

**The old Beach Elementary  
built in 1953**



**The Heller Electric crew**





# Local 26 and Heller Electric Bring a New School to Life in Calvert County

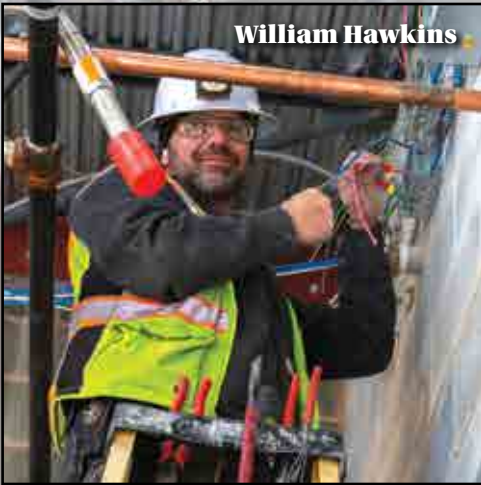
**R**ebuilding our nation's schools has long been a top legislative priority for lawmakers as our future generations deserve to learn in the best possible environment and our nation's educators deserve to work in an environment befitting the important job they have. Beach Elementary in Calvert County recently received more than a makeover; it received an entirely new home!



**Business Manager Joe Dabbs  
and Steve Heller**







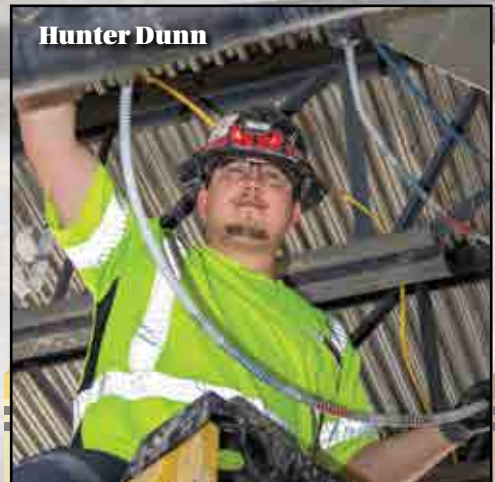
**William Hawkins**



**Luis Cruz**

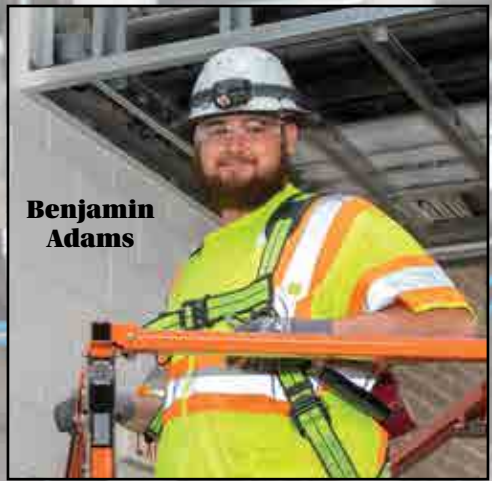


**Business Agent Paulo Henriques, Foreman Edward "Lou" Herbert, Jr., and Business Manager Joe Dabbs**



**Hunter Dunn**





**Benjamin Adams**



The first shovel hit dirt on the new Beach Elementary in Chesapeake Beach on November 11, 2021 and construction never slowed until the project was completed in early summer 2023. Teachers and administrators were able to move into the new building and set up their classrooms in mid-July.

Working for Heller Electric, about 20 Local 26 members came on site in March 2022 to construct the new three-story 75,000-square-foot building adjacent to the existing school. The existing building remained in use while construction was underway and was demolished to make room for parking once the new building was complete. The original Beach Elementary was first built in 1953 with major additions completed in 1971 and 1981.

The new school was designed with its surrounding environment—less than a mile from the Chesapeake Bay and surrounded by woods—in mind. The design includes outdoor classrooms and views of the Bay from the third floor as well as trails leading to Fishing Creek, which will be the site of another outdoor classroom. The total construction cost was about \$37 million, with the electrical package totaling about \$3.9 million.

In addition to general degradation that is common on a 60-year-old building, the old Beach Elementary School building was too small to serve its student population and had already been subject to redistricting in 2016. The new school's capacity is 578 students which allows for a little bit of growth of the current student population.

