

Another Great Year for the Georgia Chapter

We are excited to report another successful year for the SFGA! We have continued to meet our mission goals of support, education, and research. Read on to see what we have done this year—from Patient Seminars (local and national) to our very successful fundraisers . We are able to do all these things because of YOU—Our membership. We hope you enjoy reading about all we have accomplished this year and what we look forward to in the coming months.

SFGA Board Members

Top Row: Vernita White, Ann Basile, Doreen Towhey, Peggy Levengood, Brian Handley, May Bongcaron, Mary Wetherington; Bottom Row: Demetra Newton, DeJuana Ford, Cara Sullivan
Not Pictured: Richard Moore, Barbara Moore, Karen Williams, Becky Evans, Scott Morrison



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President's Point

It's important to attend Support Groups when you can!



Even when things are going well you still want to attend our Support Groups to help someone else. There are several benefits in attending Support Groups, and when dealing with Scleroderma probably the number one benefit is helping you or others realize they are not alone in dealing with this disease. We try hard to make sure all that attend have a voice, have some time to express their feelings, share their stories, struggles, and triumphs. They are also a great resource for finding very useful information.

We have seen first time meeting goers leave meetings feeling so much better than when they came in. So check out our website at www.scleroderma.org/georgia for the meeting schedules and make plans to join us!

Doreen & Peggy

HOLIDAY APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Our Winter Holiday Gathering and Volunteer Appreciation was held December 4, 2016 at Premier Events in Duluth. The unseasonable cold and rain of the day did not deter attendance. We had a great crowd! The delicious lunch was prepared by our own Chef (and Board Member) Mary Wetherington.

Co-Presidents Doreen and Peggy conducted a short business meeting and we heard from Registered Dietitian Meagan Barry from Emory Johns Creek Hospital. Meagan shared tips for healthy eating and several yummy recipes including one for Oven Fried Chicken on p. 9 of the newsletter.

Board Members Karen Williams and Becky Evans provided the beautiful winter wonderland themed decorations and dessert.



Winter Wonderland



Bongcaron Family



Holy Cross Friends



Evans/Williams Family

Each year we recognize volunteers who go above and beyond in their efforts to help the Georgia Chapter. This year's Georgia Peach recipients were The Bongcaron Family, Holy Cross Friends, and the Evans/Williams Family.



We all enjoyed a great afternoon of food and fellowship—and lucky winners took home the table displays!

MARCH PATIENT SEMINAR

Georgia Chapter Patient Seminar [By Ann Basile](#)

On Sunday, March 12, we held a Patient Seminar that has left us more knowledgeable about scleroderma on several fronts and with great memories of an afternoon well spent.

We chose a new location, and it was a winner - good ventilation, outdoor views, comfortable seating, a great size and easy to access. We had a beautiful room in the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce building on Sugarloaf Parkway in Duluth, just off of I-85. Oh, and did I mention, the price was right? Thank you, Peggy & Mike!



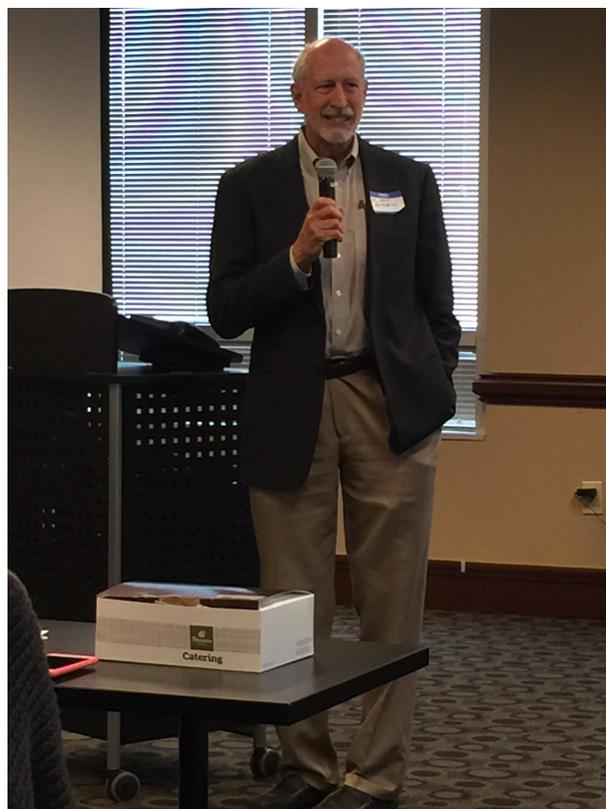
[Dr. Richard Silver](#)

