholarship was given to Allison Gleiss. Luncheon meeting programs included John Bettig (survivor of Communism, Nazism, and a displacement camp), Judy Shehigian on the history of one-room schools in Michigan, and MARSP President Les Nixon. Area 22 Assistant Director Charles Long conducted the MARSP Annual Meeting in the absence of Area 22 Director Bob Kucera. During the June membership meeting, Diane Buczwinski, secretary and Scholarship Committee chair, received the MARSP-BCC Award for Dedicated Service; and Rochelle Strunk, chapter president, conducted the installation of George Pica as 2013-2014 chapter president.

During 2013-2014, in addition to the MARSP Annual Meeting with a new, interview format for the DVD presentation, membership meeting programs included a presentation on the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor, a presentation on insurance and other retirement issues by MARSP Executive Director Mark Guastella, and Michael Kline's presentation on Al Capone and the St. Valentine Day Massacre. During two meetings, students from the Citadel Dance and Music Center performed music. During the June meeting, pianist Katie Kempf performed and Sally Cheek presented Jessica Trail and Karleann Stankiewicz with \$750 scholarships on behalf of the Scholarship Committee and the Berrien County Chapter. During the year, the number of call coordinators increased to eight and the number of callers increased to forty-two. Efforts to find a member willing to serve as first vice president were unsuccessful. In March, thanks to the efforts of Pat Wightman-Fisk, a special event enabled sixty members to meet in the Sunset area of the Shawdowland Ballroom in Saint Joseph, Michigan, for presentations on the Silver Beach Amusement Park (closed in 1971) and the new Silver Beach Carousel (opened in 2010). The special event included coffee and dessert and an opportunity to view and ride the carousel. Sinie Bass became one of the chapter's two online facilitators. Online facilitators have access to the MARSP database to facilitate MARSP and MARSP-BCC membership. Mary Anne Claywell was elected and installed for a two-year term as second vice president. Diane Buczwinski was elected and installed as secretary for another two years; Charles Long was elected and installed as treasurer for another two years. To eliminate the cost of yearbook publication, the board made the decision to have the yearbook published by School District Directories, a division of Cathedral Directories. The publication cost is paid by yearbook advertisers obtained by School District Directories.

During 2014-2015, for the September meeting, Tracy Gierado, North Berrien Historical Museum Executive Director and Curator, presented *Legends of Paw Paw Lake*, an illustrated overview of Paw Paw Lake history. For the November meeting, Robert Myers, curator of the History Center at Courthouse Square, presented the PowerPoint program *Locomotives Along the Lakeshore: Railroads of Berrien County, Michigan*. Only 85 attended the April MARSP Annual Conference. Charles Long, Area

22 Assistant Director conducted the MARSP Annual Meeting while Area 22 Director conducted the meeting for another Area 22 chapter meeting on the same day. The reason for the low attendance (135 attended the 2014 meeting) is unknown, but Easter weekend coming a week before the meeting is thought to have been a factor. Few changes were made in retirees' pensions and insurance, and no major issues were presented in the DVD presentation. During the April 14 MARSP-BCC meeting, the current officers (George Pica, Mary Anne Claywell, Charles Long, and Diane Buczwinski) were elected to another two-year term, but the position of second vice president remained unfilled.

During the June 9th meeting Dr. Gyl Kasewurm dispelled the myths of hearing healthcare and shared information on the latest technology. Thanks to the contributions of members attending the luncheon meetings, the two 2015 MARSP-BCC Scholarships were increased from \$750 to \$1,000 and presented to Lise Von Koenig and Alyvia Nadea. The \$2,000 balance of the funds provided by Dr. Serge Schillio in memory of his wife Vivian was awarded to Maggie Patnoudes. Scholarship Chair Diane Buczwinski announced that the chapter would be receiving 5% of the estate of Dorothy Hawks, approximately \$90,000, to fund scholarships. The chapter's scholarship will be renamed the Dorothy Hawks Scholarship, and members will no longer be asked to contribute to chapter scholarships. On June 19th, George Pica, Mary Anne Claywell, Sinie Bass, and Charles Long attended the MARSP leadership conference held at the Kalamazoo Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) conducted by Executive Director Mark Guastella, President Bob Wiles, and Membership Co-Chair Pamela Trask. During the year the chapter adjusted to MARSP providing chapter member information in the form of Excel worksheets instead of allowing the chapter's Online Facilitators direct access to the MARSP database.

