



# Allegheny County Retirees Association NEWSLETTER

December 2025

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**NEWSLETTER**  
Kathy Burk, *Editor*  
Guillermo Cole, *Contributing Writer*

## *Message from* **PRESIDENT JACK EXLER**

As another year comes to a close, we turn the page on 2025 and look ahead to 2026. We begin a new journey to make memories with family and friends.

The ACRA board members are hard at work putting together and scheduling the 2026 speakers, outings and even picking the luncheon menus. You can definitely mark your calendars for the Annual ACRA Picnic on June 17, 2026, at the North Park Lodge; Pittsburgh Pirate's Game in August; the Annual Pension Fund and Medicare Updates, October 21; 2026 and the Annual Holiday Party on December 16, 2026.

Be on the lookout for the complete list of exciting speakers, programs and outings to be announced shortly; and make some new memories with your ACRA family in 2026.

I wish you and your family a happy holiday season and may you have a healthy and safe New Year. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Jack Exler  
President

*Address Service Requested*

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P.O. Box 15285  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
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PERMIT NO. 882  
PITTSBURGH PA



# HOLIDAY MEMORIES OF DR. HOON AND JENKINS ARCADE

by Kathleen Burk

My dislike of my optometrist, Dr. Hoon, was nothing personal --other than the fact that I held him single-handedly responsible for my being the only person in my first-grade class to wear eyeglasses. In my inexperienced mind, those blue spectacles, complete with a clip-on eye patch, rendered me a freak of nature, and it was all Dr. Hoon's fault. But my parents firmly believed in him, and I had no real choice in the matter.

Putting all childhood trauma aside, there was an unexpected upside to this. Dr. Hoon's office was in the Jenkins Arcade, the most exquisite building I had ever seen in my entire six years on this planet. And it just so happened that my appointment was scheduled during the holiday season. For that reason, my eye exam became incorporated into my family's annual sojourn into the big city. With all the sparkling lights and ornaments, in my mind it was the most magnificent building known to all humanity.

Mom, sensing how distraught I was over the whole eyeglass ordeal, decided that she and I would explore the Jenkins Arcade alone, without any of the other family members. My dad apparently had agreed to keep tabs on my baby sister, Laurel, while Mike and Kevin, ages 8 and

10, were deemed mature enough to set out on their own to explore this marvelous bastion of opulence. But, more importantly for me, I finally had my mom all to myself!

Mom and I were able to experience three floors of retail bliss. This included getting our feet measured without buying any shoes and spraying ourselves with fancy perfume. After that it was over to the Parker Button Store where we bonded over our shared love of sewing notions. Finally, we took an elevator that was operated by a man seated on a stool. With one push of a button, he took us up to the second floor where we were able to look over the edge and spy on people in the pedestrian walkway below. All of this was followed by a giant ice cream cone. To me, Jenkins Arcade was a glorious city, all within one building.

It's still a shame to me that the Jenkins Arcade is no longer part of the Pittsburgh community of exquisite buildings. Built in 1911, it was first made a landmark in 1972 only to be savagely demolished twelve years later. The building is gone, but aside from Dr. Hoon and those little blue glasses, it remains a fond memory of my childhood and the family that made annual holiday excursions to the Jenkins Arcade.



# RICHARD KEVIN BRYANT:

## *“Kip” to Family, Friends & Fellow Retirees*

by Guillermo Cole

Richard Kevin Bryant, affectionately known as “Kip” to family, friends and fellow retirees since his uncle tagged him with the nickname in childhood, retired in 2023 after serving two separate stints totaling 36 years in Allegheny County government.

Kip initially worked as a Probation Officer in Juvenile Court from 1984 to 1991. He left briefly but returned when Juvenile Court launched a new school-based probation program and re-hired him as a Probation Officer assigned to Peabody High School in 1994.

After nearly two years in the school-based probation program, Kip was transferred to the Office of the Allegheny County Commissioners and worked as an assistant to newly elected County Commissioner Bob Cranmer.

Upon completion of Cranmer’s term in 2000, Kip moved to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and worked in various programs, including planning, youth employment/training, and contract compliance, where he served the longest, from 2012 until his retirement.

