

RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

NYSUT Retiree Council 10

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TEACHER AND SRP SOLIDARITY

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From Your President:

Greetings to all! I hope this finds everyone with much to be thankful for and some positive memories of 2023. Retiree Council 10 has been slowly getting back to in-person meetings and activities with the opportunity to meet new members and get them involved in some of the many activities we've begun to resume. In October, we held our second in-person fall meeting with a good turnout of members who came together to hear speakers on the early warning signs of Alzheimer's and the benefits of NYSUT's Peer Support Line. We were also able to honor longtime NYSUT ED 10 Director Tony McCann for his many years of service to Election District 10 and Retiree Council 10, and his guidance and mentorship to many leaders, and the nearly 50 years he represented the four counties. For those of you who missed this event, I'd like to share just a little of what we learned about Tony.



Barbara McCarthy

Born in Ireland, Tony came to Long Island when he was 15; and after graduating from Long Beach High School, he served in the United States Army Signal Corps in Italy. He then earned a BA with a dual major in History and English from Stony Brook University and an MA in English Literature from SUNY Albany.

Tony was inspired by teachers he observed while in his first teaching assignments as an assistant teacher in the **Head Start Program in Harlem** and as a member of the **National Teacher Corps in West Virginia**. (I can only guess that working in that pre-school environment gave Tony an insider's view of the experiences that elementary teachers have every day.)

At Shenendehowa, Tony taught a full range of English electives and a course on the Literature of the Holocaust that he helped to develop and taught for over twenty years. He added an expanded curriculum for a course entitled Literature of the Oppressed, a course that was extremely important to him, as he has had a lifelong commitment to promoting civil and human rights for all.

Tony served as President of the Shenendehowa Teachers Association and as a Board Member of the New York State United Teachers, continuing in this role of teacher advocate for more than four decades. He encouraged all teachers to become deeply involved in their profession beyond the classroom. Tony was opposed to the current test-driven teaching model that he asserted made children anxious, rather than inspired, and often stifled their natural love of learning in schools where a "data-driven," rather than a "data-informed," philosophy prevailed. Tony felt strongly that a deep knowledge of subject matter combined with passionate enthusiasm for communicating that knowledge is essential to good teaching. He noted that a good teacher must realize that continuing professional development is essential. "Teaching is not a job; it's a vocation; there's always something to learn." Tony also recognized that teaching in today's classrooms has become much more demanding both physically and emotionally.

Throughout his professional career, Tony has been recognized for his teaching and has received numerous awards. He was selected twice to participate in the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Fellowship for Teachers to study the literature of Joseph Conrad and the poetry of William Butler Yeats. After retiring from Shenendehowa, Tony mentored student teachers in their local school district placements for the Russell Sage College Master of Arts in Teaching program.

All of the above would have made any one of us proud to cite as career accomplishments but then we received the reviews from those who were personally impacted by Tony.

From Bill Ritchie, former President of Albany Public Schools: **As a teacher, Tony was a standout, evidenced by the response one gets from any former students at the mention of his name. He had the capacity to convey the most profound and challenging ideas in English literature and poetry to his students in a manner which they could accept and critically internalize. His disdain for the oppressive test-and-punish regimes imposed more recently on students and their teachers was palpable. His teaching focused on the intellectual empowerment of his students. Tony cared deeply about the professional and personal well-being of his colleagues. They were well aware of his ability as a leader and time and again they elected him as their union president. While his labor management skills were sophisticated and at times militant, they were at rock bottom pragmatic and gained the respect of both his members and their administrators.**

From Loretta Quigley, former President of South Glens Falls Teachers: **He was the voice of the union for me as a non-tenured teacher and then as an active union member during my career. Following his lead starting in the 70s, I turned out in support of my local and the locals of the Capital and North Country regions. Tony would be given the microphone at the rallies, and he would not only articulate the issues but also stake out the moral ground on which we stood. In addition to the**

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NYSUT RETIREE SERVICES CONSULTANT RC 9/10

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From Your President, Cont'd from Page 1

English classes at Shenendehowa where he engaged his students in the questions posed by poetry and literature, he engaged his fellow teachers and the administrators and the parents in questions of fairness and equity. As Election District 10 Director, he created a forum for local presidents and delegates to share concerns, to seek support, and to write R.A. Resolutions targeting delegates' concerns. The meetings encouraged participation and the mentoring of new members. Representing my local as a delegate to ED 10, I absorbed his methodology: let the delegates appreciate their commonalities and seek solidarity. Tony continued as ED 10 Director into retirement with no less passion for fairness and equity.

