

**An Oral History of the Florida Educational Research Association:
The Story of the Origin and Evolution of
a Grassroots Professional Organization**

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The Florida Educational Research Association (FERA), a grass-roots professional organization of educational research scholars, is almost a half-century old. This oral history of the organization explores the beginnings of the organization, provides an illustrative example of using oral history as a technique for conducting research, and delivers an understanding of how grassroots organizations emerge and how they sustain their initial momentum. Eighteen members of FERA were interviewed for this study including past presidents, past and present board members, school district-based researchers and university-based researchers, some of whom have been involved with the organization since its inception.

Background and Purpose

The Florida Educational Research Association (FERA) is a professional organization founded over 40 years ago to promote the investigation, research and discussion of educational problems and issues impacting the state of Florida. The FERA was instituted on the premise that the myriad concerns facing schools and teachers are amenable to orderly, systematic inquiry, and that such inquiry can be nurtured and sustained through the collegial association of state and district-based educators, university professors and personnel in public, private and non-profit

educational agencies. The organization was started as a “grassroots” effort, that is, initiated by the constituents it would ultimately serve. It has about 175 active members and draws its membership from throughout the state and beyond. It maintains its contacts and promotes its goals through periodic newsletters, a professional research journal and an annual meeting. It is not formally affiliated with the American Educational Research Association nor any other organization at the state or national level.

No study has heretofore attempted to describe how the organization began and how it evolved. Through the use of oral history methods, our purpose was to reconstruct the origins and historical evolution of the Florida Educational Research Association, using the recollections of individuals who were prominent in its birth and development. Dynamic themes were drawn from personal interviews with current or former FERA members, and these themes were highlighted by excerpts drawn verbatim from the interview transcripts.

Method

Description of Oral History

Oral history refers to the collection of an individual’s spoken memories of his or her life, the people she or he has known, or an event he or she has personally participated in or witnessed. When several participants are included in a study of a particular event or organization, it becomes a collection of perspectives. It is a reconstruction of history — the present perception of what has occurred in one’s past. It involves a minimum of two people: the person retelling the event and the interviewer. The oral history should naturally emerge out of a creative social relationship between two people in a concrete historical moment (Price, 1995).

When oral history surrounds one event and includes more than one participant, the information gathered across the participants can be compared to discover common remembrances as well as differences. It may also be possible to find corroboration from archival materials published about the event. However, because something is “made-up” does not make it less true, less valid, or less useful (Jackson, 1987). Verifiable truth also exists in the degree to which the resulting oral history connects with the larger audience, those who read or hear the account.

Steps in Conducting the Oral History

Unstructured Interview Protocol

Oral history involves interviewing. Structured interviews were avoided, but, according to Measor (1985), it is helpful to have a set of thematic areas to target. Therefore, the first step in interviewing was to create some very general questions that were used to guide our interviews (see Appendix A). The goal was to invite the participant to talk about the organization and her or his role in it without directly asking questions. While it is seldom possible to conduct an interview without asking any questions, the best interviews involve the least amount of prodding on the part of the interviewer (Angrosino, 1989, p. 18). According to Langness and Frank (1991), learning what is important to the participant is the principal advantage of unstructured interviewing.

Selection of Participants

The next step was to identify the participants. We purposely selected participants based on their first hand knowledge of the organization. They were also selected based on their ability to lead us to others who might have useful information or insights. An initial list of 12 names was compiled from personal

recollections of involvement in the organization and a perusal of past FERA programs. All on the list who could be located were invited to participate. The invitation was, in a sense, an invitation to carry on a “conversation” about the FERA. During this set of interviews, other names came up and the list was significantly expanded. Ultimately, 22 interviewees were sought and 19 were located; of these 19, 18 were available for interviewing. The 18 interviewees are listed in Appendix B, along with an abbreviated notation of their roles in the organization.

Interview Procedures

Prior to the interviews, all participants were contacted by letter to inform them of the project and to invite their participation. Follow up calls were used to schedule the date and time for each interview. The interview sessions took place during the months of July, August and September, 1999. Because interviewing in familiar, comfortable settings with relaxed participants increases the dependability of the information gathered, the participants were permitted to select the location and context for the interview. Seven of the interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants; four were conducted in the work setting; two were completed at the University of South Florida; and one was completed in a restaurant during a quiet period. Because of distance or other restrictions, the remaining four interviews were conducted via telephone.

Each interview was conducted one on one by Bruce Hall, Cynthia Hewitt-Gervais or Jim Swanson. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 50 minutes, depending upon the recollections of the participant. In each case, we began with a reminder as to the purpose of the interview and we requested permission to audiotape the proceedings. In every case, audiotaping was

permitted. We were aware, of course, that the use of an audio tape recorder could impact the situation. When a machine is used, it may become a “third person” in the interview, or it may be a reminder of the wider, other audience (Jackson, 1987). But oral history, if it is to remain true to its obvious definition, should consist of audiotapes.

During the interview session, we tried to remain flexible enough to allow the participant some control over the direction of the interview while staying aware of the goals of the study. Remaining flexible also allowed us to take advantage of unanticipated leads. We also tried to remain alert to messages that the participant was giving about what was truly important. This influenced the direction of subsequent interviews in a positive way. In the process, we refined our ideas about what to look for and how best to obtain the information. The interview was not the same as a conversation, but we tried to make the difference between the two as nearly indistinguishable as possible.

After each interview, the audiotape was transcribed to produce a written version in order to promote clarification and to allow for subsequent confirmation by the participant. The written transcript was mailed back to the participant with the request that the transcript be examined for corrections. The participant’s recommendations for changes were taken into consideration in subsequent revisions of the transcript.

Analysis of the Oral History Data

Analysis of the data involved examining the written transcripts and noting recurring themes. We often went back to the audiotape when clarification of the written transcript was needed. We permitted the themes to emerge from the interviews themselves rather than from the interviewer’s questions. The themes

were not necessarily grounded in the questions; the questions served only as a reference for the interviewer. As noted earlier, the best interviews involve the least amount of prodding by the interviewer and, therefore, it could not be assumed that all participants covered the same areas. The themes served to provide organization and structure for the oral history. Seven themes were identified:

- Origin of FERA
- Operational Structure
- Role of Publishers
- Benefits of Membership
- Special Memories
- Social Aspects
- Future of FERA

To give substance to each emergent theme, we drew extensively from the various transcripts. The copious use of verbatim quotes provided meaning to each theme, while preserving the spirit of oral communication. Participants' personal perceptions and unique experiences may lead to differences in recollected facts or differences in the significance placed on the facts recalled. Even so, in an oral history, people's orally stated recollections are paramount. Therefore, differences in recollections, where they occur, have been preserved in the excerpts presented.