Heller Electric's jobsite leadership team of Foreman Louis Herbert and Sub-Foremen Steve Heller, Desmond Waring, and Jason DiMichele oversaw the installa-



**John "Big John" Anderson**



**Donald Swanson**





**Nicholas Trivers**



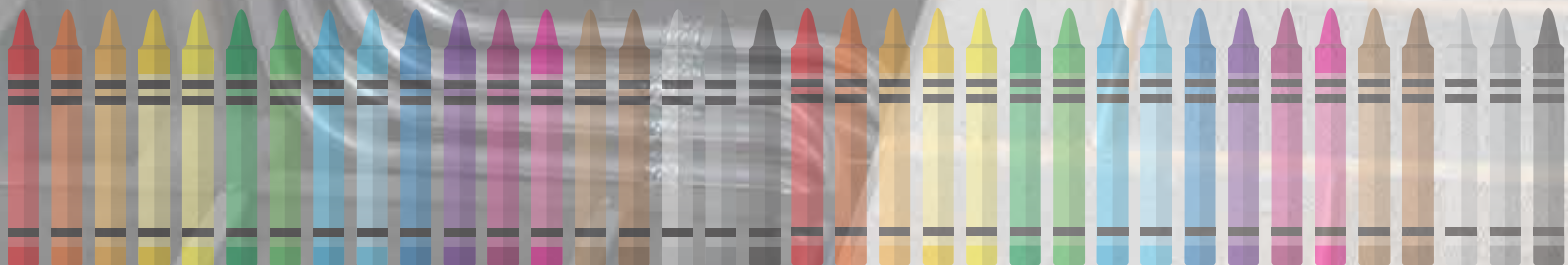
**Jason  
DiMichele**



**Cody  
Mobley**

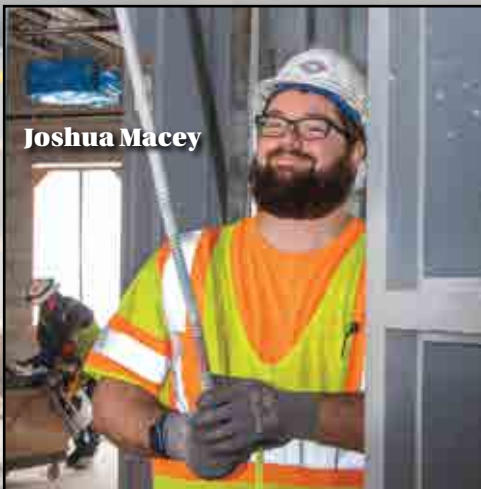


**John-David "J.D." Metcalf and  
Business Manager Joe Dabbs**





**Desmond Waring**



**Joshua Macey**



tion of the electrical rough-in, lighting and lighting control, the fire alarm system, the security system, low voltage, the antenna system, the 2000 amp switchgear including the transformers and panels, the generator, and the lighting protection on the roof. The installation of these electrical systems required 70,000 feet of mc wire; 30,000 feet of ¾", 1", and 1¼" emt in exposed areas, masonry, and drywall.

One rather unique feature of the school is the direct result of the Local 26 team—color changing round lights in the entry ways. The lights will change color based on holidays, school themes, and special events. For example, the lights might be set to green in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

Working on this project was not only right in the wheelhouse of Heller Electric; it was a true labor of love. Heller Electric specializes in school construction—new construction and modernization—and has brought countless schools to life across Maryland, Virginia, and the District. However, it's more than just another job for Heller Electric as they feel proud to be part of this important work. "These schools we build are the ones teaching our children and grandchildren and preparing them for the real world, which is amazing to think about and why our team does great work to give these schools the full potential they strive for," noted Heller Electric Safety Director/Assistant Project Manager Ricky Jackson.

While it is certainly rewarding to see a building come to fruition, for our Local 26 members working for Heller Electric, year after year they will be reminded of the rewards of building the new Beach Elementary with each class of students getting their start, learning and growing, in this beautiful school.





**Mervin "Merv" Gray at the Gallaudet University jobsite in Washington, DC**

# Passing the Torch

By Brother Mervin Gray

Most may be unaware of those brothers who came before us and had an impact on the medium voltage cable industry not just in our DMV area but, in my opinion, on the East Coast. I'm speaking of the men whom I, as well as some of my brothers, have had the pleasure to work with, be around, and more importantly, learn from at times in our careers as a medium voltage cable splicer here at Potomac Testing or at other companies within our Local. We like to refer to these men as legends.

