

HISTORY OF THE GEORGIA ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

GAEA was founded on April 15, 1955, when a group of adult educators met at The University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, in a conference entitled "The Challenge of Adult Education in Georgia." The group included representatives from colleges and universities, libraries, public secondary schools, professional associations, and departments of state government. The conference concluded with the appointment of a committee charged with the responsibility of planning the formation of a permanent state council in adult education. The committee made its report in September 1956, at a second conference on "Establishing Priorities for Adult Education in Georgia." At that conference the group officially organized as a council, adopting Articles of Agreement with this Preamble:

In the belief that only a vigorous, informed, democratic people can remain free.

In the recognition that among a free people, learning for every citizen must be a process continuing throughout life . . .

In the understanding that the capacity to perfect skills, to enrich living, and to increase social understandings and effectiveness is ever present in human beings

In the knowledge that adults through education must seek continually new and better ways to achieve these ends and ideals . . .

We, who share these convictions, seek to build a stronger adult education movement through this organization . . .

GAEA was chartered on April 2, 1959, as the Georgia Adult Education Council, Inc. In the spring of 1975, the council became the Georgia Adult Education Association, Inc., and functions today as the umbrella organization serving adult educators from all segments of the adult education profession.

Throughout its history GAEA has attempted to provide a leadership mechanism for adult educators across the full spectrum of the profession. The first six GAEA presidents represented the Georgia Tuberculosis Association, the State Department of Education, Mercer University, The University of Georgia and Southern Bell Telephone Company respectively. It can be seen that professional associations, government, public and private institutions of higher education, and private enterprise have contributed to the development of GAEA and its rich history of service to adult education in Georgia.