The Oral History

Origin of FERA

NARRATOR: Of course the first question we asked was, "How did FERA get its start?" Here's Russ Kropp answering that question.

Probably the best place to begin in looking at FERA is the event that immediately preceded it. And that was Walter Durost, who was with the Pinellas Board of Education and also test director for the World Book Company in New York, established an invitational conference patterned after ETS Invitational Conferences on testing in Florida to which he invited the 10 biggest counties to participate. It was very, very successful and Walter was a very, very capable, dedicated person who was interested in public school testing. What Walter did heightened everybody's interest and also caused an awful lot of people in the state to feel that they had been omitted because they weren't part of the big 10 that he invited. As a consequence I became interested in taking Walter's idea and moving it a step ahead. And I talked this over with two people in particular that could be looked at as maybe the founders of FERA along with me. They were Hazen Curtis, who was my department head at Florida State University and a fellow student of mine earlier at the University of Illinois, and the other person was Vynce Hines. Hines was a University of Florida professor of philosophy in education and a student with us at Illinois. And we discussed it one end to the other, felt that the state and public schools could benefit from the enlargement of what Walter had begun. And then also we were all interested in research, which was not a part of Walter's interest, but it was something we were trained in and which was becoming more prominent on account of federal funding. So we kicked the idea around and did some exploratory work. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: Mary Ester Raker had this to say:

Well, of course it was a small organization (1961-1962) because there were not that many coordinators of testing and research; just the large counties had them, small counties really did not have them. But it had representation from the

universities in terms of the professors and then you had the large district people, and then you had the vendor representatives, of course. And even then it was a small close-knit group and people helped each other in terms of sharing in ways to do things. I do not remember what the numbers were at meetings, but I just remember that it was a small, close-knit group. [MARY ESTER RAKER]

NARRATOR: Well, I'd always heard FERA started in a bar. Russ, is this true?

We became a section of FEA because we were taking FEA support. Meeting room, secretarial service, other kinds of support. In addition, FEA said it would print and do all the stenographic and clerical work for us to put out a Journal of Educational Research that would focus on public school level research and we were very beholden to FEA. At any rate, we had our first organizational meeting at the time of the Florida Education Association convention and it was in Miami and our site was the bar room - basement bar room of one of the beachfront hotels. Mr. Henderson and Dr. David Reed, who was his director of research for FEA, estimated that we would have maybe 20 people at the meeting. So we got a very comfortable bar room as our meeting site. And they weren't very far off on how many showed up. All of the people were there whom I had mentioned, I think. And we went with a draft of a constitution, bylaws and that kind of thing that was presented, and people voted on it, established it, and then set about naming a director for the first year. And for the life of me I don't know who that person was. Some claim it was me, but I'm still vague about it. This was in, maybe 55-56, sometime in there I believe. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: Howard Stoker, what is your memory about FERA meeting in a bar?

FEA had a meeting in Miami Beach one time and that would have been about 59, or something like that. And being one of the new sections, we had to take what was left over for a meeting site, and this meeting took place at breakfast in a bar in some hotel on Miami Beach. And not only did it take place in a bar, but the way they had the seats set up the podium was at one end of the room, and at the other end of the room was a wall of mirrors so that when you stood up to speak about the only thing you could see was yourself in the mirror at the far end of the room over the heads of the people sitting on the chairs in front of you. But that was one of the first meetings that became FERA. [HOWARD STOKER]

NARRATOR: Russ, when you were a section of FEA did you call yourself the Florida Educational Research Association?

We called ourselves that the day we were born. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: We haven't been associated with the Florida Education Association for quite some time. What precipitated our withdrawal from FEA, Russ?

Technically, everybody who came into FERA was a member of FEA, but that was not a matter of fact. We had many members who did not join FEA and that eventually resulted in our having to make a decision on whether we would remain a section of FEA or break away from it and go out on our own. And the group made the decision that it did not want to continue with FEA but it left graciously and with a lot of good feelings about everything that FEA did.

Our feeling was that we could go it alone on account of university support and on account of interest that the national test publishers had in Florida vying for

the 9th grade testing program and working with the big county school systems on projects. The principal one of these was World Book, which merged with and became part of Harcourt Brace World. Walter was with that. He was succeeded by Roger Lennon as director of the test division, and Roger became a very active participant and funder of activities in the Florida Educational Research Association. He was not alone in that. We had Psychological Corporation, California Test Bureau, ETS, and other groups. At the time Florida was seen as a bellwether state and there was the suspicion or hypothesis that what you did in Florida, if it was endorsed and successful there, you could then do it in all the other states too. We were the beneficiaries of the test service companies, and it paid off handsomely for us. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: Jim Swanson, what is your memory regarding our separation from the Florida Education Association?

In the early days FERA was a research and testing section of the Florida Education Association. In the 60's they had the strike among the teachers, 68 I think, and the teacher walkout. About that time, FEA sort of changed its attitude and was on its way to becoming a union, I mean as opposed to what it had been prior. The perception in those days was that this was a bad thing. Anyway, FERA had some money in the bank, and FEA was in need of funds because the strike and the defenses and things like that were sort of using up some of the treasury, and I think there were some problems with some members dropping out. And the concern was that they would realize that we had some money in the bank that they might have a legal claim to. And so Howard and Jake and I filed the corporation papers to make FERA a separate corporation, a private non-profit professional corporation. [JIM SWANSON]

Operational Structure

NARRATOR: How was FERA to be organized? This is what Russ offered:

I do want to say a little bit more about the attitude and aspirations we had with respect to how we would operate when we went into all of this. First, we did not want any university to dominate the organization. And that wasn't on account of any unrest between FSU and UF. But we felt that if we were to do the most good we had to have tremendous public school support and participation, and we wanted everybody to look at both of the universities in that way. Second, we wanted somebody from every county to participate. And that was always an ambition. [RUSSELL KROPP]

The third thing we wanted was for the leadership to come from both places. And we agreed among ourselves on the onset that every year the presidency would rotate between public school and university. And in addition to that we agreed that none of the commercial test publishers would be considered for office either as a director or an officer. And I think that was sensible but there was a downside to that kind of thing, because by and large those people were not only tremendous professionals but they had a whole bank of money that we needed. But still that was part of the operation. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: Jim Swanson, did you have something you wanted to add here?

