



# WCCFT Union NEWS

December 2006

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

## The Spirit of '69

By Richard Rosell



I vividly recall September 1969.

It was my first semester on the campus and the first semester that the faculty worked under a newly signed union contract. Unlike today, when most successes on the campus are viewed in individual terms, the achievement of a union contract was a hard fought collective victory. Although the faculty was initially divided, one faction wanting representation by an administration-friendly Faculty Senate group, the other wanting to affiliate with state and national unions, after the election to select a bargaining agent was over, if any division existed, it was not apparent to me.

By September the first contract had been negotiated and signed. Having been offered a salary of approximately eight thousand dollars when I was interviewed in March, I was overjoyed when at the new faculty orientation I was informed that under the new agreement I would be paid eleven thousand and three dollars a year. (Feeling wealthy, I bought myself a new car.) But

that was only the beginning of the gains the faculty had achieved.

When I spoke with old timers (I viewed anyone who was here before September 1969 as an old timer) their pride was palpable; after years in the desert, the contract brought them to the Promised Land. No one I met failed to inform me about the conditions the contract had liberated them from or the positive changes it had produced. I recall one conversation in which one faculty member used the word "chattel" over and over again to describe the conditions that existed before the contract. Everyone spoke about the nine-to-four work day, or how everyone was required to be in his or her office until the end of June, even though classes were not in session. People were proud of having achieved the academic day and the academic year. In addition to these achievements, the contract provided for tenure (at that time after three years, and later after five); due process in the event of disciplinary action; a self-governing Faculty Senate; sick and personal day guarantees; and specification of workload and class size limits.

Unlike some other community college contracts, ours unified full-timers and adjuncts into one bargaining unit, thus avoiding serious conflicts between the two groups. Adjunct votes were very important in the election of the union in 1969. In recognition of that contribution of adjuncts to the selection of the union, adjunct members have always had the same voting rights as full-timers in the governance of the union and have had representation on the Executive Committee and the bargaining

team from the very beginning. In the second contract (1972), additional adjunct rights were negotiated and senior adjuncts achieved a form of tenure when the establishment of a priority list guaranteed specific rights in the course selection process.

Of course, there were bumps in the road. A dispute with the administration over the handling of one faculty member's personnel records in the early 1970's, for example, led to a grievance and eventually, an agreement on the handling of personnel files. As a result, it was agreed, that the college would maintain only one personnel file for each employee (no hidden records,



Richard Rosell  
Circa 1970

that the employee cannot view or respond to); specifics as to what records the personnel file may contain; guarantees that the employee be informed when materials are placed in his/her file; and the employee's right to sign and respond to materials placed in the file, as well as time limits beyond which materials cannot be placed in the file.

Dr. Hankin's arrival in 1971 was followed by a period of turbulence—those were definitely not quiet times—as the Senate and the union both challenged many of the changes the administration sought to make. One issue the union challenged was the administration's efforts to extend the workday for full-timers. Prior to Dr. Hankin's arrival, there were no classes before 9:00 AM. When the administration sought to assign fac-

(See "Spirit" Pg. 7)





A Monthly Newsletter of  
Local 2431 American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)  
Affiliated with New York State United Teachers

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## Calendar of Events

**Monthly Meetings:  
First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.  
Science Building 102**

**Dec. 6, 2006:**

Union Looks Back on 60 Years of  
Academic Professionalism

**Feb. 7, 2007:**

Contract Strategies

**March 7, 2007:**

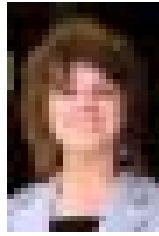
Health & Safety

**April 4, 2007:**

Election Nominations

**May 2, 2007:**

Legislative Luncheon



**President's Message**

# With an Eye on Future Anniversaries

Celebrating the past is more meaningful when you include planning the present and visualizing the future. An anniversary is a time to look back on where you've been in a context of where you're going. For us, it is an assessment—in the most positive interpretation of that word, of how well we have performed as an institution and, more particularly, as a union. We can see that we have made gains as educators because we're a union and have a strength together which surpasses our efforts individually. Every grievance the union represents is greater than the single grievant; every issue we confront has an impact on everyone covered by the contract; every gain we make benefits the entire bargaining unit. The Union never rests in its work to fulfill its mandate. We've kept salaries competitive; we've fought disregard for due process rights; we've halted erosions of benefits; we've met with the Administration to improve conditions for adjuncts.

But we are taught that good can always be better and that to arrive at that better place it is necessary to have a vision. Here is one I'd like you to consider. It is meant to open a dialogue, even a debate.

The union I envision is a collective of activist members organized on democratic egalitarian principles. Such a union would move forward in solidarity with other unions and civic groups on issues of social justice.

