

Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association

January-February 2020 Newsletter

Irene Gleason passes away

May 30, 1923 - November 6, 2019

Irene Gleason, 96, a long-time member of the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association and former state president of the Washington State School Retirees Association, passed away in Walla Walla on Nov. 6, 2019. Funeral mass was at St. Patrick Catholic Church on Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019.

Gleason was a 1941 high school graduate of St. Vincent Academy and a 1945 graduate of Marylhurst University in Portland with a degree in social work. She became the first lay instructor for Providence Academy in Vancouver, Wash., and taught for the Providence school system in Bur-

bank, Calif. She also taught in Touchet and College Place before serving as the library media specialist at Garrison Junior High from 1962-1981.

Gleason served the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association (then known as the Walla Walla Valley

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Teddy Bear Tea serves up its 14th annual fundraiser

The fourteenth annual Teddy Bear Tea will be Saturday, Feb. 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the St. Francis Church social hall.

The church is located at 722 W. Alder Street in Walla Walla.

The tea is the primary fundraiser for college

scholarships given annually by the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association.

The tea features a traditional service of tea, cookies and sandwiches. Also included with a \$6 donation to the scholarship fund is a story corner, exhibits and sales of hand-made teddy bears and

teddy bear momentos.

Raffle tickets for two exquisite hand-made bears will be sold at the event — \$1 each or six for \$5. There will also be an auction for baskets containing Seattle Seahawk blankets, bags, shirts and other memorabilia; Walla Walla Sweets hats, game tickets and

balls and bats; a Mod Pizza; art from Kris Takemura; garden supplies; a baby doll with cradle, quilt and clothes; teddy bears galore; a fishing tackle box and supplies; and a set of porcelain dolls.

Children are welcome to attend the tea, but must be accompanied by an adult.

Dwight Morgan receives award for excellence in teaching history

Dwight Morgan, a member of the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association, received the 2019 Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching History from the Washington State Historical Society at the group's annual meeting in Tacoma in September 2019.

The award cited Morgan's "long and successful career teaching at Kettle Falls Elementary School and at the Kettle Falls Historical Center," said his wife, Mimi Morgan, who is also a member of the WWCSRA.

Although he is retired from school teaching, Morgan has not retired from keeping local history alive for students. He serves on the Kettle Falls Historical Center's board of directors and volunteers for programs, demonstrations and maintenance projects, as well as greeting visitors as a regular host.

In addition, Morgan dons a period costume for events that spotlight Kettle Falls as a historical gathering place for native tribes — "The People of the Falls," whose seasonal

activities are depicted at the historical center.

During Morgan's long teaching career at Kettle Falls Elementary School, he dedicated himself completely to his students. He made sure his fourth-grade students understood the historical significance of the falls on the Columbia River — a site for salmon fishing vital to the survival of Native Americans, as well as the centuries-old trade route centered around Kettle Falls.

As a teacher, Morgan's style of educating was called innovative by a former student. He would reward students who recycled cans with a snowshoe excursion. His classes built wood duck houses for area wetlands, created jewelry from antlers, planted trees and even built frontier-style gun stocks.

Morgan's teaching style was so successful that when his students took a statewide test on history, some administrators thought he had cheated. Morgan invited them to Kettle Falls to interview his students. The auditors came away impressed by his students' knowledge.

Legislative Report

The goals of the Washington State School Retirees' Legislative Committee for the 2020 legislative session, which started January 13, are:

- ✓ **TRS 1 and PERS 1 Pension Recovery (HB 1390 & SB 5400)**
- ✓ **Protect retiree healthcare benefits**
- ✓ **Hold hearings on improving Retirement Plans 2 & 3**
- ✓ **Protecting retirees during potential transfer to new health insurance plans**

Contact your legislators to express your opinions on any of the above, before or during the session. Be ready to contact them quickly, if asked by WSSRA, during the session. Please keep handy the contact information below for your 16th Legislative District legislators:

Senator Maureen Walsh: Maureen.Walsh@leg.wa.gov
Olympia Office: (360) 786-7630
205 Irv Newhouse Building, PO Box 40416, Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Bill Jenkin: Bill.Jenkin@leg.wa.gov
Olympia Office: (360) 786-7836
470 John L. O'Brien Building, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Skyler Rude: Skyler.Rude@leg.wa.gov
Olympia Office: (360) 786-7828
122G Legislative Building, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504

*Submitted by Jim Davison
WWCSRA Legislative Chair
and WSSRA Legislative Committee Member
Advocating for members from Asotin to Prosser (E8)*

College scholarships deadline is March 1

Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association will award two \$2,000 scholarships to prospective teachers or candidates in other school-related fields in 2020.

The grants will be awarded to students who will either student teach or perform an internship experience in an educational setting to meet requirements for initial certification. Additional requirements include graduation from high schools in Walla Walla or Columbia counties. Student teaching or internships must begin between September 2020 and June 2021.

Applications are available now and must be submitted by March 1, 2020. The application is available online from the Blue Mountain Community Foundation website. Go to the scholarship tab and locate the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees application.

