

The History...

...of the Fairfax Education Association is one of long and proud service to the educators of Fairfax County. For over 50 years FEA has served as the voice of Fairfax teachers with our legislators at home and in Richmond, with county officials, with members of the school board, the superintendent and his staff. Throughout its history, FEA has stayed true to the mission of service to educators and to demanding the highest standards of education for the children of our county.



technology, teachers and administrators from the major county schools decided to get together once a month to discuss their professional concerns. A set of informal operating procedures was developed. A revitalized FEA now severed its last ties with the school system. It was independent. It rented office space in downtown Fairfax City.

In 1956 FEA leaders established the Fairfax Education Association Federal Credit

Union; today known as the Apple Federal Credit Union, the institution serves over 89,000 members. In the early 1960's, teacher dissatisfaction with their professional lives grew and so did their determination to change it. To this end its leaders, including FEA President William J. Burkholder who later became superintendent, primarily directed the activities of the organization.

By 1914 annual Virginia Educational Conferences were held in Richmond, Fairfax being assigned to state district 8 along with Alexandria County (now Arlington), Culpepper, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Louisa, Orange and Stafford. In 1920 the state association Journal listed for the first time a president of FEA, Mary M. Snead. By that time Fairfax had 100 percent membership in the State Association. The reason for that was quite simple. Membership was a requirement for employment. The Fairfax County School Board took state and local association dues directly out of teachers' salaries.

By 1930 Fairfax teachers were doing a superb job with the children of the county. The illiteracy rate among students had fallen in just five years from some 11 to 4.3 percent. Teachers began to think outside the box. Elizabeth Minor of Baileys Cross Roads School had her students write to four Indian schools in Arizona for first-hand information concerning the Hopi and Navajo tribes. The class got a reply from one of the four. They sent pictures of Washington, D.C., and stories of their home life, while in return received a Navajo doll, a blanket, a piece of the Petrified Forest, two pieces of pottery, and colored corn. Minor proudly reported that to her pupils Indians were no longer characters found only in books but real people.

The outbreak of the Second World War saw FEA members supporting the troops.

In 1946 a number of educational leaders from across the county saw the need for a stronger FEA. The postwar years witnessed a flurry of activism. Veterans of the war were not as docile as those who preceded them in the classroom. Separated by wide distances with only poor rural roads to connect them and with little in the way of communication

In 1961 FEA hired its first Executive Director, Paul Peter; this one-time radio announcer and teacher was an effective leader in desegregating the profession and having the FEA incorporated under state law. But many saw him as a 'tea and crumpets' man, one too much in the pocket of the superintendent. Thus, Allerton H. Barnes replaced him in 1968. The fact that Barnes had recently organized a strike in Denver, Colorado, caused concern among county leaders. He negotiated contracts that provided for full release time for the FEA president, a Sick Leave Bank and a joint school administration-FEA commission to work on matters of mutual concern.

Many of the rights teachers and education support professionals taken for granted today were secured in the 1960s. FEA signed the first recognized school employee collective bargaining agreement within the state of Virginia. This agreement established a grievance procedure guaranteeing teachers due process.

A continuing problem confronting the Association from virtually its inception was obtaining a building where staff could be housed and meetings could be held. A building fund was established in 1961 with a goal to purchase land.

In 1966 two acres were purchased in Reston. At that time, FEA was headquartered at 4002 University Drive. A larger and more appropriate location was found in the basement of what was then the Arlington-Fairfax Savings and Loan Building at 10637 Lee Highway.

In 1970 FEA took advantage of an opportunity to buy an 8.5 acre tract on Route 236 just west of Olley Lane. This was a central location about four miles from the Capital Beltway and immediately adjacent to the City of Fairfax. On the property, formerly known as the Krausner residence, was a large home, a garage with living quarters above it, and several small outbuildings.

The original plan was to build a permanent FEA Headquarters on the site. The leadership determined that eventually a portion of the land could be sold to offset the cost of the building. The plan worked well. The property became so valuable that, in 1988, the land was sold and the present FEA office building centrally located near downtown Fairfax City was purchased as a permanent home for the Association.