That's right, my brothers and sisters; here within the fabric of Local 26 exists a world of certified medium voltage cable

splicers who, unknown to most, have for many years operated their craft to a high standard. We've all seen them, the men working in that medium voltage manhole making splice joints. You've passed by them on the jobsite, or seen that dude in the back of the switchgear with an open flame torch terminating the medium voltage cable you may have pulled just the day before.

I remember when I saw it for the first time I thought, "Wow, we as Local 26 IBEW electricians do that type of work? Pretty cool. Where do I sign up?"

Man was I green, back then. Being allowed to pick up a Hawkbill and do what

these men did every day of their career had to be earned and there was no short cutting that.

I remember one man in particular, Jeff Green, who lived by the motto of "Let your work speak."

It changed me as a cable splicer because, first, his work was impeccable, and he told me you can really hurt not only yourself but someone you don't even know if you do this work the wrong way, Buddy. It hit me like a freight train. Those were his words to me and I thought, "Man, what a huge responsibility to have on one's shoulders every day."

One man, John Honigsberg, Jr., never

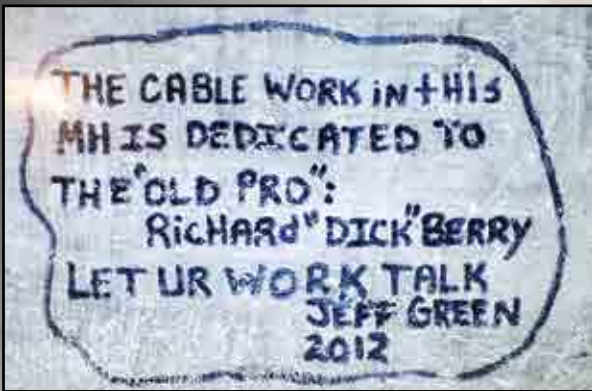


**Pictured from left, Craig Biggs, Retired Brother Brian Hunter, and Steve Meader at the Medium Voltage Maintenance Yard project at Northrup Grumman in Linthicum, MD in 2021**



**Retired Brother John Murray preparing a lead joint sleeve, in 2017, for a replacement splice at NIH and teaching the younger guys how it was done "old school style"**





Inscribed on one of the walls of the MH, a cable splicer paying homage to legend Richard "Dick" Berry

backed down on his beliefs of how this work was to be done. I mean his father practically introduced certified medium voltage cable splicing to the DMV area. Talk about big shoes to fill.

And who can forget John "The Duke" Murray who would always stress to do it the right way. He was known as "Daddy" to all of us younger guys coming behind him.

And there is the amazing Steve "Superman" Meader, who has, without a doubt, given so much of his knowledge of not only of medium voltage cable splicing to us, but also everything he has in that super mind of his.

I can go on and on about these men and the others not mentioned here. As important as they are to me, they are just as important to the young men and women who have had the pleasure of being in their presence.

I'm sure I not only speak for myself but for the other cable splicers here at Potomac Testing, along with the cable splicers at other medium voltage companies within Local 26, in saying we salute you men for what you've given and thank you for what you've taught us over the years. We will continue to keep the torch lit and light it for those brothers and sisters coming behind us.

Before us: Richard "Dick" Barry, Jeff Green, John Murray, John Honigsberg, Jr., Mike McLaughlin, Bill Sarver, Bobby Cornett, Steven Meader, Marcus Britt, Craig Biggs, David Callen, and Big John Moon.

Respectfully,  
Mervin Gray  
NCSCB Certified Cable Splicer  
at Potomac Testing Inc.



John Honigsberg, Jr., project manager of the Medium Voltage Cable Division, Installing Terminations on 35kv 1 million kcmil cable from a lift in Northern VA at a data facility in 2021



Pictured from left, "The Legends" John Honigsberg, Jr., John Murray, and Steve Meader catching up after a medium voltage lead cable job at NIH in Bethesda, MD in 2018



## April SERVICE PINS



Pictured above, from left: Joe Dabbs, Business Manager; Thomas Peoples, 30 years; Derrick Brown, 45 years; Quang Au, 20 years; Hector Ponciano, 20 years; Gary Thomas, 20 years; George Hogan, 50 years; Tom Myers, President; and Chris Cash, Financial Secretary

## May SERVICE PINS



Pictured above, from left: Jasper Kenion, 25 years; Mark Read, 20 years; Chris Cash, Financial Secretary; Ana Orellana, 20 years; Yuri Cassanello, 25 years; Khalil Zbir, 25 years; Richard Ladow, 35 years; Habib Naieem, 20 years; Michael Souder, 25 years; Robert Newman, 20 years; and Tom Myers, President

