

History of Summit County Retired Teachers Association

The Summit County Retired Teachers Association was formed in the early 1950s by combining the Akron Retired Teachers Association (begun in 1935) with the Cuyahoga Falls Retired Teachers Association. All retired teachers in Summit County were invited to join.

The meetings were held at South High School, East High School, the Summit Federal Credit Union, the Cathedral Buffet in Cuyahoga Falls, the Tangier restaurant in Akron, and Guy's Party Center where they are currently held. Picnics were occasionally held in Goodyear and Sand Run Metropolitan Parks in Akron.

The following members have served as president: Guy Swartzel, John Wagner, Charles Querry, John Griffith, Harland Horton, Virginia Ocasek, Charles Schifano, Faith Sherman, Oliver Ocasek, Martha Keisler, Blin Scatterday, Bob Frutchey, Bob Dengler, Mary Lou Swartz, Paul DiMascio, and Johnnette Curry.

Many SCRТА members have done outstanding things in the community and state. Here are a few of their accomplishments in the earlier days of the Association. Buchtel High School teacher Willis Neuenschwander helped Akron become one of the first cities in the nation to offer driver education. At Akron's West High School Henry M. Horst started a Student Tutoring System that found advocates from coast to coast. Jim Elderkin was very active in the Weathervane Theater in Akron. Faith Sherman, Elizabeth Smith, and Eileen Knapp were presidents of North Eastern Ohio Teachers' Association. Willis Eckert was instrumental in forming the Summit School Employees Federal Credit Union. Minnie Spuller pioneered an education program for handicapped children. Arthur Peoples was president of Classroom Teachers of the Ohio Education Association. Oliver Ocasek was a state senator and on the State Board of Education. Horace Jellison was a pioneer in organizing the internationally known All American Soap Box Derby, one of the nation's summer highlights. Betty Ocasek Peters served on the State Teachers Retirement Board as one of our retired representatives. Gladys V. Arbogast was one of the earliest citizens to promote preserving Stan Hywet Hall. Lila Wagner started a program for Ohio children to save Malabar Farm.

Dozens of SCRТА members were delegates to National Education Association representative assemblies throughout the years. Others served in offices of the Ohio Retired Teachers Association and were active with its national counterpart.

SCRТА has awarded many thousands of dollars in scholarships to Summit County graduates and has had numerous community service projects. Members have volunteered countless hours to the Association and the community in various schools, places of worship, and other organizations. The largest long-time project and the one receiving the most generous donations was that of helping to furnish the new Ronald McDonald House (now called Ronald McDonald House Charities) at Akron Children's Hospital beginning in 1985. SCRТА recently resumed support of the Akron house through the RMHC. Newsletter items provide details about current SCRТА community service and scholarships.

The Association has a history of strong support for legislation that benefits Ohio's public schools, their employees, and retirees and has fought bills that would weaken the schools or the retirement system.