Both stayed after the conclusion of the program, continuing to field questions, generously giving of their time.

Our very own hospitality maven, Mary Wetherington, provided an assortment of box lunches for our refreshment. We were able to have a brief business meeting prior to the program. There were a nervous few moments before proceedings began, as we were unsure if Dr. Silver would be able to escape the snowy confines of a mountain cabin and navigate the icy roads to us, but all was well.

"I'm so glad I came. I learned so much!" was a common refrain heard after the seminar.

Our speakers were Dr. Richard Silver of Charleston, South Carolina, and Dr. Gary Botstein of Atlanta. These two gentlemen have been buddies since med school days, and both are very active in the scleroderma community. Both are Board Certified in Rheumatology and Internal Medicine. Dr. Silver is a Distinguished Professor at MUSC, where he is director of the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology. Dr. Botstein has been in private practice in Atlanta. One cannot read about the history of the Atlanta Patient Support Group without mention of his dedicated involvement. On this Sunday, they spoke separately, and then fielded questions together.



[Dr. Gary Botstein](#)

OUR 5TH ANNUAL HIKING AND HOTCAKES!

By: Cara Sullivan

One of the best ways our chapter supports our mission goal of RESEARCH is through our Hiking and Hotcakes—Stepping Out for a Cure event. This year's theme was Run for Hope and Research—and we did! We started with a goal of \$30,000 and ended up with \$42,500 to donate to Scleroderma Research. If you have never come to this event—there is something for everyone including a Zumba warm up, timed 5K race with age group medals, 1 mile fun walk (in a shady part of the park), Breakfast Bingo for those who do not wish to race, chance drawings, a Cake Walk sponsored by Bill Rhodes Bakery, and, of course, a delicious pancake breakfast provided by the Knights of Columbus.

The race committee created beautiful baskets for the chance drawing. There were lots of great prizes—including a foursome at the SFGA golf tournament and a bike!

We had over 300 participants in our run and walk and many others for bingo, breakfast, and the cake walk.



There are so many people to thank for making this day a huge success:

- All of our TEAMS, and race participants
- The race committee and chapter board members for all their hard work and countless number of hours
- Our countless number of Volunteers, Family and Friends
- The Knights of Columbus Local Chapter # 7923 for preparing and serving the Hotcakes Breakfast.
- Parkview High School Cross Country Team and their students, Coach Richard King, Rudy Talik, and volunteer parents for their expertise and leadership
- City of Lilburn and Lilburn City Park for all their help
- And a very SPECIAL THANK YOU to all of our Corporate Sponsors and Friends of Scleroderma,

**It was a GREAT DAY to raise money and awareness for Scleroderma!
Mark your calendars for next year's event—June 9, 2018!**