## June SERVICE PINS



Pictured above, from left: Joe Dabbs, Business Manager; Thomas Collins, 35 years; Derrick Coleman, 35 years; JATC Director Bill Murphy (back), 35 years; Garry Bressler, 30 years; Mark Fuhrmann (back), 30 years; Richard Compton, 35 years; David Wyllie (back), 25 years; Saul Munoz, 20 years; Andre Murphy (back), 20 years; John Ricchiuto, 35 years; David White (back), 25 years; Tom Myers (back), President; Philip Riddle, 35 years; and Chris Cash, Financial Secretary



## July SERVICE PINS



Pictured above, from left: Joe Dabbs, Business Manager; Daniel Audet, 25 years; John Merrick, 35 years; John Voden, 25 years; Lynn Schrock, 35 years; Organizer John Collins, 30 years; Tom Myers, President; and Chris Cash, Financial Secretary

## May SERVICE PIN



Joe Dabbs, Business Manager and  
Perry Whitlock, 20 years

## What is ERTS?



**Rich Murphy**  
Recording Secretary

**ERTS** stands for the Electronic Reciprocal Transfer System. In plain terms, it's the system used for the automatic transfer of Pension (DB - Defined Benefits), Annuity (DC - Defined Contributions), and Health and Welfare contributions back to a member's home benefit funds, no matter where they may be working in other IBEW jurisdictions. Local 26's jurisdiction consists of the Metro Zone: District of Columbia, five counties in Maryland, eight counties in Virginia; the Shenandoah Zone: 17 counties in Virginia; and the Roanoke Zone: 22 counties in Virginia. For a detailed map and list, please visit the Local 26 website, under the "General Information" tab. If your contractor works you in another local union's jurisdiction (portability), they are required to pay your benefit package to that said local union. Being registered on ERTS guarantees that your benefit payments will

be transferred back to your home local. ERTS registration will also be required if you ever plan on traveling to other local unions to seek employment.

### How to register:

• Click on one of the following registration links:

### JWs & Apprentices should visit:

<https://form.jotform.com/IBEWLocal26/erts-registration-a-referrals>

(be sure to designate the following):

DB - (Pension) - Local 26-I- Pension Trust Fund

DC - (Annuity) - 26-I-Individual Account Plan

Health and Welfare Fund - 26-I- Electrical Welfare Trust Fund

### RTs, REs, RWs & Teledata should visit:

<https://form.jotform.com/IBEWLocal26/erts-registration-r-referrals>

(be sure to designate the following):

DB - (Pension) - Local 26-I- Pension Trust

Fund (if it applies to your classification)  
DC - (Annuity) - 26-I-Individual Account Plan (if it applies to your classification)  
Health and Welfare Fund - 26-I- Electrical Welfare Trust Fund.

- Fill in all required information (including home benefit designations and electronic signature).
- Hit submit.
- Local 26 will email you your ERTS registration confirmation and ERTS-generated password.
- Be sure to log on to ERTS and change your password.
- EWTF will contact you regarding the reciprocal payment allocation election agreement.

Once you enroll with ERTS, it's a life-time enrollment (unless changed by the member). For questions, contact Richard G. Murphy at [rmurphy@ibewlocal26.org](mailto:rmurphy@ibewlocal26.org) or 301-918-8831.



# Brother Dick Bissell Retires as President; Welcome New President Sister Susan Flashman

The RMC said goodbye this Spring to President Richard "Dick" Bissell who announced his retirement from this position at the end of his term. We will still see and hear from Dick, so no worries there. But we do want to take this opportunity to thank him for all that he does and will do. We would be remiss if we did not mention that his wife Susan, the longtime recording secretary who also resigned her position earlier this year, was ably assisting him at least 50% of the time. Thanks to both of you.

Nominations and elections were held at the April meeting. Susan was nominated and, by acclamation, will succeed Dick as our new president. All other officers were returned to their offices, also by acclamation.

Also, at the April Meeting, the RMC, in conjunction with Local 26, held its first ever Retiree Service Award ceremony at the Lanham headquarters (pictured below). Those in attendance received their awards ranging from pins to jackets to watches. It was considered a huge success, but the second one scheduled on September 30th validates the notion that this will be a tradition moving forward.

A group of retirees recently gathered last May in Annapolis, MD, for an afternoon of dining and camaraderie.

