



GCRA September 2025 Newsletter & Updates

Fall Social on October 14 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. | Alumni Welcome Center

This new event is a fantastic opportunity to connect with fellow retirees before the busy holiday season. The social will take place at the new University Advancement location at 135 N. Wilkinson St., directly across from Bell Hall. Please note that we will not be providing refreshments, so we encourage you to bring your own.

To alleviate parking concerns, the event is being held during GCSU's Fall Break. Street parking is available as well as the downtown parking lot. University Advancement has 10 visitor spaces, which may be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. To request a visitor pass, please email Lori Monney (lori.monney@gcsu.edu). If you do not have mobility issues, we encourage you to park nearby and walk to the event.

Member Benefits

Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education

<https://www.arohe.org>

The Georgia College Retiree Association is a member of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE). This membership allows our retirees access. AROHE supports all phases of faculty/staff retirement through

a dynamic member network that links retired faculty/staff associations, retiree and emeriti centers, and campus offices. AROHE provides resources and connections to increase retirees' value to their colleges/universities, communities, and professions in the areas of philanthropy, advocacy on behalf of the institution, volunteerism, and institutional knowledge and commitment. Its mission is to champion transformative practices to support all stages of faculty and staff retirement, the mutually beneficial engagement of retirees with one another and with their institutions, and their continuing contributions to campus and community life.

The resource is available to you. Through our institutional membership, you have general access to the information on the site. Several of us are 'bundle members', which provides us with access to all the information. Should you want more information, additional access or have questions, please contact Paul Jahr (paul.jahr@gcsu.edu).

AROHE

Spotlight on Retirees

Our retirees continue to make remarkable contributions and pursue exciting new adventures in retirement. This month, we reached out to several retirees to find out what they are doing after retirement.

Dr. Karen Berman | *Next Chapter*

When I retired from GCSU in 2021 as chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, I left a whirlwind of late night theatre rehearsals in Russell Auditorium and a thrilling, non-stop world of auditions, interaction with patrons, and coaching stirring in-class acting presentations.

The sudden quiet left me searching for a new mission. A phone call from a former GCSU colleague, Professor of Music Wendy Mullen, asking how we might work together, propelled me forward. I decided to write my first book and invited a friend to co-edit. Having directed many Holocaust plays, including Cabaret, I decided to explore the topic of the Holocaust in my book. My study abroad, taking GCSU students to the Czech Republic to perform plays that my husband and I wrote about Czech heroes of the Holocaust, would serve as a catalyst. 4 ½ years later, a two-volume book is now born, and Professor Mullen's chapter is included.

The two-volume book I co-edited and contributed to is titled *Stories of the Holocaust: Art for Healing and Renewal*. Volume I: Onstage and in Concert (ISBN:

978-1-956864-67-0) and Volume II: On Screen and in the Gallery (ISBN: 978-1-956864-68-7) and was published in June 2025 by IPBooks (International Psychoanalytic Books, 2025) and is available at IPBooks.net, Amazon, and Kindle.

During the book process, I missed engaging with students. Through the Department of Theatre and Dance, I helped present staged readings of Holocaust plays at GCSU in the Black Box Theatre as part of the National Jewish Theater Foundation's Holocaust Remembrance Readings. It has been a very rewarding experience mentoring the student directors and moderating talkbacks after the readings. These post-retirement activities have provided me with a new exciting purpose.



Diane and Paul Jahr | *Seeing the World*

Many of you remember Diane and me taking vacation cruises every year while we were both working. We are proud to report that since retirement almost 14 years ago, the tradition continues.

This past December, we undertook our most ambitious cruise yet. It was an unbelievable educational, enlightening, and exciting experience that challenged our stereotypes of cultures around the world.

If you would like to know more details, read on.

The entire adventure amounted to being gone from home for over 190 days. Not something I ever thought we would do until now that it is over. Fortunately, we had a dear friend who checked in on our house and vehicles twice a week.

The ship carried approximately 900 guests and 425 staff members. During our journey, many of those fellow travelers became close friends, and together we formed a genuine sense of community, traveling as one big family.

We made port in several places in the Caribbean before stopping in Los Angeles (LA). In LA, we met Diane's sister and her family for lunch and did some shopping.