I remember there was a real collegial association of university and school district people. In other words, this wasn't any frivolous thing, where the universities organized it; and said to the school district people, "Well, you all can come, but you have to be quiet, because we're the experts." They always gave the

school districts plenty to do and encouraged them to do research and do a part on that, and I think that the university people considered the district people equals and vice versa. And that always to me was a very useful thing, both at the state level and the university. I've always seen that as a very, very useful thing. [JIM SWANSON]

NARRATOR: Linda Crocker, is that your perception, also?

It was a cordial, professional organization that was focused on state and national issues primarily in research and testing as it is much today.

There is a good mix, and it's a mix with a lot of mutual respect, I think. The practitioners, the school district people don't dismiss what the university people have to say, as "oh, well, those guys are in an ivory tower, they don't have a thing to offer us," and the university people don't dismiss the needs and the problems and the academic qualifications of the school people. [LINDA CROCKER]

NARRATOR: John Follman, do you have anything to add?

I think that we've always tried to respect public school people and help them with the kind of interests that they have. I think probably the FERA does about as well at integrating public school people and university people as anybody. You know, it's a big organization for a state organization. [JOHN FOLLMAN]

NARRATOR: Freeman Cooney, what's your take on this mix that Jim, Linda and John refer to?

You can go to still other states and it's completely dominated by universities, and districts don't participate at all. And here we have this balance between the two. And maybe the balance - maybe that's the key. It may be that alone is what separates us from the other ones. [FREEMAN CONEY]

NARRATOR: John Hilderbrand, were any students involved?

When I first got involved it was an organization that was growing. It had a split, about an even split in fact, a three-way split, mostly university and school-based people and with a number of students. [JOHN HILDEBRAND]

NARRATOR: Russell Kropp? What ABOUT the involvement of students?

We said that we would, from the universities, drag as many students along as we could to every meeting. The other thing, we worked very hard to develop people; in choosing programs for presentation we did it in a way that would highlight what some of the young people were doing. We moved them into offices and chairmanships and that sort of thing as fast as we could. And finally we wanted it very much to be like a family. We always had good sessions, substantially rich, but there was always some planned recreation in it like coffees, luncheons, breakfast and evening activities. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: Dick Burnette, did you want to add something?

When we were students it was mandatory to attend the FERA meetings. After all, Russ Kropp was the head of it. Russ Kropp in 58-59 was the president. But I remember Russ Kropp leading the Conga line at Joey's Twist lounge in Coca Beach at a FERA meeting. Marching out the bar, around the lobby, and back in again. And that would be... well, we were students so they may have escorted us, Stoker and Kropp. Anyway, it was required that you attend those and work...[DICK BURNETTE]

NARRATOR: Bill Castine, you saw the purpose of the organization as . . . ?

Simply to prompt educational research as a professional enterprise, and that is research in the broad sense including evaluation, testing, measurement, etc. And, to prompt understanding and dissemination of research results. I think our basic mission and purpose has been very constant over the years. [BILL CASTINE]

Role of Publishers

NARRATOR: Russ, what role did the publishers play in FERA's development?

Usually when FERA dealt with a topic for which there were more papers, we scurried around the state, and sometimes out of state, to bring speakers in who could deal with those topics very well, and usually had a panel discussion with four or five people from the organization, plus the big guns from the outside. And that would be essential. So that's the way the thing was built, and by and large, the payment for those came from the test publishers. They picked up the bill for the speakers and often luncheons and breakfasts and that sort of thing. [RUSSELL KROPP]

NARRATOR: Lee Baldwin, what is your memory of the role test publishers played?

Probably in my early days, maybe the publishers stood out because I've never seen anything like that before, how generous some of the sponsors can be and have been over the years. I know that CTB on occasion has had the dessert reception, they had that at Miami several years ago and they had it at the Omni-Rosen the year before last, very elaborate and very upscale. Others, like Psy-Corp have done the evening reception, and it was very nicely done. They are important. [LEE BALDWIN]

NARRATOR: Chuck Dziuban, is your memory about vendors similar to Lee's?

Yes, they were active. You know, there was a time both you and I remember when vendors' rooms were full. It was a happening place and it was a place where everybody met and we spoke and we talked to vendors. They were, you know, heavily involved. And we all sort of rubbed shoulders with them and it was kind of fun. [CHUCK DZIUBAN]

NARRATOR: John Hilderbrand, what is your memory of the role of test publishers?

I have to give the publishers a lot of credit, they were always very willing to support our organization. And when I would go to them and say, "Is there a possibility on such and such a day in this particular month" (which is usually six or eight months ahead of time) "that you could have a speaker on such and such," most of the times they said "yeah." They didn't really quibble about it, which I always thought was a real compliment to them. They were very supportive of the organization. And what FERA probably doesn't realize is that we wouldn't have had the quality of programs in the 80's if the publishers hadn't stepped up to the plate and said we'll pay for that for you. Our dues structure won't cover it. And our meeting structure won't cover it unless we want to raise the dues, and nobody wants to see them raised. [JOHN HILDERBRAND]

Benefits of Membership

NARRATOR: What are some of the benefits of membership in FERA? What keeps you coming back? Jim Swanson?

It's the only organization that will let me come. [JIM SWANSON]

NARRATOR: Jake Beard?

I think it was a chance to meet people from within the profession. District people, other university people, national people, CTB, Harcourt, ETS. We have had people from ETS visiting virtually every year. We had papers presented from people throughout the southeast; it's not uncommon for people from Georgia to come down and present papers, or North Carolina. It serves some of the same functions as AERA served, for example, but does something better in that you can meet and talk with everyone that is there. There is no one that is there that is not approachable, and you can do it on a very informal and warm basis. So, I think it is a professional meeting where you really do get to interact with all of these people. And you become friends with these people and see them year after year. [JAKE BEARD]

NARRATOR: Bill Castine, you wanted to add something to this?

AERA is nice but they are so terribly huge. There was time I could do that in the 70's at AERA. I have met some of the big wigs - Jim Popham, Lee Shulman, and those guys - and I have let them know who I was. Even though I was a tiny frog in a tiny pond, and they were big frogs in a big pond. I do not believe that that opportunity is easily come by today. On a state level it is not only possible but extremely likely. [BILL CASTINE]

NARRATOR: Dick Burnette, you had a specific example of this. Would you relate that story to us?

The people I remember were test publishing type people. Because I know I was always interested in getting a test or getting a center or getting a set up and

you could always pull those kinds of deals at the meetings or work something out. That's how I got the Miller Analogies, by catching old Burgesson one night and getting him to write me a contract on a napkin...which I sent in and got my Center. And I still got it, I've got the Miller Analogies right here.

NARRATOR: You mean that he wrote on a napkin that he was giving you permission to be a Center?

That's right.

NARRATOR: For the administration of the Miller Analogies?