The annual Local 26 picnics, in Maryland and Manassas, Virginia, were both well attended by our retirees. As was expected, a fine time was had by all.

The raffle tickets for the benefit of the medical equipment supply have been

mailed and the lucky winners will eagerly await the drawing to be held on the second Saturday in November. We thank all who participate and support this once-a-year event.

The much anticipated RMC Crab Feast will be held on October 21st at the Local Union Hall for the very first time. We have fond memories of Mike's Crab House, but we look forward to having it at the Hall.

If you are not aware already, the RMC has an email newsletter. If you are already receiving the snail mail minutes and would like to also be included in the email, please fill out your email address on the membership renewal form at the end of the minutes.







Elvin Cavanaugh, 20 years



John Murray, 25 years



Owen Carroll, 35 years



William Martinez, 40 years



Richard Rice, 40 years



Richard Spicer, 40 years



James Ashley, 45 years



Derrick Brown, 45 years



Melvin Henderson, 45 years



Kevin Reeder, 45 years



Jonathan Stetson, 45 years



Richard Barton, 50 years



Michael Donaldson, 50 years



Robert Dunn, 50 years



Kevin McNeeley, 50 years



George Hogan, 50 years



Allan Ng, 50 years



John Celia, 55 years



Bernard Kalb, 55 years



Robert Lewis, 55 years



Joseph Gheen, 55 years



William "Gary" Distler, Jr. 40 years,  
and William Distler, Sr., 65 years



RMC board members swearing in



William Fosbrook, 50 years



Henry Becker, 70 years





# Scholarship Award Winners



**Marley Cosgrove**, the daughter of Brother Atticus Cosgrove

**M**arley Cosgrove is the daughter of 26-Year-Member Brother Atticus Cosgrove and a 2023 graduate of River Hill High School in Clarksville, MD. Marley will be attending the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus (UMBC) in the fall and plans to double major in biology and math. She would like to become a genetic researcher and, perhaps ultimately, become a doctor.

In high school, Marley was a member of the National Honor Society, the Spanish Honor Society, the Art Honor Society, and Scientific Minds of America. She was also part of her high school's varsity cross country team, varsity track team, and varsity outdoor track team.

Outside of school, Marley participated in an internship at Columbia Family Eye Care where she learned to run eye tests and examinations and input data into the company database. She also worked at a local cornmaze as a cashier, at a pool as a lifeguard, and at Starbucks as a barista.

"I would like to thank IBEW Local Union 26 for selecting me to receive this award. This scholarship provides me with the necessary funds to pursue my dreams of furthering the world of genetic research and technology," noted Marley. "Thank you Local 26 for giving me the help I need to find myself in the scientific field."



**Brendan Ridings**, the son of Brother David Ridings

**B**rendan Ridings is the son of 27-Year-Member Brother David Ridings. Brendan is a 2023 graduate of Sherando High School in Stephens City, VA. He will be attending Virginia Tech University in the fall in pursuit of an engineering degree.

Brendan was a member of the National Honor Society and took a rigorous course load of five Advanced Placement courses in his senior year. He was also extremely active in FFA (Future Farmers of America) throughout all four years of high school, attending the FFA Washington Leadership Conference, the Virginia FFA Leadership Camp, and several area workshops, and serving as chapter president, secretary and student advisor.

In addition to his participation in FFA, Brendan was a member of the Sherando indoor track and field team, the Sherando outdoor track and field team, and the Shernado JV football team.

Outside of school, Brendan worked as a skilled laborer for Whittington Construction and still works as an order fulfillment associate at Walmart in Stephens City, VA. He has also earned a certificate in workplace readiness.

"The IBEW has been a part of my family for 27 years and it is a privilege to receive this scholarship," noted Brendan. "It will help me continue my education at Virginia Tech. Thank you again for selecting me as a scholarship recipient."



**Tanner Seiss**, the son of Brother Brian Seiss

**T**anner Seiss is a 2023 graduate of Catoctin High School in Thurmont, MD, and the son of 25-Year-Member Brother Brian Seiss. Tanner will be attending the University of Maryland at College Park this fall in pursuit of an engineering degree.