And from a former student: I hope you know that we were listening, Mr. McCann. Indeed, the class of 1998 actually kept a record of all your pearls of wisdom and quotable quotes from Modernism Class; we called them "McCannisms." I just wanted you to know what an inspiration you have been to countless classes of learners, and I consider myself lucky to be among your students. By the way, this spring I will be filling in as our union's chapter president. Thanks for showing me the way."

From another student: You were the first person I knew who taught me how to notice culture. I don't mean this in a "go to the museum" type of way, although it is also true that your influence shaped a great amount of my curiosity. I mean that your frustration with the bell ringing during a good discussion in the classroom was a lesson in understanding the moments that matter, and the way that – if we are not careful – structures will try to cut us off from them. I mean that your open door, allowing all of us awkward teenagers into any of your classes even if we weren't enrolled and it was technically our lunch period, showed me embodied inclusivity and kindness. You also held space for everyone's oddities while winking towards what we did not yet know. Another one of your students called me a Democrat in independent clothing, a moment that didn't become solidified for me until Bush v. Gore. But when it did crystallize, it was your gentle comments in the classroom conversations that came back. When people ask me about my favorite teachers, there is only one answer. It is you. I talk about the books, "McCannisms," the day someone figured out how to disconnect the clock in your classroom as a surprise and you had a huge grin. I remember the chalkboard and your writing, sometimes seemingly disconnected words that were all an effort to help us all learn how to think. When I went away to college, and became aware of your work in the union, I always felt relieved that someone who understood power was involved. In later years, I would sit in meetings with advocates – either on the government side or as an advocate myself – and sometimes think about what it must be like to be in rooms with you as a leader. I hope that work was frustrating in the right way but still gave you a chance to laugh quite a lot.

And this from a former colleague: First, there has always been a direct connection between McCann, the labor leader and organizer, and McCann, the "Hall of Fame" teacher!! At Shen, for example, McCann's reputation as an extraordinary teacher gave a credibility that even the most vocal critics had to acknowledge. In fact, it's no accident that during the turbulent 70's and 80's at Shen, even our most anti-union school board members still made sure that their children were enrolled in McCann's classes! I would remind everyone of McCann's remarkable ability to build confidence and strength in others. Many years ago, our colleagues in Waterford hit a major bump in negotiations. Prior to a School Board meeting, McCann gave a short speech encouraging everyone to stay strong. I clearly remember the picket line and talking with a second-grade teacher who had been genuinely moved by his remarks. "I have to admit," she said, "that I wasn't so sure picketing was a good idea. But, after hearing Tony, I feel so much better, and I know for sure that this is where we need to be!"

In closing, the ceremony was too short to allow everyone the opportunity to share how Tony McCann impacted their lives; however, given the challenges we faced over the past three years, I'm so glad we were able to do this in person. Too often these wonderful moments and beautiful tributes are shared when the honoree is no longer with us. Thank you to the committee that worked with me to make this ceremony possible: Bill Ritchie, Jane Weihe, Loretta Quigley, Sandie Carner-Shafran, and Bonnie Maxon. And thank you to the many donors that contributed more than \$2,500 to the NYSUT Legacy Fund in Tony's name.

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2024.

~Barbara McCarthy, President

RC 10 NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Retiree Council 10 Facebook Page: Looking to find out about what has been going on with Retiree Council 10 members? What are some of the projects we are working on? What adventures are planned or chronicled? Then sign up for the private Facebook group called NYSUT Retiree Council 10. You will be asked to answer three questions to be granted into the group. It is another way to stay informed and connected.