For us locally that would mean having a broadly representative faculty, reflective of all racial and ethnic groups on our campus and in our community committed to the highest standards of academic achievement. It would require introducing democratic controls on all levels of governance, including the selection of department and curricular chairs, on the hiring of academic personnel, our colleagues, and all administrators directly relating to unit members—full-time and part-time teaching faculty, librarians, counselors and academic

support coordinators.

My vision is of a faculty with adequate time and money to ensure excellence of service to students and to higher education. It is a vision to foster wide participation in union and college

*"...we are taught that good can always be better and that to arrive at that better place it is necessary to have a vision."*

committees and co-curricular activities by reducing the course load and class size and by providing faculty development funds sufficient to cover costs of major conferences, advanced course work and scholarly research. In recognition of academic professionalism, maximum flexibility of scheduling would be observed. In support of a cooperative atmosphere, unit members would advance on the salary scale by seniority and promotions to higher rank would be made on merit without attachment to compensation. In deference to the professionalism of the faculty, all evaluative instruments would be faculty-driven and monitored.

In an atmosphere of respect, we would work with the Administration to devise creative solutions to the imbalance of full time to adjunct faculty, to deal with the issue of increased compensation for and involvement of adjunct faculty, to answer the crisis of dwindling health coverage, and to meet the obligation of a healthy and safe work environment.

And in all the time spent working together at Westchester Community College, we would be mindful of a larger labor movement, organized and unorganized, in the County, in the State of New York, in the United States and around the world. Wherever men, women, and children struggle to improve their working conditions, we would understand our role in fighting for their economic and social well-being.

A vision gives purpose and direction to an organization. It is a road map to get you where you want to go and a way station along the route. Let's celebrate sixty years of educational success by establishing a new threshold of academic achievement and a plan to take us there.

# The Politics of Labor

**W**hen the College was established in 1946, Thomas Dewey was governor and the Westchester County Executive was Herbert Clinton Gerlach. The labor movement was in a period of massive strikes. Almost 5 million workers left work to protest conditions in the workplace. In the steel industry alone, 500,000 workers shut down production. In this highly charged atmosphere, new labor legislation, the Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress which severely limited the rights of workers to strike and to support other striking workers. At this time, only private sector employees could organize into unions and bargain collectively with their employers according to the rules of the 1935 National Labor Relations

Act. Union leaders needed to have political allies to maintain the gains they made and move forward to organize public sector workers. But it wouldn't be until the 1960s that states passed legislation allowing this to happen. In New York, it was the Rockefeller driven Taylor Law which served this purpose. It was won, however, at a cost which was

the no-strike pledge for all public employees.

Over the years, relations between labor unions and politics have been close with the labor movement courting politicians in election years and lobbying them after the elections. Without the strike as leverage, unions have relied on good relations with local governments to secure favorable legislation and workable collective bargaining agreements. Often, unions have had to resort to demonstrations to make their voices heard.

Today, the WCCFT works hard to persuade county and state lawmakers that labor's agenda is a positive one not only for our own members but for the communities in which they live.



Anne D'Orazio greets NY assemblyman George Latimer at the November 5 WCCFT meeting.



# 40 Years of Adjunct Professionalism

By Ed Zimmel, Adjunct Faculty Advisory Board



A teacher is a catalyst for life aspirations; he/she does not always know the measure, reach or magnitude of influence on the character of another. As such, a career born of frustration and tempered by endless challenges began in 1961.

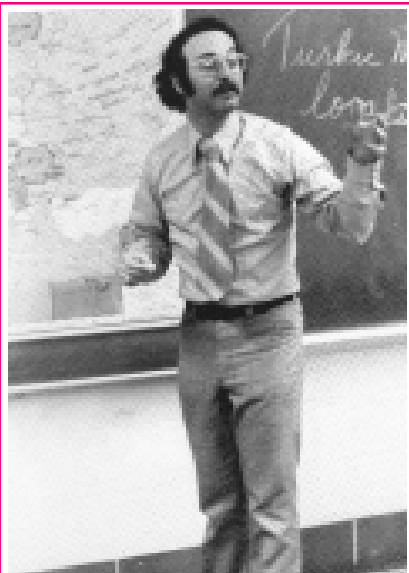
The path was never easy, but the rewards were ever abundant and transcendent. Through a lens, which refracts and illuminates the past, even into its deepest and most intimate professional moments, the outline of who I am as a teacher is a monumental and passionate memory. In 1961, I met a lifelong friend in the persona of Robert Battaly. Then, we taught in the Highlands School in White Plains, New York. There we set to task the forging of careers: I remained at White Plains while Bob went off to work full time at Westchester Community College.

