

Annual Business Convention May 12, 2018

Aqua Turf Club
Plantsville, Connecticut

AWARDS

2018 Awards Program

AFT Connecticut Staff Recognition

Local Anniversary Citations

Testifiers/Submitted Testimony

Scholarship Awards

Unionist of the Year

Joseph H. Soifer Award

Phyllis H. Kornfeld Golden Achievement Award

President's Award



AFT Connecticut Staff Recognition

Mike Ozga, Field Rep15 years

Jane Benoit, Financial Assistant30 years





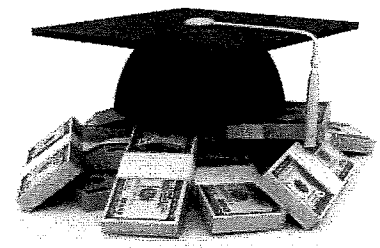
Local Anniversary Citations

Hartford Federation of Teachers	70 years
Ansonia Federation of Teachers.....	70 years
Windham Federation of Teachers	55 years
West Haven Federation of Teachers.....	55 years
Meriden Federation of Teachers	55 years
Bristol Federation of Teachers	55 years
Salem Federation of Teachers.....	50 years
New Britain Federation of Paraprofessionals.....	45 years
Norwalk Federation of Educational Personnel.....	40 years
North Branford Federation of Teachers.....	40 years
University Health Professionals	40 years
West Hartford Federation of Education Personnel.....	40 years
West Hartford Federation of Education Secretaries.....	35 years
A&R Employees Union Retirees.....	25 years
Vernon Federation of Paraprofessionals	25 years

Testifiers/Submitted Testimony

Name	Local
Shellye Davis	Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals
John Dissette	A&R Employees Union
Sal Escobales	New Britain Federation of Teachers
Bill Garrity	University Health Professionals
Josh Hall	Hartford Federation of Teachers
Bob Ricetelli	State Federation of Vocational Teachers
Ally Sexton	A&R Employees Union
Paula Wilmot	University of CT Professional Employees Association
Mary Yordon	Norwalk Federation of Teachers





Scholarship Awards

AFT Connecticut awards two (2) \$2500 scholarships, one of which is the George C. Springer Scholarship granted to a member. 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

GINA REINHARD has been a member of the Bristol Federation of Teachers Local 1464 for the past twelve years, and is currently a World Language Teacher of Spanish and Italian. Gina will be using the scholarship to help offset her tuition with the Latin cross-endorsement program at Central Connecticut State University, with the intent of teaching and maintaining the Latin program in the city of Bristol.

Gina is very involved in community, volunteer, and union activities, such as attending Board of Education meetings, after school events and union sponsored gatherings. Gina is also the President of the Connecticut Italian Teachers Association and a member of the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers.

Gina is the mother of three small children and the primary care provider for her family. In her essay, Gina states "The purpose of the union is to secure salary and benefits for the teachers as well as giving us the support of due process. This protection gives us the support of our constitutional right to speak out and advocate for ourselves as teachers as well as our students. Without the support of the union we, as teachers would not be able to best support our students and our families." Gina also states that "I believe it would be impossible for me to maintain my love for my career and a healthy family life without the support of the union."

AFT Connecticut Scholarship

MADISON ALBANO is the daughter of Donna Albano, a Newtown Federation of Teachers Local 1727 member. Madison has been accepted to Cornell University where she will major in English and History.

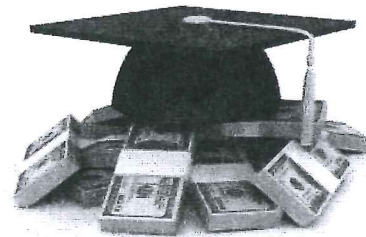
Her high school transcript is exemplary and her sports, extracurricular, and volunteer activity is too long to list, but it is in her essay and the words of her teachers that the depth of Madison emerges.

She states in her essay, "These unions campaigned for equal treatment of their workers, safety codes, child labor laws, an eight-hour workday – rights now enjoyed ubiquitously within the American workforce. Modern unions uphold these same ideologies of and desires for labor equality. Principally, unions have championed against economic inequality."