During his early days in DHS, Kip had the pleasure of meeting and working with a newcomer to the region who was committed

to bringing training and employment opportunities to disadvantaged youth. That newcomer was John Fetterman, before he became Mayor of Braddock, Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania and ultimately a United States Senator.

Kip grew up on Pittsburgh’s North Side and went to public and parochial schools before attending Perry High School and graduating in 1975. He played football and to this day continues his association with Perry as an assistant football coach for the past 40 years.

A 1980 graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Kip earned a bachelor’s degree in criminology, played football and participated in Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC).

After graduation, Kip entered the U.S. Army as a 2nd Lieutenant at Fort Benning, Georgia. He served three years and completed both Army Ranger School and Army Airborne School, earning his wings and becoming a qualified paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. His military service continued in the U.S. Army Reserve until 1991.

In addition to coaching football at Perry, Kip’s community service extends to the Edgewood Recreation Board’s summer

softball program for young boys and girls. He started managing the program when his daughters played and still does so 28 years later. He also served as PTO President during his daughters’ intermediate school years at Woodland Hills.

A longtime resident of Regent Square, Kip is the proud father of two daughters, Ginger and Melody, and has two beloved grandchildren, Abram and Noah. The birth of a third grandchild, his first granddaughter, is expected in January.



*Kip Bryant seated next to ACRA Vice President Marge Lubawy at an ACRA Luncheon*

# Congratulations

## NEW RETIREES LIST

### JULY RETIREES

Drew Borcik

### AUGUST RETIREES

Austin, Marsha  
Barr, Lenora  
Braun, Joan  
Cifrulak, Robert  
Davis, Cynthia  
Itkin, Marc  
Jenkins, Richard  
Koval, Claire  
Mangis, John  
McAllister, Sharon  
Peters, Beverly  
Pollock, Daryl  
Rourke, John  
Senaway, Paul  
Schopp, Michael

### SEPTEMBER RETIREES

Abramovitz, Gwendolyn  
Barto, Janet  
Bell, Ronald  
Binder, Jason  
Biondo, Dennis  
Bork, Arthur  
Clare, Mary  
Clark, Douglas  
Curley, Raymond  
Englert, Colleen  
Frohlich, Mindy

Jackson, Robert  
Kearney, Michele  
Klemens, Debra  
Medvid, Nicholas  
Miller, Christopher  
Moncrieff, Deborah  
Morris, Damon  
Perry, Sandra  
Polinak, David  
Quinlan, Michael  
Ramaley, Stephi  
Reisz, Joel  
Schuler, Nancy  
Then, Kathryn  
Vita, Anthony  
Zimmick, Mary

### OCTOBER RETIREES

Betzler, Deborah  
French, Ronald  
Henderson, Lena  
Humphries, Nina  
Lenhardt, Linda  
Lippert, Linda  
Macklin, Sally  
Pastor, Samuel  
Paulet, Karen  
Rubash, Peter  
Speer, Doreen  
Stoltz, Cynthia  
Wellman, Renee  
Santoro, Joel

## ACRA HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

Local food banks are struggling to meet the increasing demand for food. If you would like to help, please consider donating a canned good or other non-perishable food item at the December Holiday Luncheon. All donated items will be delivered to a local food pantry. Every little bit helps our neighbors in need.



## ACRA Annual Membership Renewal

In the upcoming weeks you will receive an ACRA membership renewal letter in the mail. Please fill it out and return it by January 31, 2026.

Annual membership dues are \$20

### Riddle

Can you name three consecutive days without using the words, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday or Sunday?

## Congratulations to ACRA Newly-Elected Reelected Board Members

Jack Exler, Hugh Hachmeister, Christine Carragher and Kathy Burk.

Their combined talents and years of experience will undoubtedly serve the members of ACRA well.



# ANNOUNCING THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY RETIREE PORTAL

Last year at the November ACRA luncheon, we were proud to announce that we started using the new custom pension software. The Retirement Office is excited to announce the newest enhancement, a Retiree Portal!

We are working on making the portal available to all Retirees over the next year. As a member of ACRA, we are giving you an opportunity to be the first to use the portal and give us your feedback.