Tanner graduated at the top of his class with a 4.83 weighted GPA and a 4.0 unweighted GPA. He was on the Frederick Community College Dean's List for three semesters. Throughout high school, Tanner took honors, Advanced Placement, and dual enrollment courses and was extremely active in clubs and volunteer efforts. He was a member of the Student Government Association, National Honor Society, the Spanish Honor Society, the Science Honor Society, the English Honor Society, and the Math Honor Society. The Boy Scouts of America has been an important part of Tanner's life as he has not only earned his Eagle Scout ranking with three palms, but is also a member of the Order of the Arrow and has earned the Ad Altare Dei and Pope Pius Awards. He has been an assistant and senior patrol leader for Scout Troop 270 and a Wolverines Patrol Leader. He was also an invaluable student volunteer at Catoctin High School as well as area elementary schools.

Among the many volunteer activities Tanner has participated in are quite a few to benefit his community in Frederick County. Collecting donations for a local foodbank, assisting with therapeutic horse riding programs, laying wreaths, marking the trails of Catoctin Mountain Park, cleaning up area trails and parks, and volunteering with the Emmitsburg Firehouse are among the many things Tanner did throughout high school.

"This scholarship will be such a financial help to my family and I," said Tanner. "I'll be able to spend more time focusing on my academics instead of worrying about the cost of my education. Thank you."





**Bailey Ancell**, the daughter of  
Brother Clarence Ancell, III

Bailey Ancell is a 2023 graduate of Luray High School in Luray, VA, and the daughter of 21-Year-Member Brother Clarence Ancell, III. Bailey will be attending James Madison University in the fall pursuing inclusive early childhood education. She plans to pursue a career in teaching.

Bailey, who served as treasurer of her school's chapter of the National Honor Society and was a member of the Spanish Honor Society, graduated with an Advanced Diploma with the Governor's Seal for completing at least 30 college credits while in high school. In total, Bailey earned 41 college credits, even completing a 40-hour practicum in a kindergarten classroom. She earned those credits taking dual enrollment courses in conjunction with Laurel Ridge Community College. Bailey graduated with a 4.25 GPA from Luray High School and a 3.8 GPA from Laurel Ridge Community College.

While at Luray High School, Bailey was also a student athlete and member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, playing basketball, soccer, and volleyball all four years of high school in addition to her 8th grade year. She worked at a local coffee shop and as a teaching assistant at SD Solutions, which employs students to serve small communities by helping at local schools and performing community service. She has also participated in volunteer work, including teaching at Antioch Independent Bible Church; volunteering at the Life Center of Page Valley, a non-profit that supports women and families; organizing events through the Luray High School Student Council Association; and volunteering in efforts sponsored by the Luray High School Girls Basketball.

"I would like to say how appreciative I am to IBEW Local 26 for choosing me as a recipient of their scholarship," noted Bailey. "Through choosing me, the IBEW will help me achieve my career goal of becoming a teacher. This scholarship gives me an opportunity to focus on my studies and excel in the early childhood education program at James Madison University. Local 26 has provided my dad with a great job that has allowed him to provide for our family, for which I am forever grateful."

## Congratulations to the following members who have retired:

### March 2023

Curtis J. Wick  
Jeffrey Galamb  
Kevin L. Weyant  
John F. Williamson

### April 2023

Carlton W. Robinson  
Douglas W. Fleming  
James C. Bethinger, Jr.  
Gary M. Downing  
Jesus E. Cueva  
Michael B. Blum, II  
Roberto Negron  
Curtis L. Sylvia  
Keith E. Coleman  
Jeffrey P. Courtney  
Steve E. Baldwin  
Jose T. Huarniz  
Wade E. Morgan

### May 2023

Darryl A. Johnson  
Carson R. Clark  
Jerome D. Bullister  
William H. Reed  
Edward H. Collins  
Elizabeth L. Bukowski  
Robert L. Loveless  
Keith G. Bender

### June 2023

Neil P. O'Brien

### June 2023

Philip W. Boyd  
Stephen W. Kubanada  
Barry S. Williams  
Vernon A. Hawkins  
Jesse E. Brown  
Francis X. Dean, Jr.  
Steven V. Seaton  
Willy Calixte  
Bejamin R. Bowling  
James J. Gallagher  
Leonard T. Meenehan  
Floyd S. Wood  
Philip H. Spain

### July 2023

Robert L. Kent  
Richard D. Gacek  
Bruce W. Clodfelter  
James B. Emerson  
Eugene A. Dailey  
Matthew Johnson  
Blair F. Bowen  
Belayneu Seifu  
E. Daniel Ellison  
Solomon W. Thomas  
Isaac N. Mancilla  
Brian K. Groff  
Robert P. Collison  
James M. Ridley  
Christopher A. McCorkle  
Charles A. Hanko