Madison states that her mother's union membership has given her the financial stability that many of her classmates did not as they grew up during the housing crisis. She credits that stability as part of the reason she has been able to pursue various extracurricular hobbies, and afford educational supplies, books, and technology that has imbedded in her a tenacious love for learning.

Madison has internalized the drive of unions to combat inequality and it guides her many talents. She is both an accomplished artist and writer and utilizes her skills in those fields to highlight social injustice. Her artwork can be seen on the murals she has painted on the walls of Danbury High School. She is a published poet and has even written a novel. Her passion for social justice have combined to make her a winner of a Martin Luther King essay contest.

Scholarship Awards



This year, the AFT Connecticut Executive Board was also able to award two (2) \$1000 scholarships to runner ups...

AFT Connecticut Scholarship

CHARLOTTE CECARELLI is the daughter of Jennifer Cecarelli, a member of the Middletown Federation of Teachers. Aside from being an honors student, Charlotte is also the student council president, an athlete, a girl scout, musician and has over 338 hours of community service. Charlotte is described as being an academically gifted, genuine and giving young woman with great values & promise.

Charlotte will be graduating seventh in her class at North Haven High School and will be pursuing a degree in Nursing with a career goal of becoming a pediatric APRN. Charlotte was one of three students selected to partake in an official class at Yale University. She chose to take the Ancient Greek Medicine course, which allowed her to confirm her love of nursing.

In her essay, Charlotte states that, "Unions have become an important aspect of the workforce. They enable employees to work together, establishing positive relationships, in order to secure common benefits."

AFT Connecticut Scholarship

RAVEN MATHEWS is the daughter of Susan Mathews, a member of the Norwalk Federation of Educational Personnel. Raven is an accomplished dancer, in which she was awarded a full scholarship to the Sheer Talent summer ballet program in 2017. She has also been the Editor in Chief of her school newspaper, the Bear Country News since 2016, and volunteers in teaching dance class, including mentoring children and adults with special needs. One of Raven's teachers spoke of how Raven has made an impact on their life as a teacher and that Raven has made them better at their job.

Upon graduating from Norwalk High School, Raven will pursue a degree in the study of Film Media Studies and Broadcast Journalism.

In her essay, Raven states that "One person cannot possibly hope to sway legislators in such a polarized country, but when standing in unity with fellow citizens who fight for the same cause, there is hope. There is power in numbers. Therefore, there is power in unions."

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



Unionist of the Year Award

Laila Mandour—A&R Retirees #4200R

Laila has served as an A&R steward for two decades, and was Assistant Chief Steward. She handled several high profile cases, including the DRS employee whose laptop was stolen. She was a long-time executive board member, and was elected President of the 3,000+ member union in 2011. She's an organizer who helped win automatic progression for A&R's staff attorneys, was part of the AFT "Blitz" that helped internally organize A&R after some tumultuous elections, and helped to form STAR (Stand Together A&R). Laila was instrumental in helping to protect the health and safety of A&R (and other) employees by lobbying to close the "sick" 25 Sigourney Street building. She brought a culture of inclusion to the A&R office, even suggesting the staff members form their own union. She began her political activism through her involvement in A&R's COPE and AFT's LPAC, and took it to the next level by joining her town's Democratic Town Committee and knocking on doors for candidates endorsed by A&R, AFT and AFL-CIO. She also serves on the State Retirement Commission. As a retiree, she still writes much of A&R's quarterly newsletter, and tries to energize fellow AFT retirees to get politically active.

Laila is lovable, and fearless. She can be tough as nails, but disarms people with her friendly and warm nature. She once took on the employer of Joella Mudry's caretaker, and got her to refund months' worth of administrative fees of \$70 per week; afterward, the woman thanked Laila.

Laila is knowledgeable, but doesn't have to be the expert in the room: she knows a lot about a lot, but is never afraid to acknowledge what she doesn't know or ask questions. She is a quick and willing learner. When she became A&R's President, she used to ask what the role of the various legislative leaders she'd name were; within a few months, she was introducing legislators like they were all her best friends.

Laila has integrity. She always saw her leadership through the lens of what she could do to help our members, not what it could do for her. She also has strength of character, as she remained actively involved in A&R - attending executive board meetings month after month - even after a bruising election defeat when she was no longer President or even on the Board. She has also stepped forward to develop the AFT Retiree Chapter and serves as AFT Divisional VP for Retirees.

