

UESF RETIREE NEWSLETTER



Sandra Mack



Dennis Kelly

In the hope that Covid and the pandemic are on the wane, the Retired Division of UESF has arisen and is getting back in business. We have scheduled five meetings throughout the year and have started up the Committees that are in our Bylaws. Some of their reports are attached to this newsletter.

We will try to make our meetings enjoyable and also educational—just like all those book reports our students had to write over the years.

Your newly elected UESF Retired Division Executive Board members have been meeting since our election in May. We still have two seats open, one for a classified member and one for a treasurer. If you are interested in serving the Retired Division, please let us know.

Our first membership meeting of 2022-23 will take place on September 8 from 10:30 to 12:30 at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center. Free onsite parking. We will have a free catered lunch and will give out free Retired Division t-shirts. Proof of vaccination will be requested at the door.

UESF Retired Division Meetings Calendar

SEPT

SEPT 8: Membership Mtg, 10:30am, Scottish Rite Masonic

SEPT 15: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

OCT

OCT 18: New Retiree Lunch, Lake Merced Boathouse

OCT 20: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

NOV

NOV 17: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

DEC

DEC 8: Holiday Party/Membership Mtg., Time/Location TBD

DEC 15: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

JAN

JAN 12: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm UESF Office

JAN 19: Membership Mtg, 10:30am, Scottish Rite Masonic

FEB

FEB 16: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

MARCH

MAR 9: Membership Mtg, 10:30am, Scottish Rite Masonic

MAR 16: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

APRIL

APRIL 20: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

MAY

MAY 16: Executive Board Mtg, 1pm, UESF Office

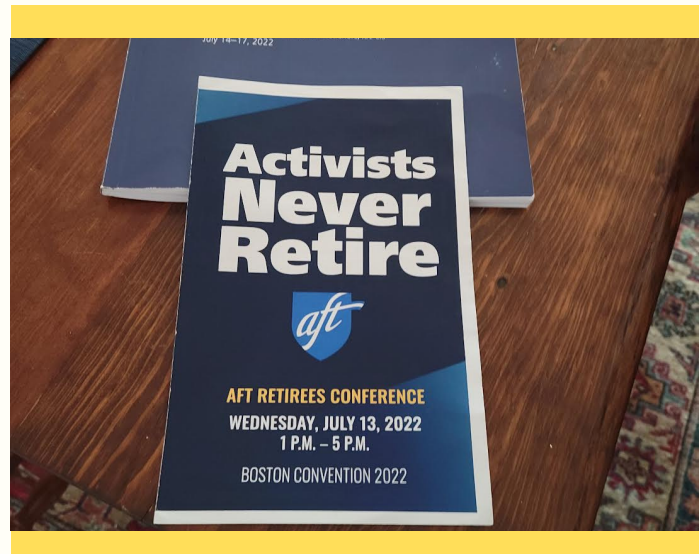
MAY 18: Membership Mtg, 10:30am Scottish Rite Masonic

AFT CONVENTION

Retired UESF members joined thousands of educators from across the country at the 2022 AFT convention in Boston this past month.

UESF Retiree Delegate, Lisa Gutierrez Guzman, shared with us some of the many highlights from her trip!

1) AFT Retirees Conference (“Activists Never Retire!”): I attended two workshops: 1) Organizing and 2) Retiree Legacy Initiative Program. At Organizing, the facilitator asked what data we needed in order to build our retiree chapters. I put my name down so that the AFT staff can check their data with what we have in the UESF Retired Division. What a resource!



The Retirees Legacy Initiative is a group of retirees who came together after the death of George Floyd to talk about how people of color and white colleagues could work together to “share ...their truths and journeys” and become “champions of social justice.” Their philosophy was: “It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must LOVE and support each other. We have NOTHING to lose but our chains!”

2) AFT Convention Speakers: Besides the politicians (see Sister Kitchell’s article) and some international visitors, we heard inspiring messages from a worker who organized a union at Amazon and from Starbucks baristas who helped organize 190 stores into the Organization for Workers United. Christian Smalls from Amazon emphasized that the court is trying to take away their victory.