2017 NATIONAL PATIENT CONFERENCE

By: Peggy Levensgood

The SFGA Board and many support group members traveled to Chandler, Arizona, in July to attend the 19th Annual Scleroderma Foundation National Patient Conference: "Discovery in the Desert". The conference took place at the beautiful Wild Horse Pass Resort, a desert oasis surrounded by mountains, cacti, and other local vegetation and wildlife. We were welcomed on Thursday evening by the Chapter Relations Committee at a 'meet and greet' ice breaker reception to kick off the next day Leadership events. Friday's Leadership Day was attended by local chapter leaders and the national board members and provided a wealth of information about fundraising, support groups, governance and general best practices. The event also included small group break-out sessions. We attended the Patient Conference both Saturday and Sunday. The national organization did another GREAT job this year securing very informative speakers and vendors. If you were not able to attend the conference, many of the sessions were recorded. The national organization's website has many links to these videos so you can learn more about "What's New" and "What's Coming" in scleroderma therapies and treatments. Next year's conference will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Scleroderma Foundation and will be held the 'City of Brotherly Love'--Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 27-29, 2018.

www.scleroderma.org

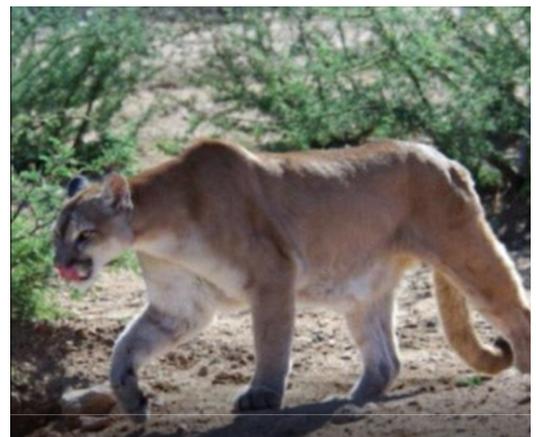


SFGA was well-represented at the National Conference!

More Conference News

Mary and the Big Cat

In between seminars on the Leadership Day, Mary Wetherington decided to take a little stroll in the Resort's desert "gardens." Mary heard a fellow conference participant call out to her that there was "a cat." Although Mary really could not figure out why people seemed so worried about "a cat" she turned around and walked back from where she started. After she was safely out of the "garden" she turned to see a Mountain Lion walk down the path she just left! An exciting adventure in Arizona, for sure!



9th Annual Kathleen Basile Golf Tournament

By: Doreen Towhey

The 9th Annual Kathleen Basile Memorial Golf Tournament was held at Reunion Country Club on Friday August 4th. It was a **GREAT** day with some **GREAT** weather, **GREAT** golf, and **GREAT** fundraising—all to benefit the Scleroderma Foundation Georgia Chapter!

There were 102 golfers who participated in everything from the “Putting Contest” to buying “Mulligans” to taking a chance on “Hitting The Green”. All golfers thoroughly enjoyed the day and when they returned from the links board members Mary Wetherington, and Annie Basile made sure there was plenty of delicious BBQ to eat. Once again this year we had awards, raffle prizes, and a good time had by all.

We have already started planning the 10th Annual Kathleen Basile Memorial Golf Tournament and you won't want to miss it. We plan to fill the course with 144 golfers next year! Mark your calendar for August 3, 2018 . Come join us and help us make the 10th Year the **BIGGEST** and the **BEST** ever!

We also want to thank our sponsors that continue year after year to support the mission of the Scleroderma Foundation. If you would like to learn more about the event or how to become one of our sponsors, email us at gachater@scleroderma.org.



The Hit the Green Crew did a great job fundraising during the event!



***Always make a total effort,
even when the odds are
against you.
~Arnold Palmer***



SUPPORT GROUPS

Peachtree City/Newnan

TAI-CHI FOR SCLERODERMA

By: Vernita White

The January Support Group meeting in Peachtree City started with a demonstration in Tai-Chi. We were fortunate to have Yvette Monet, a certified trainer with over 200 hours in Yoga and over 7 years experience teaching tai-chi and qigong.

Yvette was stricken with polio at the age of 10. Having endured several spinal operations, she now views exercise as prevention. "Pain does not end- I just keep moving," she stated.



We spent an hour working through some of the various moves. The first half hour of the class we did exercises standing up and the second half hour she demonstrated exercises and stretches that can be done sitting in a chair. Although Yvette was very gentle with us, we discovered muscles we forgot we had.