That's right.

NARRATOR: So you didn't have to go through the formal red tape?

Nothing. None of the fancy stuff. All I did was photocopy that napkin...and sent it in and told them to send me those forms, I'm ready to go. I've got Burgesson's signature on it. [DICK BURNETTE]

NARRATOR: And, Bill Castine, what are some of the other benefits you've gained?

I would say professional contacts. I can call up someone I know at any state university, and there are 10 universities. And I feel pleased that I know at least somebody that I have a professional affiliation with. And it's not someone I have looked up in the phone book or on the web, it is someone I have actually met and probably have had one or more conversations with. I appreciate that opportunity. Same thing with a lot of school districts. I cannot say by any means all 67, but certainly in a lot of them I can identify people that I know and I have talked to more than hello, how are you, goodbye. [BILL CASTINE]

NARRATOR: John Hilderbrand, you mentioned similar benefits you've gained?

It was the connection that was a networking for me, to bring these people together in one location for 2 or 3 days. I could talk to them about various issues that are affecting me and my life in my school system or them in the university or their school system and that was the importance. The meetings were fine, the sessions were fine, the sessions helped us but the real thing is getting people together to talk. [JOHN HILDERBRAND]

NARRATOR: How do you perceive the value of FERA, Lee Baldwin?

It's a good way to go to a conference instate and you're going to be picking up a lot of information on current topics. There are always some sessions or invited speakers on a topic of interest. You have that, and you don't have many other places to see it from the research, measurement, evaluation and accountability perspective. It's also been very valuable over the years to have it as a place to network, just getting together with people informally from other districts to talk about issues that are of common interest. The other thing, I still have the academic interest, that academic side that is an appeal to me. So, I always have that academic interest and you get that at FERA.

When I came to Florida, I came out of graduate school not knowing anybody or anything in Florida. Pretty quickly I found out about FERA. It gave me a chance to meet people who were similar to me and gave me a place where I could participate and get to know people who were like me. Over a period of time I got to network with people throughout the state and that's something. A lot of people I know throughout the state of Florida I know directly or indirectly through some contacts at FERA. So, I can't ever forget the benefit that FERA played in that

regard, because there are people coming along like I was 15 years ago. So that's why I think I'll always have a soft spot in my heart for FERA. [LEE BALDWIN]

NARRATOR: Dick Burnette, you mentioned sharing with your colleagues.

I really think number one, it was getting to know the other colleagues who were doing the same thing you were doing in a different trench, and second, it was the content of what they were doing which you were doing also. They were wrestling with standards for qualifying exams and that was what you were wrestling with, and so it was the people that we met, and secondly, it was the content that we were all dealing with that we could find out what they were doing and how they were handling it, so it was a one - two combination. You know I only came here for one year and then I would - I was going to be off to Purdue. But part of what kept me here was that I had the kind of support, when I called Tully and he sent me a complete copy of the role and scope when I had to do institutional research and self-studies for people. He sent me a whole copy all done. And I could call Stoker and he sent me, he got Hugh Stickler's data cards from the 1401. My gosh, I had the statistical data to run this test, I had a model of a self-study that was all ready - and then he sent me questionnaires that they would use. And so you didn't start new in Florida with FERA. You had the benefit of what everybody else had learned and figured out and you started off looking good. That's called support...and everybody looked after everybody. [DICK BURNETTE]

NARRATOR: Bill Myers, you experienced that same kind of support?

Well, just to know all those people, now when you know somebody and you've got some project you want to do or you've got some problem you want to solve or so on, no problem, you just call somebody up and say, "Hey, Bruce or

whoever, you know it's like, this is Bill Myers down in Broward, remember we were at FERA and I got this problem and what do you think I can do about this.” So to me it always opened up the lines of communication. I was free to call anybody because I knew them that well.... [BILL MYERS]

NARRATOR: And Howard Stoker, you experienced similar support?

Encouragement. I hate to use the word fellowship, but I can't come up with another word at the moment. For a long time FERA was in my judgment an extended family. We would go to meetings and people would make presentations. And someone would say “have you ever considered doing this or that?” and we worked to help each other at the professional meetings, tried not to tear somebody down but to help them if they needed help in what they were doing. So it was a supportive organization, that's how I saw it, and I tried to be as much a part of it as I could. [HOWARD STOKER]

NARRATOR: Annie Ward, do you think we got together back in those days because we just wanted somebody to talk to because we were so isolated?

Yes, somebody that understood what you were talking about. Now I don't think that's true within a school district, there's usually a department. Of course, back then Hillsborough County and Pinellas County had a small department. You know they had 3 or 4 people. But I didn't have and a lot of the districts didn't have that - we were sort of lone rangers, and having FERA gave you a group you could communicate with and talk about your recent concerns and problems and all of that. And we really needed that in the early days. [ANNIE WARD]

NARRATOR: Jack McAfee, you wanted to add something?

I think that we always managed in the annual meeting and in the program to have a number of sessions that addressed current concerns. I always appreciated the ability of the organization to go outside the state and to really bring in people who were considered to be experts in the area and to have the benefit of their discourse. I could think of a number of issues down through the years, for example dealing with accountability. I remember in 1988 I think it was the fellow that created all the ruckus on the use of norm referenced test data - I think his name was Stephen Canell - who was a medical doctor. And that supposedly showed that all the states were scoring above the national average. But we let him come down and speak to us and give us the opportunity to interact and respond and so forth. So there were a number of occasions like that, you know, that turned out, at least for me, to be very beneficial. [JACK McAFEE]

NARRATOR: John Hilderbrand, do you agree with Jack?

We use to take hot issues - not necessarily current topics in the state of Florida, but hot issues and see what we could do with them. For instance, I can remember one time we -- in the testing community there was a lot of controversy about three parameter, one parameter and what I used to call no parameter - that's just a traditional testing approach - and we'd have people from Iowa, usually H. D. Hoover, and we'd have somebody from McGraw Hill, which is three parameter, or Bob Rentz who is a one parameter person, and have discussions. I can remember one time we brought in Thorndike and Lennon to have a discussion. Those were topics... [JOHN HILDERBRAND]

NARRATOR: Linda Crocker, what did you see as a benefit of belonging to FERA?