3) AFT Panels: Gun Safety (survivors of school shootings and gun violence spoke on how it affected them and their communities) and a panel on Health Care/Patients over Profits. RNs in AFT spoke of the effect of COVID on the mental health of health-care professionals. Many have left health care due to depression and the fear of COVID. Suicide is becoming all too frequent.

4) AFT Voices and Videos: We heard from members about their organizing efforts. We saw a moving video of four generations of black men affected by voter suppression. There was not a dry eye in the house.

It was a great convention! We got a lot accomplished and were inspired to carry forward. Please contact me if you’d like to know more. Better yet, get involved!!!

UESF retiree delegate, Susan Kitchell, also attended the convention!

How good it was to see so many activists together, meeting safely and effectively, conducting the business of the AFT for the first time in four years! Randi Weingarten, AFT President, delivered a rousing “State of the Union” keynote address on the first day of the convention, urging everyone not to despair but to “reclaim our future” through collective action, stating that we were put here at this precise moment to make change for the better and reclaim our future.



Throughout the four days of the convention, rousing speeches and informative panels provided context for shaping our collective and individual work over the next two years. Political figures, including Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey addressed the convention as did First Lady Jill Biden, Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh, Congresswoman Ayala Pressley, Boston’s Mayor and the Democratic candidate for Governor of MA, all with inspiring messages of their own. We heard from the leaders of the Amazon and Starbucks unionization movement, highlighting the new frontiers in labor organizing. We heard many of our own member voices through testimony at the microphones as well as in video montages. Debate on numerous resolutions before the body was vigorous and spirited, with passage of many important resolutions.

There was great news for AFT retirees! The AFT Retirees Committee was elevated to the status of an official Retiree Program and Policy Council was greeted with enthusiasm and applause at the first ever AFT Retirees Conference that was held the day before the opening session of the convention. Tom Murphy, Chair of the Retiree PPC, delivered a report emphasizing the contributions retirees make to AFT every day and recognizing the difference in status now that retirees have a PPC of their own. “Each of us has always been interested in doing more because we have great value,” said Murphy (chair of the UFT retiree chapter).

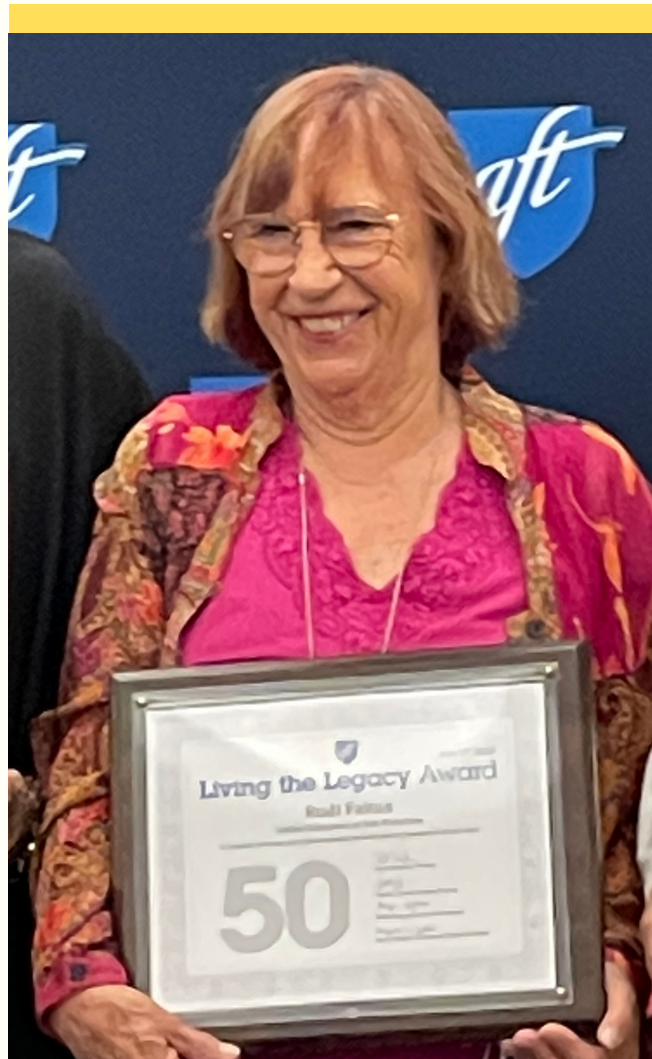
The Retiree Conference afforded attendees the opportunity to attend sessions on organizing, pensions and retirement security, political activism and legacy initiatives as well as AFT+ member benefits. Randi addressed the convened retirees with a message about hope: “The most recognizable feature of hope is action. We may not win everything we need to win in November but, if we don’t try, there’s no way we’re going to win.” Randi challenged us with the request that we each reach out to at least five others to convince them to vote and then request that each of those five to reach out to five more.

