

The Retired Teachers of Florida organized on April 9, 1954, as a section of the Florida Education Association (FEA) with Paul D. Phillips serving as President.

The purpose for organizing was to promote the economic, social, and professional status of retired teachers, and the exchange of information of value to them; to safeguard and improve retirement benefits by promoting passage of legislation; and to promote the involvement of retired teachers in community service and the decision-making process in state and local governments.

The Florida Retired Teachers section was reorganized in the fall of 1971, as the Florida Retired Teachers Association (FRTA), an affiliate of FEA.

In September of 1974, a committee was appointed to study the future of the organization. A year later a recommendation of the committee was accepted to discontinue affiliation with FEA and establish an independent organization with a separate office. In 1975 the FRTA affiliated with NRTA and was provided space in the NRTA-AARP regional office in St. Petersburg. In July 1982 the NRTA officially merged with and became a division of AARP.

During the fall of 1982 the FRTA changed its name to Florida Retired Educators Association (FREA), so benefits could be extended to faculties of higher education employees of county school boards who were primarily employed as supervisors and administrators. Membership has now expanded to include all personnel involved in the education system, plus their families and friends, and others who support the mission of FREA.

In February of 1984, the Florida Retired Educators Foundation was established as an adjunct to the FREA for the purpose of providing scholarships for future teachers, assisting retired educators in crisis, and publication of valuable educational material.

In 1988, the FREA office was housed in the St. Petersburg AARP State office. In August 1994, FREA moved down the hall to a separate four-room office, which was sub-leased from AARP. In October 1999, AARP located to a new building and FREA remained at current location. In October 2001 FREA moved office to larger quarters in downtown St. Petersburg at the Bay View Tower. In July 2005, Bay View Tower was torn down to build a condo tower, necessitating FREA's relocation to North St. Petersburg. In 2015 FREA moved to its present location.

FREA has three full-time staff, providing a continuity of operations, who work with the FREA Board, State Chairmen, Trustees and the local units.

Past FREA Presidents			
<i>Mr. Paul D. Phillips</i>	1954-56	<i>Mrs. Lucile M. Doyle</i>	1984-86
<i>Mrs. Katherine Palmer</i>	1956-57	<i>Dr. Thomas A. Backus</i>	1986-87
<i>Dr. Ralph L. Eyman</i>	1957-59	<i>Dr. Mary L. Zellner</i>	1987-90
<i>Dr. A. R. Mead</i>	1959-61	<i>Dr. Paul L. Hanna</i>	1990-90
<i>Dr. Ralph L. Eyman</i>	1961-63	<i>Dr. Merle H. Morgan</i>	1990-94
<i>Mr. L. C. Harwell</i>	1963-65	<i>Mrs. Sarah "Sally" M. Talbert</i>	1994-96
<i>Mrs. Mary W. Smith</i>	1965-65	<i>Mrs. Anne U. Bullock</i>	1996-98
<i>Miss Nina F. Fowler</i>	1965-67	<i>Dr. Robert H. Miller</i>	1998-00
<i>Mr. M. O. Worthington</i>	1967-69	Mr. Larry L. Carmichael	2000-02
<i>Dr. Ballard Simmons</i>	1969-71	Mrs. Mildred S. Dunlap	2002-04
<i>Mr. Ed B. Henderson</i>	1971-72	Mrs. Jan M. Colcord	2004-06
<i>Mr. R. Earl Kipp</i>	1972-74	Mr. Edward W. Ethridge	2006-08
<i>Mrs. Clara Louise Smith</i>	1974-76	Ms. Marie E. Grein	2008-10
<i>Dr. William A. Gager</i>	1978-80	Mrs. Esther R. Twitchell	2010-12
<i>Mrs. Betty F. Zentgraf</i>	1980-82	Mrs. Thelma J. Mosley	2012-14
<i>Mrs. Ruby G. Buck</i>	1982-84		
<i>Deceased</i>			