

January 2021, Erath County, Texas



ECARSE Celebrates 60 Years!



It is the early 1960s. John F. Kennedy is the President and Price Daniel is the Governor of Texas. The "Space Race" is underway, and the Dallas Cowboys is a new professional team in Texas. The population of the United States is 182,976,000, and Texas has 9,579,677 folks. Per capita income is \$5,315; a new house is about \$12,500, a gallon of gas around 27 cents, a movie ticket \$1, and a dozen eggs cost 30 cents. Erath County had a population of 16,236 in 1960. Tarleton State College had just started granting 4-year degrees in 1959. The average teacher's salary was \$4734. That is when the Erath County Retired Teachers Association was chartered by the National Retired Teachers Association on February 3, 1961, as a local unit of NRTA and TRTA.



It all began when Ethel Percy Andrus founded the National Retired Teachers Association in 1947 to address the health insurance needs of retired educators according to their particular economic situation. NRTA is the seed that grew into AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons. Gaining members helped bring about lower-cost group health and accident insurance for those over 65, lower-cost prescriptions, and eventually travel benefits. AARP/NRTA influence on federal and state governments continues today.



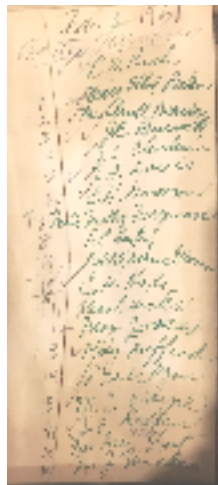
Then six local units in Texas sent delegates to the NRTA convention in Miami Beach, Florida, where they decided to meet and form a state organization in 1953 to be known as the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA). It was not financially practical in the early days to provide a headquarters office, so the earliest presidents kept TRTA files and records in their homes!



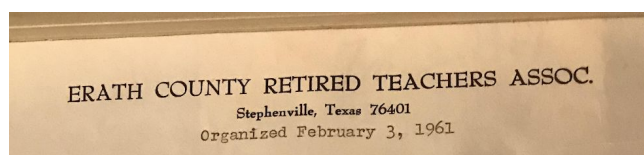
TRTA created twenty districts across the state to dispense information. The AARP/NRTA merger took place in 1982, and this led TRTA districts and local units to depend more on the state organization. TRTA finally declared itself autonomous in 1997.

CHARTER MEMBERS:

Miss Ethel Baker
Mr. Carroll Brandon
Mr. J.E. Burnett
Mr. J.S. Clendenin
Mr. S.F. Davis
Mr. C.H. Dawson
Miss Mattie Ferguson
Mr. Porter C. Gentry
Miss Dollie Marie Glover
Mr. C.H. Hale
Miss Pearl Hicks
Miss May Jones
Mr. Roy Mefferd
Miss Grace Ogan
Mr. M.T. Payne
Mr. J.E. Redden
Mr. L.G. Rich
Mrs. Grace Short
Mr. W.J. Wisdom



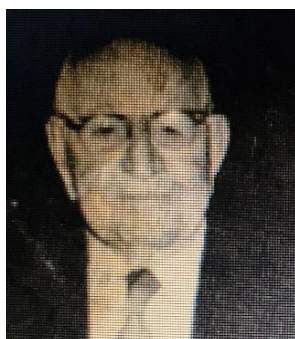
Like others across the state, nineteen Erath County retired public school and college educators saw the need to band together to improve their economic circumstances, as well as organize volunteerism in the community, continue to contribute to education, and enjoy fellowship with their peers. This led to the Erath County Retired Teachers Association charter in 1961. Mr. Porter Gentry, ECRTA first president, and W.J. Wisdom (TSU Wisdom Gym) were among the charter members. The name was changed to Erath County Association of Retired School Employees (ECARSE) in 2005 to include all TRS annuitants in Erath County.



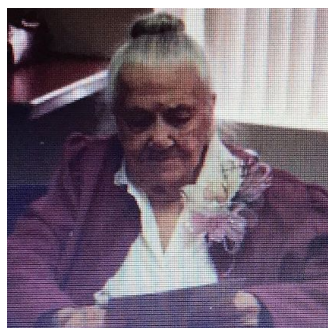
For many years, ECARSE meetings were held at the First United Methodist Church, Stephenville. By 2005 the venue changed to the Graham Street Church of Christ Family Center. However, since the beginning of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, meetings have been conducted via Zoom conferencing. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday each month, September-November and January-May. Currently ECARSE has 150 members while TRTA has over 94,000.

Membership is open to all TRS annuitants as well as anyone interested in public education.

STEPHENVILLE PROCEEDINGS		
Mr. George W. Tapp	1961-1971	
Mr. Paul Milburn	1971-1975	
Mr. Robert G. Cook	1975-1978	
Mr. G. L. Cook	1978-1979	
Mr. Donald William Cook	1979-1981	



Porter Gentry, first president



Grace Ogan, charter member



ECRTA presents flags for new SHS building



Don Jones presents book money to Dublin ISD

ECARSE provides volunteer services to the community through church and civic organizations, hospital auxiliary, food supply and delivery, and everyday services for friends and family.

ECARSE provides continued help for education through scholarships to current TSU students and student teachers, retirement education, and funds for books to county school libraries, among other educational volunteer services.

ECARSE provides information on protective services, healthy living advice, legislative news, and technology support for its members as well as many discounts on items of importance to retirees.

"Retirement is moving on to a new chapter in the book of life. I am glad to be a part of ECARSE getting up to date information, meeting with other retirees, learning new things from guest speakers at monthly programs."

-Jan Vaughn, TRTA District 15 & ECARSE Technology Chair

"What has meant the most to me is the ability to participate actively in supporting legislation that enriches the lives of retired teachers. I retired 20 years ago and my pension has never received a COLA."

-Linda Doyle, ECARSE Past President & current Parliamentarian

"ECARSE was one of the first groups to become a part of TRTA, and we have been an active player ever since. Bob and Pat Fain attended numerous TRTA State Conventions, and ECARSE has had several members serve in district and state leadership roles."

-Janis Petronis, TRTA District 15 President & ECARSE member

DO GOOD

*Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.*

-John Wesley