For more information, call Mardel Bierwagen at (509) 525-6117 or email her at gbierwagen6117@charter.net.

IRENE GLEASON

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Teachers Association) in numerous capacities. She served as president of the Washington State School Retirees Association in 1992-93. Her theme as president was "Up, Up and Away with WSTRA." She was a leader who believed in the committee structure and consistently pointed out the accomplishments of the WSSRA. She was a strong proponent for a permanent Plan I COLA. She enthusiastically served school retirees by traveling throughout the state to support local meetings and retiree programs.

"Irene was a kindhearted individual who valued fairness in all her interactions. She made sure to listen to all sides of a debate prior to taking a position on a particular issue. She was modest about herself and had a great sense of humor. She will be missed," said a tribute to Gleason in The Journal, the publication of the WSSRA.

St. Patrick's parish was considered "Irene's church." It was where her parents were married and her mother, Kitty, served as organist for more than 50 years. Gleason's home and property on Poplar Street were converted into a charitable gift annuity as part of a Providence St. Mary's Foundation program. Gleason's sister, Louise, was a member of the sisters of Providence Superior for more than 60 years.

Fall 2019

Mini-Grant Recipients

The following educators each received \$200 mini-grants in the fall 2019 drawing by the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association.

Outlying Districts

Jeff Foertsch, Prescott High School
Cathy Plucker, Touchet Grade 4
Jodi Gradwohl, Prescott Kindergarten
Doug Johnson, Dayton Superintendent
Richard Dexter, Columbia Elementary
Jackie Helm, Touchet Elementary Grade 2
Bill Clancy, Dixie Elementary
Heather Beden, Columbia Elementary

Walla Walla/College Place Districts

Lani Kefel, Pioneer Middle School Grade 6
Lori Dohe, Walla Walla High School English
Jennifer Holbrook, Berney Grade 2
Jean Tobin, Green Park Grade 4
Hollis Erikson, Pioneer Middle School Grade 6
Michelle Shaul, Green Park Library/Life Skills
Beth Clearman, Garrison Middle School
Iana James, Berney Elementary Kindergarten

Spring 2020 Mini-Grant Information and Application

January 2020

To: Active Members of Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association

From: Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association <https://wssra.org/wallawalla-columbia/>

Re: Drawing for Classroom Project Mini-Grant

The Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association will be providing 32 \$200 mini-grants for the 2019-2020 school year to active employee members of the association. Sixteen (16) mini-grants were awarded in the October drawing at the association luncheon meeting. Interested active SRA members should complete the short application form below and describe their intended student-oriented project. All applications must be received no later than Jan. 29, 2020 to:

Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association

364 S. Park

Walla Walla, WA 99362

or e-mail to: zorro@columbiaenergyllc.com

Members may receive only one mini-grant per school year. If your project was submitted in the fall 2019 drawing and did not win, it will be automatically entered in the spring 2020 drawing.

(To ensure equal representation, at least 8 recipients will be from Walla Walla and College Place School Districts and 8 recipients will be from outlying districts at the fall and spring drawings.)

Questions: Pam Conover 509-337-8876 or zorro@columbiaenergyllc.com

Application for Mini-Grant by Active SRA Member **Spring 2020 Application**

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ School Phone: _____

School: _____

Grade or Department: _____

If you submitted an application for a mini-grant project for the October 2019 drawing and it was not selected, it will be automatically entered in the spring 2020 drawing.

Deadline: Wednesday, January 29, 2019

Description of projected use of Mini-Grant: (Just a few words)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2020! A new decade brings hope for everyone. Our Teddy Bear Tea is fast approaching. Ellen Wolf is selling tickets for the event. Claudia Ford is selling raffle tickets for our two hand-made bears. Pam Conway and her committee have some really great baskets for the auction. This is our big fundraiser of the year so we all need to help.

ACTIVE MEMBERS: Our Teddy Bear Tea is February 29. We would love for you to volunteer. We need help with set-up and take-down. There are about 100 tubs that will need to be moved from three different locations. Friday might be difficult because we begin at 2 p.m. But Saturday we start



taking down at 3 p.m. at St. Francis Church. On Saturday we also need help in the kitchen, store, ticket sales, serving, clean-up and many other jobs. If you can help, please text me at 940-595-0603.

We are looking for a member to take over the chairs of the Teddy Bear Tea and the kitchen. This is very well run by committees, so please let me know if you are interested.

At this time we are working very hard with the state Legislature to increase COLA (cost of living allowance) for Plan I members. They have not received a cost of living raise in several years.

Sincerely,
Paula Nichols

WWCSRA LUNCHEON

DATES

February 10, 2020
March 9, 2020
April 13, 2020
May 11, 2020

To submit information for the newsletter, please e-mail Skip Nichols at skipnichols@earthlink.net or call 509-529-5401.

Visit our website

<https://www.wssra-units.org/wallawalla-columbia/>

Walla Walla Public Schools
Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Assn.
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Walla Walla, Washington 99362
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