The Unionist of the Year is given to someone who has served their local and AFT-CT. Laila has brought her integrity, her energy, her selflessness, and her commitment to AFT-CT and A&R for years, and shows no sign of slowing down. We are honored to name Laila Mandour Unionist of the Year.

Joseph H. Soifer Award

Sue DeLong—Norwalk Teachers #1723

Sue DeLong is a retired teacher from West Rocks Middle School and the former-long serving First VP of the Norwalk Federation of Teachers 1723. She taught middle school science for many years and served on the District and School data team. She is the head of the local's current Contract Negotiations team and manages communications for their Retirees. She even occasionally attends Superintendent consultation meetings. Sue routinely provides snacks to the NFT monthly meetings with a cheerful grace that is rare and welcome. She always has the best information about whatever health care or dental plan we happen to be on at any moment. She has daughters who are also teachers.

Not too long ago, NFT President Mary Yordon suggested Sue submit her hours so NFT could pay her for all the work she is doing. She responded by saying she isn't working on this particular task for money, but does it because she believes in the work and knows it matters. Sue is practical, smart, and fun. The NFT is a strong, adaptive, engaged organization in large measure because of her sharp intellect and her bountiful energy. She may be a retired teacher, but she is still a very active NFT member. Her contributions to the Norwalk Federation of Teachers makes her a worthy recipient of the Soifer Award.

Congratulations!

Phyllis H. Kornfeld Golden Achievement Award

Linda DeSousa—SVFT #4200 Retiree

Linda was a building rep and officer for the SVFT for over a quarter century. In those roles, she showed integrity, passion, and indefatigable energy in helping her coworkers and bringing a sense of solidarity to her union and community. The roots of activism Linda planted years ago are still felt in the SVFT today. The SVFT award given to members who go above and beyond to help their union brother or sister is named the DeSousa Award, after Linda and her husband Ed, and it is the local's most prestigious award.

When Linda retired, her commitment to the labor movement continued. She grew increasingly frustrated with the SVFT Retiree Chapter, which had become little more than a very small social club. Linda located their Constitution - no small feat - and headed a slate of officers that promised to reinvigorate the Retiree Chapter in the election. Her slate won and they have made the SVFT a vibrant organization. Membership is up, and new members want to protect not only what they have, but preserve it for their friends who are still teaching. They want to support the system they helped build. They are inspired by Linda and the other officers, who are seemingly everywhere - at the Capitol, at Legislative Breakfasts, at phone banks, and at AFT meetings.

Ultimately, what Linda has continued to do in retirement is what she did throughout her time in the SVFT: she inspires. She inspires those around her to do more, to work harder, to be better people. For the work she does herself, and for the inspiration she brings to everyone who knows her, Linda DeSousa is a deserving winner of the Phyllis Kornfeld Golden Achievement Award.

President's Award

Joshua Hall—Hartford Teachers #1018

Many kids leave home for college and vow they will come back to their communities to make things better. Very few do so. Even fewer write books about making a deal with their friends to do so. But that's exactly what Joshua Hall did. It is why I am honored to give the President's Award to Hartford Federation of Teachers Vice President and Representative from the 7th House District, Joshua Hall.

After earning his teaching certification, Joshua returned home to teach in the Hartford public school system. He co-wrote a book about his experiences and his need to give back to the public school system and the communities they serve. Joshua understands the responsibility that comes with being a teacher and a role model for students with challenging socioeconomic backgrounds. He also knows the opportunity those teachers and role models have to change the lives of these students and ultimately their community as a whole. That knowledge has informed his teaching. It has informed his work as Hartford Federation of Teachers Vice-President.

His service to Hartford as a teacher and a union officer has been extraordinary, but Joshua wanted to do more. Last year, he decided to run for the open House seat in the 7th district's special election. He decided to run on the Working Family Party line. For years, Joshua has shown his commitment to his community, and on election day the community showed their commitment to him; he won in a stunning upset. Since taking office, Joshua has been a strong voice for progressive values on issues that affect education and working people. I especially want to thank Joshua for his work on the minority teacher recruitment and retention act. AFT talks about the need for unions to engage the community, and Joshua not only embodies that engagement, but shows why it matters. For this and many reasons. I am proud to award Joshua Hall the President's Award.

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

