



**Still Still  
Here & Growing**

**72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Business Convention  
May 18, 2019**

Aqua Turf Club  
Plantsville, Connecticut

**AWARDS**

# **2019 Awards Program**

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AFT Connecticut Staff Recognition

Local Anniversary Citations

Testifiers/Submitted Testimony

Recognized Traveling Members

Scholarship Awards

Unionist of the Year

Joseph H. Soifer Award

Phyllis H. Kornfeld Golden Achievement Award

President's Award



**AFT Connecticut Staff Recognition**

- Dan Durant, Field Rep.....10 years
- Jennifer Benevento, Prof. Issues & Development Coord.....15 years
- Nickimmy Hayes, Organizer.....15 years



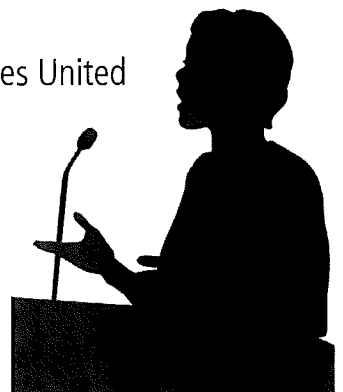


## Local Anniversary Citations

Federation of Technical College Teachers .....	50 years
Colchester Federation of Education Personnel .....	45 years
Manchester Para/Tutor Association .....	45 years
Middletown Federation of Paraprofessionals .....	45 years
Mitchell College Faculty Federation .....	45 years
Newtown Federation of Custodians and Maintenance .....	40 years
Watertown Federation of Paraprofessionals.....	40 years
West Hartford Federation of Dormitory Supervisors.....	40 years
Portland Federation of Paraprofessionals .....	30 years
Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals Retirees .....	25 years
Hartford Federation of Teachers Retirees.....	25 years
Meriden Federation of Teachers Retirees.....	25 years
Bozrah Federation of Educational Personnel .....	20 years
Job Corps United.....	15 years
Hartford Federation of Secretaries .....	5 years
Licensed Professionals at Community Health Services .....	5 years
Winchester Federation of Paraprofessionals.....	5 years

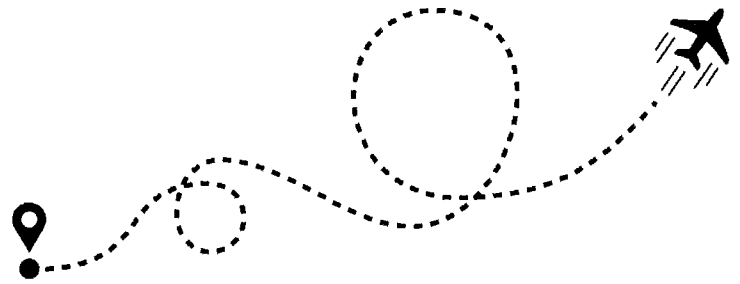
# Testifiers/Submitted Testimony

<b>Name</b>	<b>Local</b>
Ally Sexton	A&R 4200
Antonelle DellaRipa	Hartford Teachers 1018
Chuck Morrell	UCPEA 3695
Bill Garrity	UHP 3837
David Hayes	Bristol Teachers 1464
Ed Leavy	SVFT 4200A
Francesca Ford	SVFT 4200A
Glen Maloney	Manchester Memorial S&S Maintenance 5121
Gwenath Douglas	Hartford Paras 2221
Jason Adler	Waterford Classroom Teachers 2038
Jennifer Newman	Hartford Teachers 1018
Karen Mylly	Colchester Ed. Personnel 3279
Marianne Maloney	New Haven Teachers 933
Marta Shephard	Hartford Paras 2221
Mary Yordon	Norwalk Teachers 1723
Rose Reyes	Windham Teachers 1577
Sal Escobales	New Britain Teachers 871
Shavon Russell	Hartford Health Professionals 1018AB
Shellye Davis	Hartford Paras 2221
Stephanie Johnson	L&M Federation of Technologists 5051
Tamika Gilhooly	Rockville General Hospital Skilled Service Employees United
Verna Bernard-Jones	Hartford Health Professionals 1018AB
Wendy Kurtzman	Rockville General Hospital Skilled Service Employees United