Scholarship Committee News: RC 10 annually awards four \$1,000 scholarships to one public high school graduating senior, from each of our four counties, who are planning to pursue a degree in education. If you know of any student who is considering becoming a teacher, applications can be obtained in the Guidance Office at the school or by contacting rc10communications@gmail.com. The process for selecting the recipients begins in January when applications are mailed to Union Presidents and Guidance Counselors. The applications are due on March 25. On April 11 these applications are reviewed at NYSUT Headquarters by a committee of RC 10 volunteers who read and score each entry. While we have a dedicated core group on the Scholarship Committee, we are always looking for new members. If you think you might be interested in joining the Scholarship Committee, please contact Jeanne Bush at jeannebsh50@gmail.com.

It's That Time of Year: This is the time of the year that our in-service colleagues will be committing to join us in the retiree ranks! If you hear of people making that decision, read about retiring colleagues in Board of Education agendas/minutes, see it on social media, etc., please let Laraine know so RC 10 can contact them before the end of the school year. Send the information to rc10communications@gmail.com. If you could include the person's name, school district (and building location if possible), when they are retiring and where you found the information. For example: Joe Doe, Green School District in ABC Elementary in the January 2024 Board of Education agenda.

Attention—All Florida Snowbirds and Soon-To-Be Florida Residents: RC 43 - the only NYSUT-sanctioned out-of-state retiree council is waiting to welcome you to the Sunshine State. We have an active, dedicated group of New York State retirees who would love for you to join a local Florida unit. All units sponsor social activities, meetings with guest speakers, community projects that benefit children, and engagement in non-partisan politics in conjunction with Florida unions. If you are interested in becoming involved with retired colleagues, even on a seasonal basis, please contact Miriam Hanan, NYSUT Retirees Services Consultant at 516-236-0276 or miriam.hanan@nysut.org who will connect you with your local unit representative. Once again - welcome to Florida!

Social Justice Committee: In 2023, RC 10 members helped local communities in a number of ways. Our BackPack Donation since September is over \$18,000! Every third Wednesday since September, groups of 6-10 members sorted food at the Food Bank Warehouse for delivery to local food pantries. In October, a group of retirees participated with other NYSUT members in the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk in Albany. In December, members laid wreaths at the Saratoga National Cemetery and many others purchased wreaths. Plans for 2024 include a Red Cross Blood Drive and a Ronald McDonald House volunteer project in Albany. If interested, please contact rc10communications@gmail.com.



SPRING 2024 TRAVEL/SOCIAL EVENTS

HISTORY IS NO MYSTERY IN NYC, MONTREAL IN MAY, AND CRUISE ON LAKE OTSEGO AND LUNCH AT OTESAGA ARE PROVIDED BY YANKEE TRAILS. TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING HAVE BEEN ARRANGED BY THAT COMPANY. These are all active tours and require a large amount of walking and standing. Be sure to assess your personal physical stamina before registering. Registration is prioritized for sustaining members with a limit of one non-sustaining member per sustaining member. Contact rc10communications@gmail.com to obtain a registration form. **YOU MUST FIRST REGISTER WITH RC 10 IN ORDER FOR YANKEE TRAILS TO ACCEPT YOUR DEPOSIT. UPON REGISTRATION, INSTRUCTIONS TO REGISTER WITH YANKEE TRAILS WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU.**

MAY 1-3, 2024, HISTORY IS NO MYSTERY IN NYC. Highlights include matinee performance of A Beautiful Noise, dinner at Carmine's in Times Square, Tenement Museum Tour, pub and food tour with a local guide through historic neighborhoods, and Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island tours. Two breakfasts and two dinners as well as gratuities are included. Hotel accommodations will be at The Hampton Inn, Elizabeth, NJ. Cost which includes cancellation insurance: per person \$975 Double (2 people sharing a room w/ 2 queen beds); \$1,221 Single (1 person in a room w/ king or 2 queen beds). The registration fee is \$25 for those members who have paid the annual sustaining membership fee; \$50 for guests and non-sustaining members. [Registration needs to be completed by February 2, 2024.](#) Contact Dawn Castle at dmcastleeg@gmail.com with any questions.