Yvette also provided booklets showing some of the exercises she did with us. We have some extra copies if you would like to pick one up at



our next meeting in March.

Great meeting!
Thank you Ms. Monet!

***Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so
much. ~Helen Keller***

Atlanta Area

SUPPORT GROUP RETURNS IN OCTOBER!

By: DeJuana Ford

Looking for scleroderma support in Atlanta? The Atlanta Scleroderma Patient Support Group will resume meeting on Sunday, October 22, 2017, then on the second Sunday of each month thereafter. Come out to connect with fellow scleroderma warriors and friends and gain information from future speakers on ways to maximize your wellness. Meetings are facilitated by DeJuana Ford, creator of the ScleroJournal blog and former Athens Area Support Group Facilitator. (You can follow ScleroJournal at www.sclerojournal.com!)

All support group meetings will be held from 3:00-4:30PM in the Conference Room at Sandy Springs Christian Church (301 Johnson Ferry Rd, Sandy Springs, GA 30328). Future meeting dates are Oct. 22, Nov. 12, Dec. 10, Jan. 14, Feb. 11.

SUPPORT GROUP CONTACTS

Atlanta Support Group

Sandy Springs Christian Church Conference Room
301 Johnson Ferry Rd.
Sandy Springs, GA 30328
Contact: DeJuana Ford
Email: dejuanaford@gmail.com
Phone: 678-315-6969

Newnan Support Group

Peachtree City Library
201 Willow Bend Rd
Peachtree City, GA
Contact: Vernita White
Phone: 678-479-4521
Email: vwwhit@yahoo.com
Contact: Demetra Newton
Email: demetra@gmail.com



NATIONAL BOARD MEMBER

Our own Mike Levensgood was elected to the National Board of the Scleroderma Foundation at the July Patient Conference. We are very proud to have Mike serve on the Board and know that he will help us continue to have a strong presence at National in our efforts to raise awareness and find a cure for Scleroderma.

The following is excerpted from the Press Release from the Scleroderma Foundation.

Mike brings tremendous experience and expertise to this position—more than 30 years experience as an attorney whose practice focuses on counseling business clients and helping them resolve their commercial disputes through negotiation, litigation, workouts and corporate reorganizations. He has served on numerous non-profit boards in Gwinnett, GA. Last year, he was elected to the boards of the Georgia Hospital Association and the Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia. He currently serves as chair of the boards of the Gwinnett Health System, Partnership Gwinnett and the Gwinnett Parks Foundation.



Mike with SFGA Board Members Vernita White and Demetra Newton at the National Patient Conference

FALL PATIENT SEMINAR



Come learn more about the re-opening of the Scleroderma Clinic at Emory Hospital. Doctors Susan Wallis and Kristina Tsargaris will speak at our SFGA Patient Seminar on October 29, 2017 at 2 p.m. The location will be the Emory University Campus. We will post more information on our website www.scleroderma.org/georgia. Look for an email soon with details. We hope to see you there!

Doctors Wallis and Tsargaris with Peggy Levensgood, Doreen Towhey, and Mike Levensgood.

W is for WARMING—Cooler Weather is on the way—tips for hand warming.

- Wiggle your fingers
- Windmill technique (large circles with your arms) - make sure your doctor has approved this one
- Warm Water
- Warm pits (place your hands in your warm armpits)
- Warmers



<https://www.sclero.org/scleroderma/symptoms/raynauds/rewarming.html>

RECIPE

Oven Fried Chicken Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

6—4 oz. skinless chicken breasts, trimmed of fat
1/4 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 cup Italian bread crumbs
1 tsp dry mustard
1 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp oregano
1/2 tsp parsley
1/2 cup egg substitute

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix whole wheat flour, Italian bread crumbs and 5 seasonings in a large bowl. Wash chicken first and then coat each piece with egg substitute and toss in bread crumbs. Place chicken breasts on a cookie sheet covered with cooking spray. Then light spray tops of chicken breasts with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 30 min., turning each breast over halfway through and then cooking and additional 15 minutes.