Beginning November 1, 2025, you will be able to access the portal. The portal can be found at: <https://retireeportal.koryak.com/>

You will need your retirement number to start the log on process. Please use the following email, [pensionportal@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:pensionportal@alleghenycounty.us), to request your login information or to let us know about your experience.

Thank you,



Walter Szymanski  
Director, Allegheny County Retirement Employees' Retirement System



The October Luncheon featured Walt Szymanski and staff of the Allegheny County Employees' Retirement System. They demonstrated the upcoming retiree portal to members who attended the luncheon. The portal will allow retirees to access their account information.

See the welcome letter in this newsletter

## ACRA HOLIDAY LUNCHEON *December 17, 2025*

Please join in the fun and festivities as we celebrate another good year of ACRA fellowship. There will be sing-alongs, Pick-a-Prize Auction, games, prizes, good food and great friends.

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at noon

At the DoubleTree Hotel, Greentree • 500 Mansfield Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15205

ACRA Members \$30, guests \$30 per person

Reservations are required to ensure adequate food and space.

Checks must be received no later than December 10, 2025 to guarantee the reservation. No refunds past the RSVP date or for non-attendance. Tickets are unavailable at the door.

Please send checks to ACRA, P.O. Box 15285, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

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Every little bit helps our neighbors in need.



# IN MEMORIAM\*

Name	Date of Death
FARREN, DENISE	7/16/2025
WATTS, JEROME SR	7/17/2025
HUGHES, CLAIRE	7/25/2025
DUDUKOVICH, DONNAH	8/1/2025
DEFAZIO, MARSHA	8/2/2025
MURPHY, MARYELLEN	8/4/2025
CLOONAN, THOMAS	8/8/2025
BALTOS, DAVID	8/9/2025
LYONS, DONALD	8/11/2025
TUITE, HELEN	8/12/2025
ABATE, JAMES	8/13/2025
KRISHER, GEORGE	8/14/2025
MANDELL, PATRICIA	8/14/2025
MACKO, ANDREW	8/16/2025
VERONICA RICHARDSON	8/17/2025
LEOPOLD, ALICE	8/18/2025
WOLVERTON, WILLIAM	8/22/2025
WALKER, DIANA	8/23/2025
BRENTIN, KATHRYN	8/23/2025
MCDERMOTT, GARY	8/29/2025
MORRISSEY, THOMAS	8/31/2025
KETTERER, MAUREEN	9/5/2025
SAMMARTINO, PETER	9/9/2025
JOSEK, HARRY	9/10/2025
SINGER, JEFFREY	9/10/2025
CONDELLO, KENNETH	9/12/2025
HARRISON-REED, SHERDINA	9/15/2025
MUSTACHIO, THOMAS	9/16/2025
WHITEMAN, LAVERNE	9/17/2025
ZABLOTNY, MARLENE	9/17/2025
LATIMORE, CHRISTINE	9/17/2025
BEVILACQUA, ROBERT	9/19/2025
MARS, VIVIAN	9/20/2025
BURDA, DANIEL	9/23/2025
MCGRAIL, DONALD	9/26/2025
KUSTRA, LAWRENCE	9/29/2025

\*As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board

## Riddle Answer

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



## RECIPES BY PAM

by Pam Long

### PECAN TOFFEE BARS

1 cup unsalted butter

1 cup brown sugar

1 egg yolk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups of flour

*Mix above together and spread onto a cookie sheet or jelly roll pan that is 10"-15"*

*Bake at 350 for 15 minutes*

*While baking the above, break up a giant Hershey Bar into pieces. When taking the baked cookie dough out of the oven, spread the chocolate pieces onto the dough.*

*Chop 1 cup of pecans . Cover the chocolate with the finely chopped pecans.*

*Let the cookie cool. Cut into bars.*

**Enjoy!**

# Thank You

Allegheny County Retirement Association  
wishes to extend a warm thank you to the  
outgoing board members who generously gave  
of their time and talents toward making every  
ACRA event a great success.

Their skills, insights and creativity  
were greatly appreciated.

Marge Lubawy  
Cathy Thomas  
Connie Przybyla