MAY 21 TO 23, 2024, MONTREAL IN MAY. Come see Old Montreal, visit the Biodome or Botanical Gardens, enjoy a sightseeing cruise on the St Lawrence, experience the Giant Ferris Wheel and a culinary tour. Yankee Trails will provide round trip bus transportation. **A VALID PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVERS LICENSE REQUIRED. INDIVIDUALS WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD OF ANY KIND WILL BE DENIED ENTRY; FOR EXAMPLE, DWI.** Accommodations are at Le Nouvel Hotel. Price, including cancellation insurance, per person is \$802 Double (2 people sharing a room w/2 queen beds) and \$989 Single (1 person in a room w/king or 2 queen beds). The registration fee is \$25 for those members who have paid the annual sustaining membership fee; \$50 for guests and non-sustaining members. Registration needs to be completed by **April 21, 2024.** Contact RoseMarie Carey at rcarey03@rochester.rr.com with any questions.

JUNE 7, 2024, CRUISE ON LAKE OTSEGO AND LUNCH AT OTESAGA HOTEL. Enjoy a day in Cooperstown with a quick stop at Fly Creek Cider Mill to use your \$7 shopping voucher. Then cruise Otsego Lake aboard the Glimmerglass Queen followed by a buffet lunch at the Otesaga Hotel. Base Price \$129. After lunch you will have the afternoon in Cooperstown to enjoy the Baseball Hall of Fame (\$26 additional), the Farmer's Museum & Fenimore Art Museum (\$23 additional) or spend time on your own. The additional museum tour tickets may be purchased when you make your reservation. Return will be approximately at 6 p.m. in Albany. The registration fee is \$5 for those members who have paid the annual sustaining membership fee; \$10 for guests and non-sustaining members. Registration needs to be completed by **May 7, 2024.** Contact Dina Ariemma at fdariemma@verizon.net with any questions.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **APRIL 2024.** WALKING TOUR OF DOWNTOWN TROY.
- **MAY 9, 2024.** NYSUT SPRING CONFERENCE, Christ the King Conference Center, Greenwich.

RC 10 "GOOD NEWS STORY" PAULA FROM AVERILL PARK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

I can't remember a time when I didn't want to be a teacher. Whether instructing my three younger siblings or corralling the numerous 1950's neighborhood children, I delighted in supervising their craft projects using my homemade Captain Kangaroo art supply box! Despite the fact that I loved school and did well as a student, I was always nervous and anxious, one of those "stomachache kids." That is, until we moved and I was privileged to find myself under the tutelage of Miss Hansen, my fifth-grade teacher. It was like entering a different world. From creative writing to sitting in small groups, or memorizing the Gettysburg address, school became a joy. There was student council, where I entered politics as treasurer, and a performance of *Hamlet* as our class play, my acting debut a success as Ophelia. I still have the compositions I wrote with my best friend, Patti, as we worked in pairs. Miss Hansen must have really liked our class, as she moved with our entire group to teach us in 6th grade! I knew one thing: I wanted to be just like her when I grew up.

The rest is history. I taught for 37 years as an elementary teacher. As with all of education, there were phases of "new" instructional methods that came and went. There was cooperative learning, looping, flexible seating, Writing Workshop and Reader's Theater, but they all seemed familiar to me, as Miss Hansen had been ahead of her time in 1961! Teaching was my passion, and I tried to create an atmosphere of calm acceptance for every student, remembering how difficult it had been for me in primary school. If there is one of my past students who remembers me as clearly as I remember Miss Hansen, I will feel I have been blessed as a teacher.

When I retired from teaching, I was eager to volunteer, and many organizations offered opportunities. I tutored, served on the Averill Park Educational Development Committee, served as RC 10 treasurer, volunteered at the Red Cross and am currently an RC 10 Ambassador for my district. Although I found all these experiences interesting, I knew none would ever compare with the excitement I felt when facing a room full of bright, eager (most of the time!) faces. I was proven wrong.