Well for one thing it's the quality of the program. If you want to know what's going on in Florida in assessment and evaluation, if you teach in this area or you want to, its the quickest, easiest way to get a quick study in important things, that's one thing. Two is the caliber of the people and the presentations. It's not a snobby, snotty organization. It's people who appreciate what each other do as well as the context in which it's done. And that's often not the case on the national scene. If you go to a national meeting and they're talking about what they do in Portland, either it's not relevant sometimes to what you want to hear, or you're got three experts from all over the nation who never had to deal with a public school issue in their life and stomp all over the people. You feel as if it is not practitioner friendly. And FERA is a good mix and it's a wonderful way to orient graduate students. [LINDA CROCKER]

I think decisions have been more informed because we either met people who we respected and want to hear more from at FERA, or because we heard or learned about something at FERA that we then copy in our own districts or that we then teach in our classrooms. Without it universities would lack that flavor in their preparation. And I think a lot of the policy decisions that testing directors contribute to would be made in greater isolation. [LINDA CROCKER]

NARRATOR: Chuck Dziuban, do you have something you wanted to add here?

I think FERA has, in a sense, proved to be the transitional link in the state of Florida between the legislature and the applications of research to the public schools. It's been valuable in my judgment and it's been probably the most important organization for that, because most of the important implications of what

happens to young people in this state are played out through the themes that FERA is committed to.

Also, I think FERA is a wonderful, wonderful vehicle for the people in the state of Florida who are involved in this business to get together in a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere where we exchange ideas, and once again, revitalize ourselves at least in terms of the state of Florida, in terms of the things we are doing that are valuable and viable. I think the organization has done that and, I think there would be a lot of very lonely people in the state of Florida if it were not for FERA. [CHUCK DZIUBAN]

NARRATOR: What kept you coming back, Chuck?

You know that organizations at the national level are much different than state organizations. So what I find is that I've made a good deal of friends. Friends that I see only once a year, but those brief interchanges are very important to me because they sort of ground me in my state and I cherish that kind of relationship. Those are the things that have brought me back. ...plus it's damn fun. The meeting is a whole lot of fun. [CHUCK DZIUBAN]

NARRATOR: Mary Ester Raker, how has getting school district and university people together strengthened the organization?"

Well, I think you have the academic people who probably have more time to keep up-to-date in the latest research that is available than the district level people do, and you have the academic people that can bring to the district people what they have learned or the research that they are conducting. On the other side, the district people can hold academic people down in terms of what is realistic in terms

of how you can implement something in a school district. So I think that it is a good sharing of experiences. [MARY ESTER RAKER]

NARRATOR: Jack McAfee, you had something to add here?

Well, the primary purpose was as a research community it gave people the opportunity to present research papers, many of which would address topics of immediate concern - particularly the things that were going on at that time with respect to state wide assessment and other state initiatives. And for me it was an opportunity because my peers in the organization, we were all from school districts, and we had our own groups and we got together, but FERA was an opportunity to meet in a broader community involving university personnel and I think we all benefited from that kind of interaction. Not only the interaction in a professional sense, but the interaction in a social sense that I think served to more or less, well I always came away at the end of each annual meeting reinvigorated. You know, I'd go back home and my wife said he's come home with a gleam in his eyes. I think a number of us probably felt that way. And so from that perspective, I mean you could really get bogged down in district operations and sometimes feel like, or even losing it, and you can go away to those meetings and come back and you're ready to take it on again. [JACK McAFEE]

NARRATOR: Bill Myers, you've been away from FERA for a while, are you coming back?

If I come back again, do the spin again, I mean I had a lot of fun and I learned a lot of things and I met a lot of great people. I mean those are the three things and I'd almost put in that order. [BILL MYERS]

Special Memories

NARRATOR: John Hilderbrand, are there any particular events that happened in the organization that sort of stick out in your mind?

Yes, the logo that we now use which is the normal curve super-imposed backward to each other. That was created by Kitty Kaney and myself at a place that was in Ybor City called the RoughRiders. It used to be a restaurant bar and we had lunch in there and we were talking and all of a sudden we came up with this scheme and it became the logo. And it's been on all the programs since probably about 1985-1986. Again, we didn't get permission for it. I think Kitty was printing the program and I was doing something with the program, but we decided we needed a logo. I don't know if anyone said this was good or endorsed it. But all of a sudden it was on everything. It was picked up and I don't know if people just didn't know it wasn't an official logo. It was sort of made up by two people sitting in a restaurant one day talking about what we needed to do. I don't know if its EVER been approved as a logo. But the test of time I think approved it. Back in those days you could do things like that. It wasn't difficult to just simply have an idea, and if it was a bad idea it wouldn't have lasted more than one year.

[JOHN HILDERBRAND]

NARRATOR: Speaking of how we could do things back then that we can't do today

I served illegally for an entire second year as secretary/treasurer because Paul Gallagher forgot to put the position on the ballot. The membership never was allowed to vote. So when I discovered that I said, "Paul, what are we going to do?" and he said, "Don't worry about it. Just serve another year." I said, "But

Paul, that's illegal," and he said, "Who cares." And he was right. Nobody complained. [BRUCE HALL]

NARRATOR: Dick Burnette, are there any special memories you'd like to share with us?

Because you never turned anybody down, we had to devise ways of getting them on and getting them off in five minutes. Well, in '65 in Clearwater, I was program chairman so I was going to have to somehow supervise like 20 people giving those 5-minute speeches. Well, all you have to do is run a few of them over a minute or two and there is no way you are going to get to the last ones. And I noticed up on the stage when I was checking it out that the podium had wheels on the bottom. Little tiny wheels. So I thought by golly, I'll put a rope on the podium. You stood on the podium, the podium had a little platform. You didn't stand behind it, you stood on it. You sort of got up on it and it had wheels, and there was a curtain on the stage. You could pull the rope and pull the podium, you know, right on back through the curtain, pull it back off stage. So Ed Caldwell and I rigged that up, and the first person who was going to make a speech we had already planned it as a way of showing them how it worked. We would give them their four minutes and then I would reach down on the podium and press this suction cup and about a minute later it would pop up. And so the ground rules that I would explain to them were that when this little thing popped up you needed to be off the podium. And so the first guy we set up knew what was going to happen and so he didn't get off the podium, he was just going to keep on speaking. And so we got to the end of his 4 minutes or so and pushed the little thing down, it popped up and then Ed pulled the rope and there he went right on back slowly while I'm introducing the next person. And he's back behind the curtain, still talking, out of

sight, and I got the next guy already walking up, and he pushes out the podium again and the next guy got up. And once we got the idea across, we ran off all those presentations on time. EVERYBODY, because they knew if you ran over time you were going to get pulled back behind the curtain. [DICK BURNETTE]

NARRATOR: This is one of my favorite memories.

