

A Short History of the Colorado Springs Education Association or
"How We Became the Organization We are Today"
By Michael A. Coughlin, former CSEA President

Before 1960, the Colorado Education Association was for administrators only. Teachers were ineligible for membership and could belong only to their local association and to the National Education Association.

Before 1968, there were three organizations for educators in District Eleven. One of them, the Classroom Teachers Association, consisted only of teachers from a few elementary schools, West and North Junior High Schools and Palmer High School. The Colorado Springs Education Association consisted only of principals and administrators. The Department of Classroom Teachers was a subgroup of the Colorado Springs Education Association.

In 1966-67 the Colorado Springs Education Association began to fall apart. Teachers saw themselves powerless to affect any change in their position. At the time teachers saw CEA as an obstacle to what was uppermost on everyone's mind, collective bargaining.

In 1968 an effort was made to merge the two teachers' associations. The NEA began to pressure CEA to affiliate with the state's teachers. The resistance was strong, but when Colorado Springs, Denver, Jefferson County and other local associations threatened to form a new Colorado Teachers Association, CEA gave in and excluded administrators from CEA membership.

On December 4, 1968, a mass meeting was held and the membership of the Colorado Springs Teachers' Association ratified its first Master Agreement. The base salary for a teacher in District 11 was a whopping \$6,100! As the old saying goes, **"We've come a long way, Baby."** The rights and benefits in our current contract reflect the huge progress we have made since our initial Master Agreement.

The inherent right of all employees to be treated with dignity and respect and to receive appropriate and fair compensation has always been one of the primary goals of CSEA. As our Mission Statement says, "The Colorado Springs Education Association advocates for the rights of its members and promotes excellence in education through collaboration and continuous improvement."

Don't take your rights for granted. It took hard work to get where we are today. With your involvement we can and will be heard.