During 2015-2016, for the September meeting, Robert Myers from the History Center at Courthouse Square in Berrien Springs presented "The *RMS Titanic* and Southwest Michigan." The meeting was held at the Berrien RESA, which had not been used as a meeting place for several years because of the number attending exceeded the meeting room capacity. For November, J. Haynes from Hospice at Home presented the program. In April, Area 22 Director Bob Kucera conducted the

meeting. During the April meeting, the membership approved increasing the executive board and board officers by including the three immediate past presidents. (Previously, only the immediate past president was included.) On April 20 and 21, the chapter again sponsored the two-day Retirement Planning Seminar. For June, chapter member Buzz Calvert presented "Forgotten Outposts and Ancient Sites," and the members learned about the people, life, and sites in Michigan's ancient history.

In January, the chapter received the first payment from the Dorothy Hawks estate and \$34,000 was invested in funds of the American Funds Service Company. At the June meeting, Jennifer Wharton received the first Dorothy Hawks Scholarship. Because only one applicant qualified for the award, the amount of the award for this year was increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

The chapter ended the year with 685 members; however, 103 of 2015-2016 members had not yet renewed their membership. The position of second vice president remained unfilled.

During 2016-2017, the chapter held four membership meetings. On September 12, the program was on Pokagon Culture and History. On November 8, 2016, the program was on Benton Harbor and Saint Joseph history. Area 22 Director Charles Long conducted the MARSP annual meeting with the DVD presentation on April 11, 2017. On June 13, 2017, Berrien County Deputy Sheriff Kelly Laesch spoke on senior safety and three \$1,500 scholarships were awarded. The Retirement Planning Seminar provided information about Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan on April 19, 2017, and the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS) on April 20, 2017.

During the year, MARSP communicated concern and the need for member response to legislative efforts to replace the defined benefit retirement with a 401K retirement for new retirees. The chapter received the balance of the Dorothy Hawks bequest for scholarships and ended the year with \$87,185.47 invested for scholarships. Three \$1,500 Dorothy Hawks Scholarships were presented during the June meeting. The chapter was unable to find a member willing to fill the first vice president vacancy or to replace Charles Long as treasurer. Diane Buczwinski completed fourteen years as chair of the Scholarship Committee; Craig Molitor will become chair on July 1, 2018. On June 30, 2017, the chapter had 504 2018 members, 148 life members,

and 111 members who had not renewed their 2017 membership.

During 2017-2018, for the September meeting, member Anita Kay Walker described river cruises in the United States and overseas. For the November meeting, Medal of Honor recipient U.S. Army Specialist 5th Class James “Doc” McCloughan described his military experience in Vietnam. (Before and after his military service, McCloughan taught at South Haven High School until his retirement in 2008.) Following the DVD presentation at the April meeting, Area 22 Director Charles Long described challenges faced by public school employees, public school retirees, MARSP, and MARSP chapters. For the June meeting, the Alzheimer Association presentation did not get scheduled; however, the descriptions of past accomplishments and future plans by the four scholarship recipients filled the void.

On October 24, 2017, Membership Chair Sinie Bass-Wilburn attended membership training at the MARSP office. During the April meeting, George Pica received the 2018 Chapter Service Award. During the June meeting Harold Bragg was sworn in as chapter president and Nancy Holda Weakas as chapter secretary. On July 1, 2018, they will replace George Pica and Diane Buczwinski, who served as secretary for ten years. Despite efforts, no candidate was found for chapter treasurer. Among the changes in medical insurance, beginning January 1, 2018, hearing exams and hearing aids could only be provided through the TruHearing network.