In 1980, I think it was - we had it at Tampa - it was at the Travel Lodge in Tampa. I was in one of the socials, there was a reception put on by one of the vendors. I had a drink in my hand and Cliff Blair came rushing in and Cliff said to me, "Dr. Hall, Dr. Hall, there's been an accident." And I said "what happened?" He said, "Dr. Annie Ward has fallen and broken her leg." I said, "What, when did this happen?" He said, "She fell in her room and she's afraid she's broken it and she can't get up and she wants you to carry her to the emergency room." And so I put my drink down and I started going out with him and I said, "Well where is she now?" He said, "She's in her room." And she was on the second or third floor - I forget - and we were rushing along and I said, "Why did she ask for me?" And he said, "Well, she knew you had a car and so she wants, she was asking for you and she wants us to carry her down the stairs and put her in the car, take her to the emergency room." So by now we're going up these narrow stairs toward her room and I said to Cliff, I said, "Cliff, how are we going to get her down these stairs?" And he said, "Dr. Hall, I don't know, all I know is she was asking for you." And so here we go roaring into the room and guess what? Annie is standing there on two good legs with a cake in her hand, and Howard is standing next to her, and about 20 other people, and everyone started singing Happy Birthday." [BRUCE HALL]

Weren't we clever. You know, I'd totally forgotten that. [ANNIE WARD]

Oh, yeah. And Howard had found some stick that he had taken the bark off and had sanded it down and made a nice walking stick and he gave it to me. This was my 40th birthday. 1980. I still have that walking stick. [BRUCE HALL]

NARRATOR: Jim Swanson, what is one of your favorite memories?

Some place somebody has got the leg of a chair from the Columbia Restaurant. FERA was at the Holiday Inn downtown Tampa. This was 1973. And I think Janice Smith was the President-elect, Will Nelson was the President. Well after the meeting one night, you know we used to always go, a bunch of us would get together and go some place for dinner, and we decided we would go to Ybor City and go to the Columbia. So it must have been 10 or 15 of us and we had to stand in line a long time. Because they weren't set up and we didn't go with a reservation or at least we didn't make a reservation until it was time to go. And they put us in a little room that was kind of like a mezzanine and you had to walk upstairs to get up there, and I don't think that area had been used for some time. Which was part of the preparation, that's why the table was wobbly. And Janice had got a chair that had a loose leg on it, and sometime during the evening the leg fell off the chair. And somebody carried that leg out as we went, they carried the leg with them. And I don't know who has the chair leg...as a memento. [JIM SWANSON]

NARRATOR: Rick Nations, what is one of your favorite memories?

We used to have invocations, and then they stopped that. Society has changed. The most unusual invocation occurred in Daytona Beach, and I was giving that. They had not refurbished the hotel as quickly as they thought. This was

a record cold season, and we used to meet in January. Many people were sleeping with their clothes on, and it was just that cold. And there was no heat. And we were meeting to have our dinner, and they asked me to give the invocation. I was not a minister back then, and I got up, and I'm doing an invocation, thanking Him for the food. Suddenly the heat turned on, and I thanked Him for the heat; just all as part of the invocation. When I was finished, Jake Beard came up to me and said, "You must be on awful good relations with God to pull that one off!" [RICK NATIONS]

NARRATOR: Bill Myers, what is one of your favorite memories?

The one I remember the most - we were meeting in Orlando. And CTB McGraw Hill sponsored a 3.1 mile run. And I had been drinking the night before and just about got in when the race was to begin. Like the night was over now, and I had a pair of cowboy boots and I decided I'm going to run the 3.1 mile run in my cowboy boots, which I did. And as I recall you had to estimate your time. It wasn't like, you know, the fastest guy wins. You could do it in, let's see, 36 minutes or whatever, it was the winner who was the person that finished closer to that time. So I think I finished something like 3rd closest to the estimated time. I finished the run. It wasn't too bad. But I remember driving home but I could hardly get out of the car when I got home. My wife said, "What the hell happened to you?" I said, "I did something stupid. I ran 3 miles with a pair of cowboy boots on." My muscles were so tight. I could hardly walk. [BILL MYERS]

NARRATOR: F. J. King, was there a particular meeting that you remember?

There was an FERA meeting and it was in the late 70's and we met in St. Petersburg. We met in the fancy hotel down there, the Don Cesar. We had a

meeting there and the thing that stands out in my mind is that it snowed in St. Petersburg. It was a January meeting. And it snowed! I remember the snow falling. In fact, we had a graduate student who went in the swimming pool and swam while the snow was falling. [F. J. KING]

NARRATOR: Russell Kropp, are there any special memories you'd like to share with us?

I'll tell you a little anecdote without any names. I met a woman and her husband in a supermarket one day and she said, "What are you doing to my husband?" I said, "I don't know what you're talking about ma'am." She said, "He comes home from your meetings, he says he goes night and day, and he has to rest for a week." She said, "He just can't take this pace that you're setting." I said, "Well we do have a very long schedule. It starts with a breakfast, and ends late in the evening. We're at it all the time." And I never did tell her that her husband attended all the sessions and then he danced from 4:30 in the afternoon until midnight every night. Never missed once. And his problem was that he had other fish to fry at those meetings and he came back a basket case. [RUSSELL KROPP]

Social Aspects

NARRATOR: Bill Myers, do you remember any dancing at FERA?

At Joey's Twist Lounge. You went to the meeting in the daytime and danced at night. And when the place closed we sang in the rooms. [BILL MYERS]

NARRATOR: Dick Burnette, what about this singing?

You really got to know these people, when you had happy hour. We sang hymns. We sang. We sang everything no matter, they'd heist it and we'd follow

through on it. And then we would tell - everybody had their own little category of jokes, we had British jokes that had no solution and you remember the jokes someone told you the year before and you'd tell them again. [DICK BURNETTE]

NARRATOR: Jake Beard, what do you remember about the evenings at FERA?

We used to have a sing along that was part of the nightly entertainment. We would go to various hotel rooms and a couple of people would bring guitars and we would sing songs. I remember being at the Holiday Inn in Tallahassee.... I remember being in one of the rooms after the meeting and we were singing "Oh My Darling Clementine" and someone knocking on a connecting door that was locked. Knocking loudly and it was Burgy and he said, "Would you guys put Clementine to bed?" But that was a pretty typical thing to have happen after the meetings in those days. [JAKE BEARD]

NARRATOR: Howard Stoker, how did these activities start?

What happened was that as we planned the 1963 meeting for Tallahassee, we tried to figure out what we were going to do with the people at 5 o'clock on Friday afternoon because at that time there was nothing to do in Tallahassee in the evening. Well, you could go to a movie but that was it. There were no bars, you couldn't even buy a beer in a bar in 1963.