One Sunday, in 2017, a woman spoke at our church service about a refugee mentor program in West Hill, Albany. I spoke to her after the service and was put in contact with the Refugee Welcome Center. Within days I met my first English language learners and this new adventure in teaching had begun. As I came along side of my ELL students, it was an overwhelming experience to witness their determination, eagerness, and tenacity, not only in learning English, but in traversing the many challenges involved in acclimating to their newly adopted country. I've watched as my students from different backgrounds, cultures, and languages, have come together, shared with each other, and along the way, have improved their English skills. I've had the opportunity, once again, to create an environment that encourages learning, with acceptance, humor, and support of every student. To hear them laughing and chatting together during our classes is a joy. I work with an amazing group of committed teachers. We have had the opportunity to work with women who were never allowed to leave the house alone in their home country, never held a pencil, and were illiterate in their own language. We've supported women who earned a university degree in their past and are now learning English so that they can work in their desired field. We have watched our students progress and earn their citizenship. Despite their abilities and goals, all have been welcomed.

Once again, I am able to experience the creativity, enthusiasm and rewards inherent in my profession. The students may call me "Teacher," but I have come to understand that I am a learner as well.



BEEN WONDERING WHAT YOU CAN DO...THIS MAY BE THE ANSWER

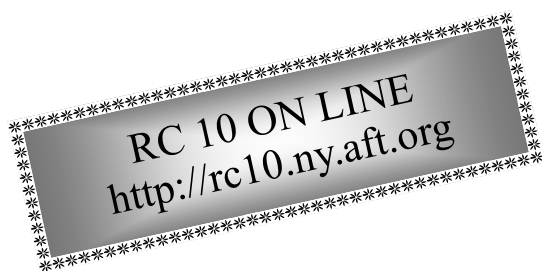
Are you like many people wondering what you can do to help make a positive impact in our area? As they say, activists never retire. Would you like to become part of a team for our Retiree Council to help provide other retirees with information and possible action plans so that we can use our experience to make a difference?

NYSUT Retiree Services is looking to make teams to help us learn more about what actions we can take. *What will these teams be looking at?* For one item, what can be done to help Tier 5 and 6 members have a more supportive retirement like we have. That will take legislative action. And we have an easy way to influence that through our contributions to VOTE COPE. The retiree council team will be looking to encourage us all to do our part with that.

Have you wondered how your school district is influenced? Are you interested in learning more about how staff are supported and encouraged to do their jobs? Are you concerned about how some groups are targeting our in-service members and creating hostile work environments? What can retirees do to support our in-service members? This team will explore that.

The team's efforts will be in creating, recruiting, and growing a political program specifically designed for our region and by our regional retirees. NYSUT staff training for this role is included and will take place in March. At that time, support to help train and educate fellow retirees on issues and the program will also occur.

Help build a stronger and deeper support network of retirees to support the union! Please consider being a part of this team. If you are interested in further information, contact our Retiree Services Consultant, Ruth Shippee at ruth.shippee@nysut.org. Together, we can make a difference.



NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS



Did you know that, as a retiree, you can take advantage of NYSUT Member Benefits? While many items are at a reduced rate negotiated by the NYSUT members who advise the Member Benefits program, there is a whole section that is free.

For example, have you priced the cost of a will lately? And if you want to get one for your spouse or partner - what will that cost? Throw in Power of Attorneys (which NYS just updated) and imagine the total. On the other hand, you can go to Member Benefits Legal Assistance Plan - just \$50/year with pension deduction and receive (for the two of you) wills, power of attorneys, living wills, and health care proxies. AND additional consultations. All for that one annual fee. Additional services can be obtained at discounted rates. Go to NYSUT.org for this plan: <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/program-service/legal-and-financial/legal-service-plan> or call Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST).

FREE - did someone mention FREE? Check out the benefits that are free to us. Again, go to the Member Benefits page of NYSUT.org to see what is available: <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/free-member-benefits>. One of the best benefits we can get for FREE is the recently added PREMIUM CALM SERVICE app. Especially now during the holidays, can't we all use a bit of focus and help? **The Calm app** -- recognized as Apple's Best of 2018 award winner, Apple's App of the Year 2017, and Google Play Editor's Choice 2018 -- is the #1 app for sleep, meditation, and relaxation with over 100 million downloads. Whether members have 30 seconds or 30 minutes of time available, the diverse content library offered by Calm includes numerous resources for their schedule and needs. Members can explore guided meditations and specialized music playlists to help with stress and focus, mindful movement video and audio, relaxing sleep stories, nature scenes and sounds, specific content tailored for children, masterclasses led by experts, and more. <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/free-member-benefits/calm-app>