You always forget something.

From LA, we headed to Hawaii and then to several islands in the South Pacific, providing 12 sea days to relax on the vessel. Next, we made our way to 5 ports in New Zealand and 5 ports in Australia. We spent 7 days in Indonesia visiting the Komodo National Park, Bali, Jakarta, and Singapore for 2 days.

We visited 3 ports in Malaysia: Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Seychelles. We left the vessel for a 6-day overland trip to India, which was tremendous. We spent a day at the Taj Mahal. It was magnificent and no picture does it justice. We happened to be there for their national holiday of Holi, which is where they throw colored chalk over one another. For us, it was 60 to 80-year-olds acting like 3-year-olds.

We reboarded the vessel in the Seychelles. We sailed for over 30 days around the east and west coasts of Africa. We stopped in Kenya, Madagascar, Maputo, Durban, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Cape Verde, and Morocco. In Morocco, we left the vessel for 3 days, including a stop in Marrakesh, which was extremely educational. We also enjoyed two, day-long safaris in South Africa.

Leaving Africa, we stopped in Spain and Portugal before London. In London, 650 of our fellow world cruisers left the ship, leaving about 200 of us to continue to New York. In England, we were able to reconnect with dear friends from previous cruises who live in Nottingham. They were able to come to the ship and visit us for 2 days. It was wonderful to catch up with them.

We left London and sailed around the United Kingdom. We made additional stops in Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Up next, we sailed to Norway for 5 ports over 10 days and 4 ports in Iceland.

Our attempts to sail around Greenland were difficult. Bad and rough weather finally caught up with us. We missed several ports due to ice and high winds. We had one stop in Halifax, Canada, before reaching New York City.

We sailed into New York Harbor around 6 am and had an inspirational arrival as the Statue of Liberty greeted us in all her glory! We left the vessel around 9:30 am and went to the hotel in midtown. Our son, Drew, and his fiancée, Maggie, flew in from Texas to meet us at the hotel. We spent 4 days together. We spent time visiting and had fun being tourists. We rode several Hop-On, Hop-Off bus lines, visited the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, and attended the Broadway play Wicked. This was all a wonderful way to bring our traveling adventures to a close.

Should your personal situation ever allow it, we hope you will consider a similar traveling experience and join us as members of the Spending Kids' Inheritance (SKI) Club.

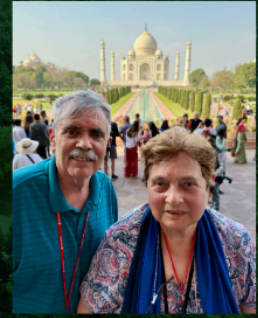
Diane and Paul Jahr



New Year



Holi Holiday



Taj Mahal

Artis Williamson | *Not One but Two New Careers*

I retired at the end of 2019 and have not slowed down. Today, I am a leading financial advisor with Ameriprise Financial, managing over \$100 million for clients (Artis Williamson, Financial Advisor in Milledgeville, GA). In addition, I am a trip leader and guide for Sojourn Bicycling and Active Vacations (www.gosojourn.com), where I lead biking, hiking, and kayaking vacations across the United States and Canada. Outside of work, I chair the Ambassador Team for the Milledgeville Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, volunteer to deliver Meals on Wheels (I've been volunteering to deliver for more than 36 years), and I remain strong in my faith and active as a volunteer in our home church at Northridge Christian.

Artis Williamson



Ameriprise Financial

Outside Glacier National Park,
West Glacier, MontanaOutside Saguaro National Park,
Tucson, Arizona

Do you have a retirement journey or achievement you'd like to share, or do you know a fellow retiree whose story deserves the spotlight? We invite you to submit your experiences and recommendations to gcra@gcsu.edu. Join us in honoring the remarkable contributions and adventures within our community!

Spotlight on Georgia College History by Dr. Bob Wilson



Three people shaped the course and indeed the very existence of Georgia College —President Marvin M. Parks, President Rosemary DePaolo and faculty member, Julia A. Flisch. This sketch focuses on the presidency of Dr. Marvin M. Parks.

