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## We Have Lost a Valuable Man

In Navajo society, a *valuable man* is someone who devotes much of his life and energy to helping those in need or by building the social infrastructure that enables society to function. Robert F. Welker was a valuable man in both senses, assisting students, faculty, and ordinary citizens while helping build USF and making the law accessible to ordinary people.



*In this issue, we remember...*

### **Bob Welker for the Community**

### **Bob Welker for the Faculty**

*And we look ahead...*

### **The Past and Future Contract**

On October 11, from 11:30 am - 1 pm, the Scholars Strategy Network will host a discussion on **Teaching on Eggshells II: Florida Higher Ed Laws & What Faculty Can Do About Them**. The panelists are Leah Watson of the ACLU, Jacqueline Allain of PEN America, UFF (statewide) President Andrew Gothard, and UFF FIU Chapter President Eric Scarffe. Here is the [registration link](#).

### **Bob Welker for the Community**

In 2017, when Bob Welker was honored for donating to USF on each of 41 consecutive years, he explained, "My wife, sister and nephew - all are USF graduates."

He was always committed to his students, his colleagues, the community, and to the institution. Former UFF USF Chapter

President Paul Terry wrote, "He was a very kind and considerate person and shall be greatly missed .... Bob was a true soldier and despite his health issues, he was always soldiering on and standing up for the little guy."

Dr. Welker arrived at USF Tampa in 1966 after receiving his doctorate from Indiana University. He joined what is now the Lynn Pippenger School of Accountancy and taught undergraduate and graduate courses on business law. He also practiced law and provided pro bono services to elderly and economically disadvantaged people.

He was generous with his time, serving in many capacities for the Hillsborough County Bar Association and the American Business Law Association, as well as community service organizations, USF shared governance, and student organizations. He was recognized for *Over 20 Years of Continuous Service as Chairman of the Hillsborough County Bar Association's Law Day Creative Art Contest* in 1994 and with the *Outstanding Male Faculty Award for Working with Disabled Students* in 2009.

**Donations in Bob's memory may be made to the Robert F. Welker United Faculty Fund. Here is [a link](#).**



*The 2004 contract. L to R: USF Chief Negotiator Noreen Segrest, USF President Judy Genshaft, UFF USF President Roy Weatherford, and UFF USF Chief Negotiator Bob Welker.*

### **Bob Welker for the Faculty**

From caps on summer school class sizes to domestic partner benefits, every item in the contract got there because it was bargained. Faculty rights and privileges do not appear by magic; they are the result of decades of



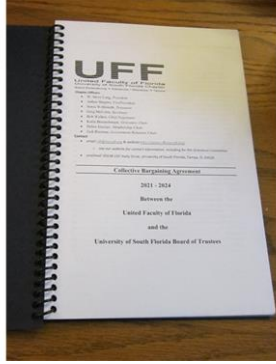
*Bob was fond of cat ties, and sometimes let the cat do the talking.*

hard work. For three decades, Bob Welker has bargained on behalf of the faculty.

In the 1990s, when there was a single contract covering all Florida universities, Bob would fly to Tallahassee to join other members of the union's bargaining team to meet with Board of Regents' bargaining team. By then the contract was already nearly two decades old. Over the years, the union bargaining team slowly won victories in the contract; one of the most notable concerned the state's previous attempt to dilute tenure.

The Board had insisted on some kind of post tenure review, and during bargaining, this became *Sustained Performance Evaluation*: every seven years, each tenured faculty member would be evaluated to determine if they were satisfactory. Bob got the restriction that a faculty member who had received at least satisfactory on the previous six annual evaluations could not be found unsatisfactory. And it is this language - not the recent post tenure faculty review - that is in the contract.

In 2003, Florida's universities were reorganized amidst an attempt to decertify the union. But faculty stood our ground, and we still have a union and a contract. Now, each university would bargain its own contract with its own chapter of the United Faculty of Florida. Bob became the Chief Negotiator for the USF Chapter, and in bargaining the first contract between the USF Board and the USF faculty, academic freedom language in the contract was



The current contract is [posted online](#).

strengthened (a priority of the Faculty Senate) and among other changes, sexual orientation was listed in the nondiscrimination clause.