## D.C. Public Employees Mobilization Drive

Ally Sexton	A&R 4200
Chuck Morrell	UCPEA 3695



## Montana Mobilization Blitz

Ally Sexton	A&R 4200
Ed Leavy	SVFT 4200A
Jean Castagno	UHP 3837
Jessica Mongeau	SVFT 4200A
Keith Wortz	JPE4200B

## Virgin Islands

Amanda Daniels	Backus RNs 5149
Amanda Santiago	Backus RNs 5149
Bruce Downer	Johnson Memorial RNs 5046
Holly Davis	L&M RNs 5049
John Brady	Backus RNs 5149 & AFT CT VP
Leigh-Anne Corey	Backus RNs 5149
Lori DelVaglio	UHP 3837
Melanie Perez	UHP 3837
Michelle Brady	AFT CT At-Large Retirees 8006R
Pierre LePage	UHP 3837
Robin Young	Backus RNs 5149
Selena Ramirez	L&M HCW 5123
Shamia Moffett	Danbury RNs 5047
Yachira Encarnacion	Danbury RNs 5047





## Scholarship Awards

AFT Connecticut awards two different scholarships each year, one for our members (**George C. Springer Scholarship**), and one for spouses/domestic partners, and children of members (**AFT Connecticut Scholarship**). Candidates are selected based on academic promise and financial need, among other criteria. The member applicant, or the AFT Connecticut member upon whom the applicant bases her/his eligibility, must be a member of an AFT Connecticut local in good standing.

### **George C. Springer Scholarship**

**SYEDA H. NAQVI** has been a member of the Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals, Local 2221 for the past six years. Syeda will be using the scholarship to help offset her tuition of earning a Master's degree in the area of TESOL (teaching English to the speaker of other languages).

Syeda is very involved in her community, not only was she a teacher at The Jafaria Sunday School she was also the first principal, helping with the initial set up of the school. She has also been a spiritual speaker in her community for the past 7 years. Syeda is also active in union activities, such as attending Board of Education meetings, after school events and union sponsored gatherings.

In her essay, Syeda states "I feel strong because the union offers professional development opportunities. These opportunities help us to do our work more efficiently and professionally. These opportunities cover all aspects of our needs, from classroom duties to the administration of the school." She goes on to say that because of the union she feels safe and is able to perform her duties in a better way.

### **AFT Connecticut Scholarship**

**CAMERON GERME** is the son of Jennifer Germe, a member of the Meriden Federation of Teachers, Local 1478. Cameron is a member of the National Honor Society, Chemistry Club, Math Team the Student Senate, and Youth and Government. Cameron has also volunteered at Camp Nerden, a camp for people with intellectual disabilities for the past three summers. He spent a week at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Science, days on a research vessel testing water samples in the Thames River for Project Oceanology. He has also spent two weeks at the Yale Young Global Scholars camp for applied science & engineering and shadowed a PHD student at one of Yale's chemistry labs where he worked on protein kinetics, purified samples and extracted and cloned DNA. To add to Cameron's accomplishments, he will be graduating at the top of his class from Platt High School this year.

In his essay, Cameron states that, "Unions bring the "underdogs" together to create a formidable force to promote economic equality. Without a union, the blue collar workers of America would have much less to prevent corporations from taking advantage of their hard work." He goes on to say that in his opinion, teachers play the most important role in our society: ensuring a bright future. They educate the leaders of tomorrow and deserve the very best support from their supervisors. However, in most cases they would not receive the support they needed if it weren't for the union fighting on their behalf.

# Scholarship Awards



## **AFT Connecticut Scholarship**

**BRENNA WATTS** is the daughter of Peter Watts, a member of the Judicial Professional Employees, Local 4200B. Brenna has been an active member and a three year officer with the Best Buddies Program which promotes friendships between people with and without disabilities. Brenna is also involved with Unified Basketball which pairs people with and without disabilities as teammates for trainings & competitions and the Unified Theatre program which pairs people with and without disabilities in the performing arts to create theatre productions. Since the age of 9, Brenna has also been volunteering almost every summer at the Ronald McDonald House and has become a spokesperson participating in local, national, and international events for the charity.