Marvin Parks came from Marietta. In the 1890s, he attended Emory, the University of Chicago, and Harvard. He was hired in 1903 as a professor of pedagogy. Intensely ambitious, this dynamic young man was appointed acting president in late 1904 as President J. Harris Chappell was suffering from an ultimately fatal onset of tuberculosis. Parks took over fully in 1906. He devoted himself to the success of our college. He did take a step backward from President Chappell and Julia Flisch in his attitude toward female education. He ardently believed that young women should be educated, but that education, he felt, should not encourage women to transcend their traditional sphere. For example, he established classes in the proper way to raise poultry, should they become farmer's wives. He believed that the girls should be physically fit and thought basketball would be the perfect sport. Consequently, near where the A&S building now stands, it appears that the first place the new game of basketball was played in Georgia was on a court on the Georgia Normal & Industrial College (GN&IC) campus.

Parks became a father figure to the young women, but he was known for quickly expelling a girl for any violation of the rules. He was revered not only on the campus but also in the community. In 1911, Parks secured funds for a new classroom building and two years later, the Board of Directors announced that the building would be named Parks Hall after him. Campus buildings erected under Parks included Chappell Hall (1907), Ennis Hall (1920), Russell Auditorium/Lanier (1926) and Terrell dormitory (1908). Originally, Terrell was named for a prominent member of the Board of Directors, R.N. Lamar. However, Lamar was an outspoken critic of Parks. In 1913,

Parks changed the name of the building from Lamar Hall to Terrell Hall for Georgia Governor Joseph Terrell. One crossed Parks at one's peril.

Parks' great ambition was for GN&IC to be a fully independent, 4-year degree-granting institution. In 1917, after a hard-fought struggle with the University of Georgia, the Legislature did grant us exactly that status. In 1922, Governor Thomas Hardwick signed into law the act that changed our name from GN&IC to Georgia State College for Women. By 1926, Dr. Parks was raising funds to build an auditorium. Shortly after Russell Auditorium was built in December of 1926, Parks was struck and killed by a car while crossing a street in Tampa, Florida. The first event held in Russell Auditorium was Marvin Park's funeral. In 1927, the grief-stricken college and community built a college infirmary, Parks Memorial, named for Dr. Parks. Parks is buried in Memory Hill Cemetery with an impressive tombstone.

Events on the Horizon

Here are the anticipated events for the 2025-2026 Academic Year. Details will be shared when events are confirmed and finalized.

- ~ Fall GCRA Social – October 14 | 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Alumni Welcome Center
 - ~ President Cox's Holiday Brunch - November/December
 - ~ State of the University - February
 - ~ Homecoming – February
 - ~ Celebration of Excellence with a retiree reception following the event - April
 - ~ Spring GCRA Get Together and Meeting – May
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Resources

[University System of Georgia Shared Services](#) | Toll Free: 877-251-2644

[Teachers Retirement System of Georgia](#) | Phone: 404-352-6500

[Georgia College & State University Human Resources](#) | Phone: 478-445-5596

[Georgia College Retiree Association](#) | Email: gcra@gcsu.edu

Campus Engagement Opportunities

[User Forum on Leadership](#)

[TEDxGeorgiaCollege](#) – retirees can get discount tickets by contacting us:
gcra@gcsu.edu

[Learning in Retirement](#)

[62 or Older Program](#)

[Continuing and Professional Education](#)

We Would Value Your Input!

Click the button below to submit a short [feedback form](#) to share your thoughts with the GCRA Executive Council.

Feedback Form

GCRA Executive Council 2025 - 2026

Mike Augustine, Cindy Bowen, Ken Farr, Sandy Gangstead, Robin Harris, Paul Jahr, Kelly Pope, Craig Turner, Carol Ward, Artis Williamson and Bob Wilson

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gcsu.edu/retireeassociation

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Georgia College Retiree Association

[Email](#)

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Thank you to University Advancement for their assistance and support to the GCRA and the production of our newsletter.

For assistance or information regarding the Georgia College Retiree Association or information in this newsletter, please contact the GCRA at gcra@gcsu.edu or Cindy Bowen at cindy.bowen@gcsu.edu

Please also visit our website at www.gcsu.edu/retireeassociation for additional information

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