Our friendship endured and, we wallowed in the bog of history, which we coveted with endless passion. It was then that I realized that the ability to purvey the lessons of history was born more of pedagogy than substance. I can remember reading Jacques Barzun's Teacher in America. If I learned one thing from this great teacher, it was the charge that he gave to all teachers: the art somehow is the greater power at your command; it is that distinction that is paramount in one's pedagogy. Throughout my career, at whatever level I taught, the epiphany was the same—stand and deliver—the power of ambient personality and pedagogy is equal to the content.

I began my career at Westchester as an adjunct in 1966 when the evening division was a separate entity administered by Alan Fales. With the advent of Dr. Hankin, the college underwent an expansive change into a one-college concept. Joe and I graduated college (CCNY) together and shared some of the same history professors. I like to kid him by saying I was there before him! Between the memory of Bob and the dynamic Presidency of Joe, the mis-

sion of WCC possessed me. I became active in the Evening Division Student Forum where I became a faculty advisor, planning ski trips, a two-year college conference in New Orleans, etc.

It was my belief then, as it is now, that a college professor should interact with the life of the school in numerous ways. I became a strong believer in the role of the student government and the Viking as crucibles of expression where students could hone their leadership skills. The longer I taught at Westchester the more committed I became to the Community College concept. The reasonable tuition per credit made it possible for many students to jump-start a career when they might have thought that they would never go to college, even achieve a successful transition to a four year college. But for those who were contented with an Associate's Degree, I took great pleasure in being an agent of their changing outlook on life. For many students Westchester was a niche, an inspiration, and a home to throttle their dreams. Nourished by the belief that I could broaden my input into the life of the college, I taught the full spectrum of history courses on and off campus, even working at the Taconic Correctional facility, teaching college credit courses to the inmates. It was a hands-on experi-



Prof. Edwin Zimmel circa 1972



ence for life.

Currently, I represent the Behavioral and Social Sciences Department on The Adjunct Faculty Advisory Board. There I work for the improvement of the status of adjuncts at the college. It has afforded me the opportunity of working with fellow adjuncts in common cause. In addition, though not incidental to my career in education, I have been a track coach at White Plains for the past 44 years. At Manhattanville College, I teach a methods course for aspiring history teachers. It is work that I have an abiding faith in. As I complete my 40<sup>th</sup> year as an adjunct and 45<sup>th</sup> as a teacher, I'd like to think that there is still much life ahead for this teacher. Beyond the classroom, for two years I chaired the New York State Social Studies council for the inclusion of Human Rights into Secondary and College curricula. I began to write professionally and published an article on the FDR Administration and the Holocaust. As a member of the educational committee of the Westchester Holocaust Commission, I work to energize the concept of Human Rights at every level of teaching. I was the proud recipient of the Jack and Ina Marsh Human Rights Award at a reception given at the Crown Plaza Hotel in White Plains. There in my acceptance speech I spoke about the need to vitalize the place of Human Rights in college and secondary education. I continue to work toward the propagation of our humanity in the wider aspect of the world community. Like my esteemed colleagues Joe and Bob, we are products of public education and to that end our passion and legacy for contribution must not abate.

# A chat with Mary Mannetti, a WCC “original”

By Carolyn DiLeo

**I** sat down recently with my aunt, Mary Mannetti, who taught Office Technologies at the College for over thirty years. This is not the first time we have talked about WCC; in fact, I remember hearing about the college years before I came to belong to this community. Here are a few questions that both new and not-so-new faculty would find interesting.

**CD:** When exactly did you start working for the College?

**MM:** I came to WCC in 1953.

**CD:** Where was it located?

**MM:** In the basement of an elementary school in White Plains. It was and still is known as Battle Hill.

**CD:** What courses were offered?

**MM:** There were limited offerings primarily in the areas of Construction, electrical, chemical, medical assistant and dental assistant. All of the courses were designed to teach a skill that would allow the student to find a good paying job. While the jobs were entry level, these were the first jobs for many students. Many students were able to continue their education. The student's program was divided into three semesters. Their last semester was devoted to working in their respective field. These internships usually led to employment, often with the sponsored employer.

**CD:** How many students were there?

**MM:** About 200.



Mary Mannetti circa 1961

**CL:** And how many faculty?  
**MM:** 28.

**CD:** What hours did you work?

**MM:** We were treated as County employees and worked a full business day, five days a week, 12 months a year. The only holidays we had were those granted by the County and those were very limited. I remember coming in during the snow storms, summer months, whether classes were in session or not. There were many, many days that we were required to be in our offices with little or nothing to do. We were actually required to sign in and sign out every day. In addition to our teaching responsibilities, we also handled registration for classes. We not only advised students, answered their many questions, but we were also responsible for collecting tuition. During registration days, we acted as the bursar. There was little to no staff to handle the administrative duties.