Bob served nearly continuously as USF's Chief Negotiator since then, and in the successive iterations of the contract, faculty rights and privileges were strengthened. Instructor promotions appeared in the contract in 2008, along with promotional raises. And one of the most significant improvements was presented to Bob by a junior member of the Bargaining Committee: some items (tenure status, primary place of work, salary, etc.) cannot be changed without the written permission of the employee. Bob got that one into the 2019 contract, just in time to protect faculty during the pandemic.

One innovation that will probably prove valuable *now* appeared in the 2014 contract. Prior to that contract, if the Legislature compromised part of the contract, then the Administration and UFF would bargain a replacement, leaving the rest of the contract intact. But what if the Legislature's action was illegal? In 2014, the contract got new language saying, "UFF does not concede to the constitutionality of any subsequently enacted legislation that invalidates a term of this Agreement." Now that the Legislature has violated the federal constitution, the state constitution, and its own laws, this particular sentence may have a major role in upcoming litigation.

**The Past and Future Contract.**

Bargaining is supposed to start in six months. This is going to be an interesting bargaining session: we will likely be bargaining and litigating at the same time, perhaps over the same things. But that doesn't mean that we aren't interested in things like raises.



Bob Welker said that bargaining is 90% preparation. What problems are employees in the USF UFF Bargaining Unit experiencing? What are unions at other institutions winning at the table? What pitfalls have they encountered? What is our Administration likely to go for (always remembering that the USF Administration represents the Board of Trustees - and the Board must ratify the contract for it to come into force).

So we ask everyone with an interest and / or background in bargaining to come join us, just as Bob joined the UFF Bargaining Team three decades ago. If you are interested, contact the Chapter Secretary.



## UFF Chapter Meeting

The USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida will meet tomorrow, Friday, September 21st at 12 pm, on USF Tampa in EDU254 - and on Zoom. On the **agenda**: the statewide UFF Senate meeting this weekend and more. And here are **the minutes for the previous meeting**. Any employee in the Bargaining Unit may attend, but to Zoom in you must have an invitation: contact **the Chapter Secretary** to get one.

Meetings and events are **posted on the Events Calendar** of the **UFF USF Website**. Come and check us out.



## Join the Movement!

If you are not a union member, please [join today](#) (the form connects automatically to the eDues form, so you will want to have your banking info or checkbook information handy). We are stronger standing together.

### Reminders...



If you have been the victim of a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, you have thirty days from the time you knew or should have known of the violation to file a grievance. If you are, and at the time of the violation were, a dues-paying member of the United Faculty of Florida, you have the right to union representation. To contact the UFF USF Grievance Committee,

go to the [Grievances Page](#).

Despite the reassurances from Academic Affairs, some of the reactions of USF middle management to Post Tenure Faculty Review are ... distinctly uncollegial. If your unit is planning on review criteria that do not reflect past practice in your unit, the Grievance Committee would like to know.

### **USF United Support Fund for Food Pantries**

Many of our students are struggling financially, and the USF Foundation is supporting the USF Food Pantries to help out. They are accepting non-perishable donations, but one can also make monetary donations for the pantries at all three campuses.

### **We are on Social Media**

- We have a Facebook group: see [United Faculty of Florida at USF](#). This page is a place where UFF

members can exchange thoughts and ideas. The page is "public", but only dues-paying UFF members are eligible to post items on the page. If you are a UFF member, ask to join on the page, and the moderator will invite every UFF member that asks to join. Non-members are welcome to look (but you need a Facebook account to do that). So check us out.

- We have a blog: see [The USF Faculty Blog](#). This has news items as they come up.
- We are Twitter-pated (or X-pated): follow us on Twitter (or X) via [@UffUsf](#).
- We even have a You-Tube channel: [check out our videos](#)

If you want to help with media matters, contact [the Communications Committee chair](#).

NOTE: The USF-UFF Chapter website is <https://uff.ourusf.org/> , and our e-mail address is [uff@ourusf.org](mailto:uff@ourusf.org).

About this broadcast: This Newsletter was broadcast by Constant Contact, and is intended for all members of the UFF USF Bargaining unit (USF faculty and professionals at most departments). A (usually identical) version will be broadcast to USF-News and USF-Talk from [mccolm@usf.edu](mailto:mccolm@usf.edu).

If you do not want to receive the UFF Biweekly, you can unsubscribe below or contacting [the Chapter Secretary](#). If you do not receive the Biweekly, but want to, contact [the Chapter Secretary](#).

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