Since 1988, the FEA building has served as a visible symbol of teacher and school employee strength and commitment to excellence in Fairfax County. Across the country, FEA is recognized as a pace-setting local Association with integrity, high standards and an unquestioned commitment to the welfare of teachers and school employees.

In the coming years, FEA broadened its focus to include the issues of education support personnel, and today ESP members are guaranteed representation on the FEA Board of Directors. Jacqueline Dilley, a former ESP Department President, was the first ESP member to serve in this capacity.

Health insurance, maternity leave, retirement enhancements, a sick leave bank, duty-free lunch, guaranteed planning time, Monday early closing and many other advancements were the products of the hard work of the FEA leadership and staff in the years to follow. It is fair to say that virtually every benefit currently enjoyed by county teachers and education support personnel today is the work of the Fairfax Education Association.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the FEA struggle with issues of pay for performance, more stringent teacher evaluation programs, changing demographics, and complacency on the part of the Reagan me-first generation. The organization had to face these and other issues without collective bargaining, which the Virginia State Supreme Court declared unconstitutional in 1977. But even without this, the FEA got the school system to agree to a new communications procedure, gained additional salary for its members by successfully getting the school board to improve salaries and add longevity steps to the scale, and blocked attempts to eliminate Monday Early Closing on the elementary level. With the use of newspaper advertisements, monetary contributions to political action committees and one-on-one lobbying both locally and on the state level, FEA members supported political leaders who were pro-education. In the 2003 local elections, eleven of the twelve successful candidates for school board won with FEA endorsement.

FEA has greatly expanded the community outreach programs to garner support for and understanding of the great contributions of public education to our county and our country.

The leaders of FEA believe in a future just as full of purpose, promise and challenge as it did more than a half century ago. Together, FEA can continue to achieve.

Over the years, FEA has been most fortunate to have an array of dedicated and talented leaders and staff to deliver the Association program.

FEA Presidents

since the Second World War:

Katherine Hopper, 1947-49
W.S. Rumbough, 1949-51
Craighill S. Burks, 1951-52
Ralph Buckley, 1952-54
Phil Fuller, 1954-56
Robert Bogen, 1956-58
Evelyn Magarity, 1958-60
Roy Frye, 1960-62
William J. Burkholder, 1962-64
Roy I. Brooks, 1964-65
Walter Dowling, 1965-66
Don R. Rapier, 1966-67
Douglas Dalton, 1967-68
I. Elise Jones, 1968-69
Thomas Propps, 1968-69
Merlin G. Meadows, 1970-71
Robert F. Wilkie, 1971-72
Edward A. Anderson, Jr., 1972-73
Elizabeth Cofer, 1973-74
L. H. Mense, 1974-75
Gloria B. Thorpe, 1975-76
Edward A. Anderson, Jr., 1976-77
Victor Cornacchione, 1977-78
B.D. Hicks, 1978-79
Gerald T. Gripper, 1979-80
George W. Costello, 1980-81
Marilyn S. Rogers, 1981-83
Robert S. Starr, 1983
William B. Martin, 1982-84
Donna P. Caudill, 1984-86
Mimi Dash, 1986-88
Walter J. Mika, Jr., 1988-90
Maureen Daniels, 1990-92
Kelly Peaks Horner, 1992-94
Kathryn A. Davis, 1994-96
N. Yvonne Jukes, 1996-98
John Butterfield, 1998-2000
Richard J. Baumgartner, 2000-2002
Barbara Allen, 2002-2004
Richard J. Baumgartner, 2004-2007
Leonard Bumbaca 2007-2009
Michael Hairston - currently serving

Executive Directors

Paul Peter, 1961-68
Allerton Barnes, 1968-74
John Radcliffe, 1974-76
Jon White, 1976-81
Barby Halstead, 1981-85
Richard T. Willis, 1986-94
George Segna, 1994-95
Kenneth Reinsuttle, 1996-2009
JoAnn Karsh - currently serving