If you wanted booze you had to bring it in from someplace outside Tallahassee because Leon County was dry as a bone. So we said since there is nothing to do in the evening let's have a banquet. So we planned a banquet for Friday night. And then somebody said well let's go over to somebody's room. And there were two or three people who had musical instruments at that time - guitars, a ukulele and things like that - and this was in the sing-a-long hoot-n-nanny days,

and so we had a hoot-n-nanny in somebody's room and that started the Friday night banquet followed by sing alongs. Joe Klock had a banjo...and he had a little organ that he would carry with him.

Ed Caldwell used to come to these things with a guitar. He had bought a guitar when he was with CTB and traveling, didn't know the first thing about playing it, but bought himself a guitar and taught himself to play the guitar, so he'd have something to do in the hotel rooms at night when he was alone in the towns where he used to make calls the next day. [HOWARD STOKER]

NARRATOR: What about that, Jim Swanson?

I guess if Ed was sitting right here I would say this to his face, but he played the banjo about as uncoordinated as I've ever seen. He would pat his foot but he'd never strum the same time his foot hit the floor. But he did make a lot of noise and we sang the Baptist hymnbook at a lot of those meetings. [JIM SWANSON]

NARRATOR: What do you remember about all this, Bill Castine?

One thing I do remember, talking about the guitar. Jake Beard would often participate in those sing alongs and the one song that was always requested from him was - and he had to oblige - I guess it was a country western song. Had to do with a plastic Jesus on a dashboard. We had a good time with each other, we kind of let our guard down, and decided to have a good time people to people. [BILL CASTINE]

NARRATOR: What about all this, Dick Burnette?

See, if you send this quarter in and two Brutin Snuff labels then you can get a tablecloth with a cross on it that glows in the dark, so you send in a quarter. And there's also an 18-inch plastic statue of Jesus and you get the crooks or the lambs

for a quarter. And Jake Beard use to have that thing down....And Jake can tell you - he can recite that radio station and just send in that quarter. [DICK BURNETT]

NARRATOR: Jake Beard, is this true?

I recall and this actually came from Howard Stoker and others. I claim no responsibility for this. Somehow I remember on one or more occasions doing the radio spiel selling prayer cloths.... From Del Rio Texas. Actually I think that this was implanted in my mind rather than being my own. I think Howard set me up really. After people had a few drinks and did a lot of singing, Howard would start strumming the guitar and say something like “Well, now we are going to have brother Jake Beard speak to you for a moment.” What could I say, the whole room kind of quieted down and started humming a church tune and there we went.

This was 25 cents for the tablecloth with the cross that glows in the dark. I recall also that Howard had a little song about the plastic Jesus. “I do not care if it rains or freezes as long as I have my plastic Jesus riding on the dashboard of my car.” [JAKE BEARD]

NARRATOR: What came out of all this comradery, Jake?

Well, I think there was a lot of fellowship among people around the state, around the country. I feel that comradery developed especially with the people in testing and research, and the few people we had in institutional research. There was fellowship, friendship that developed and probably there was a little direction of the organization developing at the same time. Professional contacts perhaps, job contacts. [JAKE BEARD]

NARRATOR: What can you add, Linda Crocker?

I remember it was a very social group. The Michigan Group had been more or less - “let’s do the meetings and go home.” It seemed FERA just kind of flowed from the meetings into the bars and into the restaurants. It was a sort of seamless continuing discussion of issues and social events. [LINDA CROCKER]

NARRATOR: And from Bill Myers . . .

So to me it brought people together. It brought people from the university and from the school districts. It brought them together and you know not just in the paper sessions and the discussion sessions, but it brought them together socially where they kind of got to know one another. And that was really one of the biggest things that I saw, is that if you make it a better social event more people will want to attend, and more people will begin to know each other like these school people knowing university people. And you know if you sit down and have a good time with someone you’re not going to forget. That’s going to be a lasting memory. [BILL MYERS]

Future of FERA

NARRATOR: John Follman, what do you think enables FERA to continue?

Well, I think it’s people. There were certain public school people who were game and were certainly active. I think that’s what it is, it’s the continuous participation by a certain amount of hardcore people. Also, we had a lot of help from a couple of testing companies, a couple of them on the meals andIt gives you kind of a continuity that you tie in what’s going to happen and how it’s going to happen, and I think that’s important. There are a number of people that are

there consistently and that's what gives you stability, kind of like reliability.
[JOHN FOLLMAN]

NARRATOR: Mary Ester Raker, what do you think has kept the organization alive over the years?

Well I think there is always a need for professional organizations as long as it is run correctly, because no one knows everything about a subject. And there is always a need for it in terms of learning something new or sharing your information with someone else - that's the best way to do it - by attending state conferences like that. [MARY ESTER RAKER]

NARRATOR: Lee Baldwin, how do you see the future of FERA shaping up?

I think it's promising, I think that it's certainly promising because it stills fills a need for the people that are its core members, and there's always this thing that an organization has to be careful of is that it remembers that its membership base is universities and school districts. The networking and the learning that goes on at FERA is still a reason for membership. I think it has a good future as long as it continues to have that core of leadership and continues to try to meet the needs of its members. [LEE BALDWIN]

NARRATOR: Jim Swanson, is FERA at any risk of dissolving?

I'm afraid if I were to say what I thought was a danger, I think the danger is going to be if we get a bunch of educational research professors talking to each other and not talking about practical applications that are of interest to the district people; and we get district testing people who are talking about administering tests and meeting standards without looking/seeing - you know, we just start talking past each other. [JIM SWANSON]

NARRATOR: Jake Beard, how do you see the future of FERA?

Well, we can call it a natural evolution if we want but the field of educational research is primarily driven by the government; we like to think that it's not; but the government can direct things just by placing funds in particular places. If the government thinks it is important to fund research in English as a Second Language, there will be a rush to fill the vacuum and suck up the funds. So if we think we are directing ourselves we are mistaken. We are probably being directed by the overall directions in which education is going and being directed by both the federal government and the state government. We do not have a group of researchers who sit around and think: "I'd like to research x on y." Instead, in order to survive, researchers have to have sponsors so money comes available in certain areas, and that is where the researchers go. And where the researchers go FERA kind of follows. So, testing and assessment and evaluation evolve and hopefully FERA should better evolve with the field. [JAKE BEARD]

NARRATOR: Freeman Coney, how do you see the future of FERA?