Upon graduating from E.O. Smith High School, Brenna plans to attend a university to pursue a career pediatric nursing.

In her essay, Brenna states that "The importance of union membership is too often seen only as a means to fight for members increased salaries and adequate wages, while other benefits, such as negotiating access to health insurance is forgotten. Being born significantly premature, my twin-sister and I have both had the fortune of parents who are members of two separate, but equally powerful unions. The collective bargaining power of unionized labor has protected my family from financial ruin by negotiating strong contracts that have assured an appropriate salary, but more importantly, it has provided benefits, including paid health insurance that are adequate to my medical needs."

## **AFT Connecticut Scholarship**

**CAMERON REGAN** is the son of Trina Regan, a member of the North Branford Federation of Paraprofessionals, Local 6152. Aside from earning high honors the past four years & becoming the National Honors Society President his senior year, Cameron is very active in sports and his community. He has been an active member of his church's youth group since the sixth grade, as a volunteer and an usher. He has over 320 hours of community service with Group Mission Trips, an organization dedicated to helping people repair their homes. Cameron is also a volunteer counselor at Parks & Rec teaching basketball to kids. Along with teaching basketball, Cameron has played varsity basketball for the past four years becoming captain his senior year. He is also on the varsity track & field team where he earned all-state honors as a high jumper his sophomore and junior year.

In his essay, Cameron states that "Stop & Shop is an example in my community where a union has allowed the workers to have a career in the grocery industry that is respected, well paying, and provides health benefits."

*Congratulations, and best wishes to  
all of our scholarship winners!*



*Congratulations!*

## **Unionist of the Year Award**

**Glen Maloney—Manchester Memorial Service & Skilled Maintenance #5121**

Glen has served MMH Local 5121 as Chief Steward for about a decade. While being elected to serve in his Local, he has also been a fierce advocate for all workers within ECHN at both Rockville General Hospital and Manchester Memorial Hospital. He has handled countless cases and should feel proud that he has never had to go to arbitration to do so. His most recent win is the result of his advocacy to get Prospect to stop using oxycide (a cleaning chemical) that was harmful to workers at both hospitals. Members would feel dizzy, ended up with watery eyes and experienced headaches because of that chemical. Workers no longer have this problem.

Glen was instrumental in the most recent successful external healthcare organizing campaign of AFT Connecticut. He was able to inspire and encourage his fellow service and maintenance coworkers at Rockville General Hospital to stand up and form a union. He also had his own turf like any other member of the organizing committee. From the first meeting with a couple of workers from EVS and the Kitchen to the victory party on November 14th, 2018, when they finally won their election, Glen was there. And he still is, helping and accompanying them with their grievances while the new Local is being formed. "I cannot wait to see them do this on their own," remarked Glen.

Glen's advocacy for workers' rights goes beyond what is happening at RGH and MMH. He recently testified at the State Capitol in favor of the captive audience bill. A bill that aims to protect workers during external organizing campaigns. With this new law, it will be illegal for employers to force workers to attend intimidating meetings, the captive audience meetings. "When I was organizing my own group 10 years ago, we had some sweet talk from management, they even gave us a raise, nothing compared to what those folks had to go through last year," he said. "I felt compelled to go voice my opinion at the State Capitol hopefully those practices are stories of the past in the labor movement."

The Unionist of the Year is given to someone who has served their local and AFT-CT. Glen has brought his integrity, his energy, his selflessness, and his commitment to AFT-CT and the unions at Prospect ECHN for years and shows no sign of slowing down. We are honored to name Glen Maloney Unionist of the Year.

**AND**

## **Tamika Gilhooly—Rockville General Hospital Skilled Service Employees United**

The inspiring organizing win at Rockville Hospital was led by some strong women, like Wendy Kurtzman, Jean Tilsh, Georgette Amaral, and our second Unionist of the Year recipient, Tamika Gilhooly. It is the first successful organizing campaign in an ECHN Hospital since Prospect Medical Holdings took over the system. Over 150 new AFT CT members have joined our Federation and the Labor Movement because of this successful campaign.

