

## **From The Desk of RC 43 President Felicia Bruce**

The temperatures are HOT and rising; the politics are almost as heated. Energy is low, but utility bills are on the rise. It's all part of summer in Florida! While the snowbirds are gone, and even year round residents take road trips to avoid the daily sizzle....your executive board has been hard at work preparing for a successful 2023-24 year for all our RC43 members.

In person meetings, Zoom meetings, conferences and daily tasks have continued. Miriam Hanan, your Retiree Council Consultant, has made hundreds of phone calls. Some of them were in search of qualified members to step into leadership positions left vacant in the SE unit by Marsha Friedman's passing and Miriam's own necessary resignation as unit president. Not surprisingly, two people will share Miriam's former responsibilities as president. Please welcome co-presidents Alene Model and Elinor Neri. To date, RC 43 is still without a treasurer and Miriam has added that job to her other duties. She is in constant contact with Albany on a myriad of issues to make RC 43 more effective, better serve our membership, and expand our enrollment.

Cheryl Dodes is working tirelessly on newsletters, updating mailing lists and keeping us informed as is our new VOTE COPE Chair, Ross Stonefield. Ross has implemented several new ideas to solicit contributions and expand our VOTE COPE presence in the NYSUT family. Lynn Dodd has grown her VILLAGES unit and maintained year round activities to keep her membership growing and engaged. Otilie Woodruff has kept our Face Book (<https://www.facebook.com#!/pages/New-York-State-United-Teacher-Retirees-InFlorida/166355720080638>) and web pages (<http://rc43.ny.aft.org/>) current, maintained our Executive Board and membership minutes and boosted our presence on social media.

Additionally, the Executive Board has reviewed our RC 43 Constitution and By Laws, found a variety of ways to help our Florida union brothers and sisters who are struggling under the harsh laws enacted by the Florida State Legislature to oppress unions and micromanage classrooms, attended ZOOM meetings, training sessions, communicated with NYSUT and AFT on how best we can serve the interests of retirees as well as tried to keep retirees engaged in political dialogue so that they can make informed decisions.

ALL of this is not just LABOR motivated....it is truly a labor of love. In several contexts recently I have drawn on a saying that I used to post in my classroom: "Do good. Feel good". Unselfish acts that help others make us feel good about ourselves. That is why Miriam, Cheryl, Lynn, Ross, Otilie, and I consider it an honor to serve you: it makes us feel good!

Sadly, one of the great and powerful leaders of the labor movement in Florida died suddenly. Mike Williams was a union icon who fought tirelessly for working families in Florida. He founded the FIGHT FOR FLORIDA group, a community organization dedicated to the dignity of workers and their families. He served as President of the Florida AFL CIO for nearly two decades. If you would like to make a donation in memory of his unwavering, unselfish service please send it to Fight For Florida, 135 S Monroe St, Tallahassee, FL 32301.