



EMPLOYEE FEDERATION

of

North Harris Montgomery

Community College District

2700 W. W. Thorne • Suite A-217 • Houston, Texas 77073



THE ADVOCATE

FEBRUARY, 1994

DO YOU HAVE A PARACHUTE?

Something has concerned me for quite some time now. The specific incidents are too numerable to mention, but there seems to be inconsistencies with regard to personnel decisions on the part of higher administration. It appears that administration looks after its own without giving other personnel the same "second-chance" opportunities. If the "lowly" staff member can not adequately perform his/her job, that person is generally let go on the spot with only minimal time to even clean out a desk or work space. Similar treatment occurs if a faculty member has yet to complete the third year of their probationary period. They generally get a chance to complete the contract year, but they are usually ousted in the same fashion with no thought of other possibilities (e.g. reassignment within the college or reassignment to another college). Again, in similar fashion, some multi-year contract faculty have not been allowed to transfer to another college. Some of the transfers that have been denied seem to be based on personal rather than professional reasons.

This brings us to the processes by which the administration has treated its own. Time and time again we have seen administrators, at many levels, be deemed incompetent in their positions only to be reassigned to another position. Sometimes it is a transfer from one college to another, or from an administrative position to a faculty position within the same college, or from one college to district. Very often these "administrators" retain the high salaries that they "enjoyed" in their previous positions. Could these "new" positions be one short of the well-known "Peter Principle"?

The point I wish to make is that there are inconsistencies in the way these personnel decisions are made. We all realize that we have "policies and procedures" that dictate the processes in which these personnel decisions are made. But, it seems a bit unfair to those who do not benefit from these policies and procedures, namely non-administrators. All I am calling for is more human compassion. Administrators must realize that they often hold the future of peoples' lives in their hands, and every one must get a more fair shake.

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"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"

RETIREMENT REALITY CHECK

During our lifetime we have a few very special times that we look forward to with excitement. For some it is becoming that magical age of 16 or 21 (when we are really grown up), graduating from school, getting married, having our first child, then....our first grandchild and finally **RETIREMENT**. Just the sound of that one word is exciting or at least it should be. The thought of not having to work or worry about bills is something we all dream of. Then reality sets in.

A lot of people in the academic world worked elsewhere at one time or another, some perhaps for years. Did you know that those of us that have worked in the "outside" world and intend to retire from **TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM** are in for a rude awakening?

When we actually retire, our **SOCIAL SECURITY** benefits will be reduced if we choose to take our retirement from TRS in monthly payments rather than in a lump sum. For example:

A. Our retirement without deductions from Social Security with our years of service (quarters) would be:

\$550 per month (standard figure with the minimum of 40 quarters)

Our retirement from TRS would for example be:

\$240 per month.....Total \$790

Keep in mind that Social Security now comes in and takes 40% (remember that this amount will vary from 40% to 90% depending on your years of service in TRS) of your Social Security Annuity because you have taken your retirement from TRS.

Now instead of \$550 per month from Social Security you will receive \$330 per month plus your TRS payment of \$240 per month. Total now \$570

The difference of \$220 can/will make a lot of difference to a retiree.

B. Potential retirees with minimum number of years in TRS will suffer more.

Example:

Social Security per month.....\$550
TRS.....75

Total without penalty \$625

But:

Social Security per month with 40% penalty...\$330
plus TRS..... 75

Total per month with SS penalty \$405

In this example, the employee would benefit more by **not** taking the TRS in monthly payments, but by taking the lump sum and the full benefits from Social Security (but then would lose health insurance).

The TRS figures cited are merely examples. You can calculate your expected monthly payment from TRS and calculate the results as you factor in the Social Security deduction.

The point I'm trying to make is to:

- A. Plan ahead for your retirement while you can.
- B. Examine which option would benefit you more at retirement.

The college should include this information in its orientation sessions for new employees. Finding it out just before we retire is too late.

Social Security will send you a chart with the exact percentages based on years of service that will enable you to calculate your annuity. You may request this information from:

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
Albuquerque Data Operations Center
P.O. Box 4429
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87196

Sally Thrailkill
Division Secretary
North Harris College

JOIN THE AFT!

If you agree with the union's stances on educational and workplace issues, then it's time for you to join the Employee Federation. No other organization or publication at NHMCCD takes our kind of independent, critical approach to District affairs. If you want that effort to continue, then show your solidarity by becoming a member. All faculty and staff are eligible. Monthly dues rates are \$20.25 for full-time faculty, \$13.10 for full-time staff and adjunct faculty, and \$10.00 for part-time staff. Discuss membership with **Alan Hall**, District President (443-5544, 353-8634); **Marilyn Kron**, District Staff President; or any other member (Tony Foster, Bob Locander, Mel McFadden, Greg Mitchell, Patricia Plunk, Velma Smith, Allen Vogt, Steve Davis) of the Federation executive committee. Also, please consider writing for this publication. Submissions should be sent to the Editor, Steve Davis, at Kingwood College.