Nutritional Data Per Serving:

Calories: 170 | Fat: 2g | Cholesterol: 66mg | Sodium: 191mg
Fiber: 1g | Carbohydrates: 7g | Protein: 30g

This recipe was shared by Emory Dietitian Meagan Barry. You can find these and other Healthy Tips at advancingyourhealth.org

***We make a living
by what we get,
but we make a life
by what we give.
~Winston Churchill***

HOLIDAY GATHERING

Holiday Gathering and Annual Awards Luncheon

Save the Date: December 3, 2017

Location: Shorty Howell Park, Duluth GA

Time: 2:00 pm

**SEE YOU
THERE!**



SFGA BOARD MEMBERS

Co-Presidents : Peggy Levensgood & Doreen Towhey

Vice-President: DeJuana Ford

Treasurer: Brian Hanley

Secretary: Vernita White

Board Members at Large:

Ann Basile

Scott Morrison

May Bongcaron

Demetra Newton

Becky Evans

Cara Sullivan

Barbara Moore

Mary Wetherington

Richard Moore

Karen Williams

National Website: www.scleroderma.org

Georgia Chapter's Website:

www.scleroderma.org/georgia

LIKE US on SFGA Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/sclerodermafoundationGA/>

FOLLOW US on Twitter: @scleroderma_GA

SAVE THE DATES

Patient Seminar—Oct. 29, 2017 2:00 p.m. Emory University Campus

Holiday Gathering and Awards Luncheon—December 3, 2017 2:00 p.m. Shorty Howell Park

5th Annual Hiking and Hotcakes—Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma—June 9, 2018 Lilburn Park

National Patient Conference—Philadelphia, PA—July 27-29, 2018

10th Annual Kathleen Basile Golf Tournament—August 3, 2018 Reunion Country Club Hoschton , GA

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO SFGA!

What does it mean to be a member?

- It means you will be helping out scleroderma patients right here in Georgia through continuing Patient Education Seminars, Support Groups, and Awareness Events
- You will start to receive the National Foundation's award winning magazine "The Voice" to get the most up to date information on all things scleroderma, along with stories of hope, and triumph!

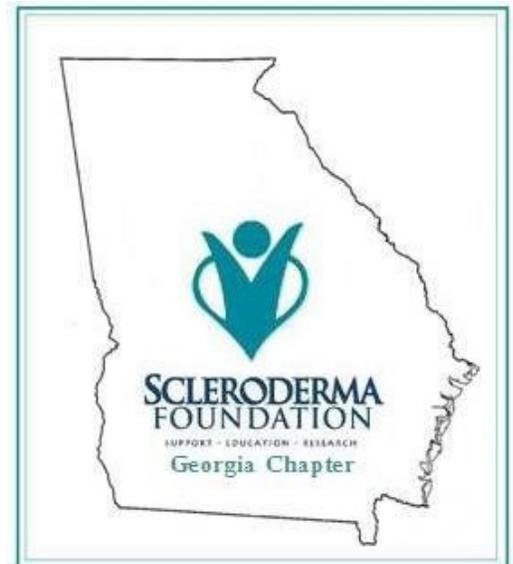
How do I become a member?

- Visit our website at www.scleroderma.org/georgia and click on **DONATE NOW!**
- Mail us a membership donation of \$25 to SFGA, PO Box 522, Lilburn, GA 30047

What if I am not sure if I am a member?

If you have stopped receiving the Voice Magazine then it is time to renew your membership.

If you are not a member please consider joining today!



WHAT WE DO

Whether we are running for hope and research, playing golf, attending a patient seminar or support group—we do these things to accomplish our mission of support, education, and research. Thank you SFGA members for all you do to support us in all our endeavors! See you soon!

THANK YOU!