We at the UESF Retired Division want to encourage you to reach out to us, as well, to connect on a social level, to connect on an activist level and to connect in community for the well being of all.

50 YEARS OF LABOR LEGACY AWARDS



Betty Robinson-Harris



Rudi Faltus

Two UESF women (Rudi Faltus and Betty Robinson-Harris) were honored this year by the AFT Women's Rights Committee with a "Living the Legacy" award for their 50 years of union service. Elaine Merriweather was honored with a 30-year "Living the Legacy" award. Betty and Rudi were in attendance to receive this honor during a breakfast meeting keynoted by AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and Cindy Marten, US Deputy Secretary of Education, whose message was "Be Kind, Dream Big, Work Hard, No Excuses!" Our UESF awardees sure embody that message.

GOODBYE FROM RUDI FALTUS

What a long, strange trip it has been has always worked for me, but it has become real in the last few years. As I write this valedictory (Dennis Kelly's word), I am thinking about my union brothers and sisters in the Retired Division (RD), and hoping that you are feeling hopeful as we move into the hopefully, post pandemic reality. Hope seems to be the key word here. Before I write anything more, I want to thank a lot of people who worked together so successfully to keep the RD a dynamic, active organization meeting the needs of its members. Until the shutdown in March 2020, the RD kept union members actively engaged, working and socializing together, union strong, pursuing interests and friendships. The pandemic created drastic change for all of us, and was particularly cruel to some of us. I am so sorry for the profound losses many members experienced.

The RD is still active and well, thanks to the work of so many people through the years, standing on the shoulders of those before us. Knowing that this is dangerous as I will miss way too many people, I am going to do it anyway. First, a special thank you to Tim Tindol, our treasurer for so many years, who has been trying to not be the treasurer for a very long time, but continued on because we needed him. Our work depended on so many volunteers who took on leadership roles of various kinds, as organizing is always required to get things done. Some of these sisters and brothers are: Connie Flannery, Mary Farquhar, Lisa Gutierrez-Guzman, Alexia Tindol, Nancy Kaufmann, Linda Felix, Diane Doe, Marian Gonzales, Bob Fesler, Sandra Mack, Ann Hunt, Diane Ehrlich, Susan Floore, Lita Blanc, Rick Girling, Sandra Shure, Liz Rogers, Martha Gould, Connie Levy, Linda Tabor-Beck, Gale Ow, Jackie Throne, Sharon Geron, Jonathan Frank, Lou Webb, Dennis Kelly, Hene Kelly, Judy Levy-Sender, Bill Milestone, Anna Bolla and so many others. If I missed acknowledging you, forgive me. I knew this was risky. Thank you to all of our members who came to meetings, paid dues, voted, organized ,participated in activities, wrote articles, asked questions, pointed out problems, caught mistakes, walked precincts, researched issues and made reports, wrote resolutions, phone banked,, developed and anazlyzed surveys and just helped others. Congratulations to the newly elected leadership: Dennis Kelly, Sandra Mack, Susan Kitchell, Mary Anne Ahtye, Lisa Gutierrez-Guzman, Ken Tray, Alice Mosley and a yet unnamed treasurer and paraeducator representative. We are in good hands.