Tamika has worked at Rockville General Hospital for nearly 30 years. From the kitchen as a cashier to Registration and now the Emergency room, where Tamika serves as a Secretary in a very complicated and intense environment. Despite that stress, Tamika has always been there for her fellow workers. This has been evident with her leadership during the campaign to organize her bargaining unit and her ongoing efforts to help organize the Techs, the last major bargaining unit that remain unorganized at RGH. It's inspiring to see Tamika's enthusiasm to go knock on doors with other volunteers. She even has her own turf: a true Member-Organizer.

Despite being busy with the campaigns and as a mother and community member, Tamika submitted testimony to the legislature in support of the captive audience bill by sharing her own story. While in DC for the Professional Issues Conference (along with other AFT CT members), she shared about what unsafe working conditions mean and why it makes sense to have laws that protect healthcare workers.

We are so proud of Tamika and excited to honor her as one of our two Unionists of the Year.

*Congratulations!*

## **Joseph H. Soifer Award**

**Shellye Davis—Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals #2221**

Shellye has been for many years a co-president of the HFP, the PSRP Divisional VP of AFT Connecticut Divisional, and a member of the AFT PSRP PPC. She also serves on multiple committees, including Membership & Structure, AFT CT Convention Planning, the AFL-CIO and the Para Advisory Committee. She is active in the political process, including labor walks and phone banking. She is on the Board of Directors for the United Way and a member of the NAACP.

She has engaged her members in a successful recommit campaign, in Para Equity Bill lobbying and testimony, and in sending 24 students home with food backpacks for families in conjunction with the Shiloh Baptist Church, where she also helps at the soup kitchen. Her contributions to the Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals make her a worthy recipient of the Soifer Award.

## **Phyllis H. Kornfeld Golden Achievement Award**

**Walter O'Connor—New Milford Federation of Registered Nurses #5101 Retiree**

Walter O'Connor is a Registered Nurse. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Western Connecticut University in 1977, and in 1981, he received a Master's degree in Science from Western. Walter was employed at New Milford Hospital from 1988 to 2018. During his tenure at New Milford Hospital, Walter was a member of the organizing committee that unionized the registered nurses. He served as President of New Milford Hospital Federation of Registered Nurses, Local 5101 for six (6) years and as Treasurer for fifteen (15) years.

Walter has been active with AFT Connecticut retirees for several years. He is a charter member and Vice-President of the AFT Connecticut At-Large Retiree Local, 8006R. Walter is also a member of the National AFT Retiree Committee, where he actively collaborates with retirees across the country to improve retiree union membership. Walter has dedicated himself to growing the membership of the new retiree local as Vice-President with the goal of reaching as many retired union members as possible in Connecticut. Walter is a dedicated unionist who continues to fight for the rights of all workers and retirees.

Walter is a US Army Vietnam Veteran, has been married for 50 years, has three (3) children and eight (8) grandchildren.

*Congratulations!*

## **President's Award**

**Erin Benham—Meriden Federation of Teachers #1478**

Erin Benham taught in Meriden Public Schools for over 35 years and recently retired as the president of the Meriden Federation of Teachers. She earned a bachelor's degree from Saint Joseph College and a master's degree and educational leadership degree from Southern Connecticut State University.

She and her team participated in the AFT Leadership Institute with the school administration. The collaborative relationship that developed is nationally recognized. She and her team have been asked numerous times to present at national conventions on how to develop exceptional Labor Management relationships. Erin has been a leader in promoting educational opportunities for educators and helped establish the Fund for Teachers and Rise programs in Meriden.

In addition to serving as an AFT-CT Vice President on the Executive Committee, she also serves on the board of directors for Project Excel and The Sisters' Project and was very recently reappointed to the CT Board of Education.

To honor all the work that Erin has done for AFT, AFT-CT, educators and students in Meriden, and the citizens of Connecticut, Erin is receiving this year's President's Award.

***Congratulations and best wishes  
to our awards recipients!***