On June 30, 2018, the chapter had 510 2019 members, 141 life members, and 112 members who had not renewed their 2018 membership.

During 2018-2019, Earlene Whorton took over responsibility for the 10 call coordinators and 29 callers, Donna Strine became chapter historian, and Sinie Bass Wilburn was awarded the 2019 Chapter Service Award for her outstanding work on membership.

On October 18, George Pica completed the School Ambassador training at the MARSP office. On May 15, Harold Bragg participated in the MARSP legislative outreach at the state capitol.

As in recent years, the chapter contributed \$500 to the MARSP Voluntary Benefit Defense Fund and \$100 to the MARSP golf outing.

The position of first vice president continued to remain vacant and no one was will to take over as chapter treasurer.

The September meeting program on ballot proposals was presented by the League of Women Voters; the November program on the history of the Saint Joseph lighthouses was presented by the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center; the April program was the MARSP DVD presentation and report by Area 22 Director Charles Long; the June program on Calling All Colors was presented by Mary Alice Johnson and chapter president Harold Bragg.

During the June 11, 2019, membership meeting, Dorothy Hawks Scholarships totaling \$9,000 were awarded Natalie Rush, Lindsay Ebeling, Nicole Mucha, Keegan Downey and Nicole Oman. Since 1991, the chapter has given more than \$50,000 in scholarships.

On June 30, 2019, the chapter had 431 2020 members, 134 life members, and 167 members who had not renewed their 2019 membership.

The 2019-2020 year began well with the September 10, 2019, presentation by Loreen Niewenhuis titled “A 1000-Mile Walk on the Beach.” Because of a winter storm, the program presenter and many members were unable to attend the November 12, 2019, meeting. COVID-19 resulted in the cancellation of the April and June meetings.

Dorothy Hawks Scholarship checks totaling \$10,500 were mailed to Sarah Dubbert, Karlee Jane Liles, Nicole Oman, Kyra Reese, Natalie Rush, and John J. Wendland. The chapter contributed \$100 to MARSP scholarships, \$300 to the Voluntary Benefit Defense Fund, and \$495.99 to DonorsChoose.org.

The chapter ended the year with terms expiring for president and second vice president and positions vacant for first vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

On June 30, 2020, the chapter had 322 renewed for 2021, 132 life members, and 244 members who had not renewed their 2020 membership; however, MARSP is a month behind in processing membership payments.

The 2020-2021 year was dominated by the constraints of COVID-19. The chapter’s 2020-2021 directory was published August 6, 2020, and a newsletter was published May 11, 2021; however, both the September 8 and October 13 membership meetings were cancelled. The board met November 13, 2020, and March 23, 2021, via Zoom. The board approved an April payment of \$100 to the MARSP Foundation for scholarships and a June payment of \$200 to the MARSP Voluntary Benefit Defense Fund. The board also met April 27, 2020, to rehearse the

May 11 membership meeting. The membership meeting held May 11 via Zoom included the MARSP annual video and live participation by MARSP Executive Director Royce Humm; however, only nineteen members attended the meeting. Harold Bragg was elected president and Mary Ann Claywell was elected second vice president for the two-year term ending June 30, 2023. Charles Long was elected treasurer for the one-year term ending June 30, 2022. The positions for first vice president and secretary remained unfilled. The June 8, 2021, meeting was cancelled, but Dorothy Hawks Scholarships were awarded to John J. Wendland (\$3,000), Matthew Kennedy (\$2,500), and Vanessa Crisenberry (\$2,500). On June 30, 2021, the chapter had 363 2022 members, 124 life members, and 181 members who had not renewed their 2020-2021 membership.

The 2021-2022 directory and fall newsletter were published and mailed to members; however, COVID resulted in the cancelation of the September 14 and October 12 membership meetings. The redesign of the chapter website created in 2006 was completed September 2, 2021, at a cost of \$560.

In anticipation of in-person meetings, Earlene Whorton, working with Charles Long, updated the lists call coordinators and callers. Sixty-five members attended the May 11, 2022, meeting at Pebblewood Restaurant and Banquet Hall in Bridgman. Charles Long gave his report as Area 22 Director, but the materials and DVD video presentation requested from MARSP were mailed to the wrong address and not available for the meeting.