I think there are two winds blowing in FERA - one is blowing back toward the part where it's really dealing with numbers and all this. And another one is trying to make it the way I was just describing - more useful to the layperson. And both of these currents are flowing through FERA. And I don't know if that's bad. I think that's probably good. I don't think we should get so down to earth that we lose our scientific credibility. I definitely wouldn't want that. And by the same token, I think what we do should be understandable by more people than just a select few. So both of those winds blowing are probably creating a third product that's better for everybody. And that's the way I see the organization moving. But

those two opposite poles seem to fight each other every now and then. But that's okay. [FREEMAN CONEY]

NARRATOR: Should FERA strive to be political, Linda Crocker?

I think sometimes informed societies (and this is basically a scholarly society) have to be open to a wide range of ideas and to the criticism of those ideas, and as we try to mobilize behind any particular movement we're going to close off some of those ideas. So I think we have to decide that there's a difference between a lobbying organization and a scholarly organization. Other than the broadest based kinds of things that were obviously pro-education, it's very difficult to be political in the broad sense. You have to end up taking specific stands on specific issues and I'm not sure that's the role for us. [LINDA CROCKER]

NARRATOR: Jack McAfee, how do you see the future of FERA?

I think the greatest contribution that could come from the organization today is to steadfastly maintain the ethic of here's the way you need to approach problems, here's how you can look at data, and here's how you can analyze data and here's how you can interpret data. So we can have what I would call both an honest approach to analyzing problems as well as a morally responsible approach. And that is a role that FERA can play. [JACK McAFEE]

NARRATOR: When you think over the past thirty or forty years of FERA, who comes to mind, Jake?

Howard Stoker, Annie Ward, and Russ Kropp. I think all three of them cared deeply about the organization. They had all been present at the birth or soon after the birth of the organization. There was never any doubt in my mind if any one of them was called on to do something for the organization, they would do it and act

for the best interest of the organization. Now of course that list of names could be expanded. There were many people who fall in the category, but in terms of the early days, when it could have lived or died, I think those three people pop in my mind. It is also nice that they are good friends. [JAKE BEARD]

NARRATOR: John Hilderbrand, what about that?

I went to President-elect, then President in the early 80's following Annie Ward as President and who followed me was Russell Kropp. I pictured it as being sandwiched between two legends. [JOHN HILDERBRAND]

NARRATOR: Chuck Dziuban?

I think I've observed my colleagues operate with character and compassion and I've watched people and I've learned from my colleagues. Those are the three things. Mostly the thing I really appreciate about FERA is the sense of caring. We care about the organization and at some level we care about each other, you know. I could never imagine at FERA anyone from the organization making a professional attack on someone else. We may disagree with ideas, but I can't imagine a personal attack coming from a member of FERA on another and that's not true in major organizations. [CHUCK DZIUBAN]

NARRATOR: Russell Kropp, do you have any closing statements?

We had a mission and we wanted to bring the university faculty and the public school people together. We wanted to improve educational practice. We wanted to get test people together. We wanted to do research. That was something I was interested in, and it was just wonderful to have the privilege of being on the scene at that time and to be able to take part in this. And there's no doubt that if I hadn't played the role I played, somebody else would have come along next year

and done it. I mean it was just right for that sort of activity and it enriched my life. I have a lot of life long acquaintances that came with it. I always thought it was a noble and good work. [RUSSELL KROPP]

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Appendix A: Interview Questions and Prompts

1. During what period of time were you most active in the organization?
When did you first get involved in FERA?
2. What is your perception of the purposes of the organization during that time? How effective was it in the pursuit of these purposes?
3. In what ways did the organization benefit its members? How has the organization benefited you? Does any one person stand out in your mind in terms of interest, or color or significance?
4. How did you first become involved with the organization? How did your role change over the years?
5. What challenges did the organization face during the time your involvement? How did it attempt to respond to these challenges?
6. What are some significant events in the life of the organization since you first became involved?
7. What significant changes did you see in the organization? How do you view these changes (positive/negative)?
8. How has the organization interfaced with the educational community over the years? What have been the perceptions of the educational community toward the organization?
9. What is your assessment of the organization's success?
10. How would educational research and assessment in Florida be different today if FERA had never existed?
11. How has your involvement in the organization affected you?
12. What do you see as the future direction of the organization? (optional)
13. What makes FERA unique?
14. What to you was the most interesting experience you had at FERA?

Appendix B: Interview Sources

- Lee Baldwin: President 1997-98
Currently Director of Educational Improvement Services,
Orange County Schools
Resides in Orlando, Florida
- Jake Beard: Honorary Member 1997- Present
President 1971-72
Editor of FJER 1967-69
Retired Professor, Florida State University
Resides in Tallahassee, Florida
- Dick Burnette: President 1966-67
Currently Professor, Florida Southern College
Resides in Lakeland, Florida
- Bill Castine: FERA Newsletter Chair 1994 - Present
FERA Board of Directors
Retired Professor, Florida A&M University
Resides in Tallahassee, Florida
- Freeman Coney, III: FERA Board of Directors
Retired Senior Manager, Educational Research, Orange
County Schools
Resides in Orlando, Florida
- Linda Crocker: Secretary/Treasurer 1980-81
Currently Associate Dean, University of Florida
Resides in Gainesville, Florida
- Chuck Dziuban: President 1984-85
Currently Professor, University Central Florida
Resides in Orlando, Florida

- John Follman: President 1974-75
Currently Professor, University of South Florida
Resides in Tampa, Florida
- John Hilderbrand: President 1981-82
Currently Director of Assessment, Accountability and
Evaluation,
Hillsborough County School System
Resides in St. Petersburg Florida
- F. J. King: FERA Member since 1960
Retired Professor, Florida State University
Resides in Tallahassee, Florida
- Russell Kropp: Honorary Member 1985 - Present
President 1958-59, 1982-83
Editor of FJER 1959-64
Retired Florida State University Professor
Resides in Tallahassee, Florida
- Jack McAfee: President 1989-90
Retired from Indian River School System
Resides in Vero Beach, Florida
- Bill Myers: Honorary Member 1985 - Present
Retired from Broward County School System
Resides in Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Rick Nations: Honorary Member 1997 - Present
President 1975-76
Retired from Sarasota County School System
Resides in Sarasota, Florida
- Mary Ester Raker: Secretary/Treasurer 1966-70
Retired from Hillsborough County School System
Resides in Crawfordville, Florida

Howard Stoker: Honorary Member 1983 - Present
President 1963-64
Editor of FJER 1975-80
Retired Professor, University of Tennessee and Florida
State University
Resides in Knoxville, Tennessee

Jim Swanson: President 1978-79
Retired Professor of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical
University
Resides in California

Annie Ward: Honorary Member 1984 - Present
President 1962-63, 1980-81
Retired from Florida Board of Regents, University of
South Florida
Resides in Daytona Beach, Florida