Perhaps the pandemic is finally over, and perhaps some sanity can be restored to this crazily divided nation. Positive change is trying to happen, and if it does, it will be the most significant change for working people since the 30s (many of us grew up on these stories), I'm hopeful. I was able to participate in the 2022 AFT Convention, which was inspirational and action oriented, focused on the labor movement, past, present, and future. Now is the time to organize everyone who is unorganized. Established big unions and the AFL-CIO are providing the support to the new ones to get it done. Finally happening! Now, more than ever, the struggle continues and we can win!

ACTIVITIES & RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Lisa Guzman and I, Mary Anne Ahtye, are the newly elected At-Large representatives to the UESF Retired Division (teachers, paras, and other school staff) and appointed by Dennis Kelly, chair, to the Activities and Recreation Committee. We are busy catching up from a 2-½ year hiatus due to Covid 19 and are now ready and willing to serve the UESF Retired Division. Our plan is to make our meetings educational, conduct important business, and enjoy a wonderful lunch made by our excellent caterers Olivia and Phillipe.



Mary Anne Ahtye, was a Child Development teacher for SFUSD for 12 years and 20 years as an SFAFT/UESF Field Representative. She retired in 2006 and is a member of the UESF Retired Division. She worked for 4 UESF Presidents and continues leading an active life in retirement. I am happy to be appointed to serve my union, once again, and hope to provide fun activities for us to enjoy together.



Lisa Gutierrez Guzman also joins the Executive Board of the Retired Division, having served on the RD Executive Boards under Diane Doe and Rudi Faltus. She was a bilingual para educator and teacher in three elementary schools from 1987 to 2013, when she left the classroom. From that time until 2018, she was the Secretary of the UESF Active Division while attending the Retired Division membership meetings as often as possible. Prior to being elected as Secretary, she was very active on her Union Building Committees, the Delegate Assemblies, and on the Executive Board.

HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT



It is with sadness that we learned of the death of Gayle Ow, former Chair of the RD Health Committee. RD President Dennis Kelly appointed Susan Kitchell as a Co-Chair of the committee. The Health Committee is looking for new members as well as a Co-Chair. Please contact Susan Kitchell (zevisema@gmail.com) if you would like to get involved in the committee.

The HSS Board met in early June. During their June meeting, the Health Service Board unanimously approved Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage (California) Fully Insured Medicare Retiree 2023 Rates and Contributions as well as the United Healthcare (UHC) Medicare Advantage PPO Fully Insured Medicare Retiree 2023 Rates and Contributions.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ken Tray and Hene Kelly are co-chairs of the Legislative Committee. This committee will keep the Retired Division in contact with retirement issues and electoral politics of the City. This year we have a Board of Education election and our former UESF president, Susan Solomon, is running for a position on the Board of Trustees for City College.

Teachers are among the most respected voices in the community. Our voices are important and we need to be seen and heard by our elected representatives. That will be our purpose and we hope you will join us.



Hene Kelly

Hene Kelly is the Legislative Director for CARA (California Alliance for Retired Americans), the Sergeant-at-Arms for the SF Labor Council, and Regional Director for the Democratic Party. She retired from the SFUSD in 2003.



Ken Tray
Ken Tray

Ken Tray spent 25 years in the classroom and a 14 year turn as full-time UESF Political Director. It is reassuring that the Retired Division is moving beyond pandemic shut down with a Political and Legislative Committee preparing to help UESF Retired activists show-up meeting the challenges facing our schools, communities and the very survival of our nation's democracy.

WE ARE GOING DIGITAL!

Make sure your contact info is updated to stay informed!

This is our last paper newsletter, but you can find our digital newsletter online! Every few months, we will send a digital newsletter to your email and post it on our retiree webpage (www.uesf.org/retiredmembers).



If you are a retired UESF member who would like to stay informed about how to continue to fight for the schools our students deserve and receive the retiree newsletter, send us your updated info! You can share your contact information with us using this form: www.bit.ly/uesfretiredinfo