Counting 15 scholarship guests, seventy-seven attended the June 14 meeting. Thanks to the efforts of the Scholarship Committee (George Pica, Craig Molitor, Diane Buczwinski, Sharon Alsbro, Melanie McCammon, and Jeannie Dehring), Dorothy Hawks Scholarship were awarded to Kyra Reese (\$1,500), Vanessa Crisenberry (\$1,500), Hannah Harrison (\$2,000), Morgan Tourangeau (\$2,000), and Camille Bauer (\$2,000). Charles Long was elected treasurer for a one-year term ending June 30, 2023; however, the positions of first vice president and secretary remained unfilled. The year ended with 120 life members, 354 2023 members, and 122 2022 members not yet renewed for 2023.

During 2022-2023 year, the chapter board met at the Coloma Public Library on August 1 and April 3. The directory was mailed in August, and the chapter newsletter was mailed in August and April. Mary Anne Claywell scheduled the four membership meetings at the Berrien RESA and selected the menus. The meeting cost for members was held to \$13. For the September 13 meeting, Faith Dowd described Region IV Area Agency on Aging services, answered questions, and provided informative handouts. For the October 12 meeting, Larry Ward described and showed photos of his experience climbing Alaska's Mount Denali. On April 20, Charles Long ended his four years as MARSP Area 22 Assistant Director and seven years as Area 22 Director. In April, Earlene Whorton updated the list of call coordinators and callers for the May and June meetings. Larry Ward returned for the May 9 meeting and shared his experience hiking the 1,160 miles of the Appalachian Trail. During the May meeting, officers were elected for a two-year term beginning July 1, 2023: Harold Bragg (president), George Pica (first vice president), Mary Anne Claywell (second vice president), and Martha Makay (secretary). Charles Long was elected to serve as treasurer from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The Cass chapter closed in 2023, and a few Cass members joined the Berrien chapter, including Martha Makay. During the June 13 meeting, Dorothy Hawks Scholarships were presented to Vanessa Crisenberry (\$1,500) and Hannah Harrison (\$2,000) and Berrien County Deputy Sheriff Kelly Laesch discussed senior safety. The year ended with 115 life members, 327 2024 members, and 152 2023 members not yet renewed for 2024.

During 2023-2024 the fall and spring newsletters were published; however, for reasons unknown, Cathedral Directories failed to publish the chapter directory that had been submitted for publication.

At the September 12 membership meeting, Mosaic Executive Director, Gabrielle Engle, described the Mosaic mission of transforming lives. At the October 12 membership meeting, Jill Adams, Director of Berrien County Parks Department., presented an overview of seven park properties.

At the May 14 membership meeting, Dr. Loren Hamel, President, Corewell Health Loren Hamel, M.D. described the latest facility investments and industry trends impacting health care locally and throughout the State of Michigan. MARSP Past President and Area 22 Director Robert Kucera

provided an update on MARSP and presented the MARSP annual video and Sandy Beiter presented insurance information and answer questions. Members contributed to the MARSP Voluntary Benefit Defense Fund and the chapter added enough to make a \$500 contribution to the fund. Barbara Peebles was elected treasurer for the July 1, 2024—June 30, 2026, term. Mary Anne Claywell could not attend the meeting but Harold Bragg presented her the MARSP-BCC Award for Dedicated Service shortly before her death on June 4, 2024.

At the June 11th membership meeting, Michelle McCoskey, Director of Education at Fernwood Botanical Garden presented Fernwood's history, scenic gardens and services. The members approved the revised chapter bylaws and committee descriptions and scholarships were awarded Dulce Lopez-Lara (\$2,000), Vanessa Crisenbery (\$2,000) and Abigail Mead (\$1,500). Abigail missed the meeting, but the Scholarship Committee voted to give her the award. The year ended with 110 life members, 339 2025 members, and 117 2024 members not yet renewed for 2025.