**CD:** When did the College move to its present location?

**MM:** I think in the early 1960s.

**CD:** What buildings were there at the beginning?

**MM:** There were just a couple of buildings. Classes were held in the Greenhouse (now the Health Science Building). There was also a riding academy, and my office was in the stables. Other classes were held in the stone building next to the stables.

**CD:** Did the faculty get together? And if so, where?

**MM:** Dr. Martin did his best to gather faculty together and held monthly meetings in any room which was available.

**CD:** Was there a Faculty Senate?

**MM:** No.

**CD:** What changes did you see after the College moved to its present location?



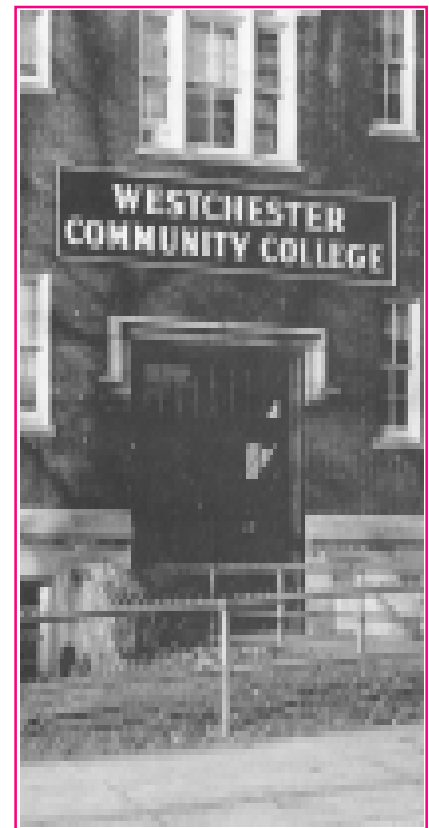
Mary Mannetti and husband Frank at a recent social function

**MM:** College life changed once the union was established. We negotiated reasonable hours that made sense.

**CD:** When did you retire?

**MM:** In 1984 after 31 years.

Since retiring from the College, Mary and her husband Frank have traveled and have just returned from a trip to the Caribbean where they visited the Panama Canal. She lives in the spacious family home in Port Chester which her father, who emigrated from Naples, built in the 1920's.



Battle Hill campus circa 1958



frank Messman

# Looking back: WCC during the 60s

A reminiscence by Don Carmody

**W**CC has always been a college in transition. When I took a job here in 1959, it was in the process of moving from Battle Hill where it originated, to the Hartford Campus, where it could expand. During my first year, I taught chemistry classes at both, traveling daily back and forth. The school was growing, and changing from completely technical to one offering a variety of liberal arts programs. The combination of new "Open Enrollment" rules and the pressure to achieve Middle States accreditation pushed WCC toward larger enrollment, and more varied programs (not always with the complete support of the sponsor). From a full time faculty of about 37 when I arrived, to over 100 in less than a decade (the Adjunct Faculty expanded by a factor of 10), everything was growing. Four new buildings were put up rapidly – in order: Engineering Building, Student Center, Physical Education Building and Classroom Building.

The Faculty was also changing. The Taylor Law was passed in the mid 60s, and it allowed the faculty to organize and negotiate a contract. There was great turmoil and controversy as two groups vied to represent the teachers. One group wanted the Faculty Senate (formed a couple of years earlier) to

*"The combination of new "Open Enrollment" rules and the pressure to achieve Middle States accreditation pushed WCC toward larger enrollment, and more varied programs..."*

also function as a local, independent bargaining agent. But starting with a small group of ten faculty, a second group pushed to be represented as a Local of the United Federation of College Teachers (now NYSUT), which was affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers. Without taking an official position, the College Administration gave moral support to the former. After considerable electioneering, there were two elections, the first unofficial, the second official and supervised by the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB). Both were won by the Union, but in each case the margin was less than six votes. The Union was recognized by the County and was able to negotiate an extremely successful con-



*Prof. Don Carmody circa 1970*

tract. Salaries increased over ten percent, tenure and promotions were introduced, sabbaticals, a grievance procedure and many other specifications on working conditions all were initiated.

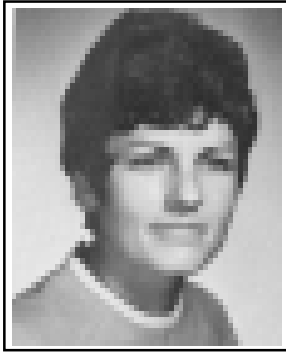
By the end of the decade, the environment at the College was no longer recognizable. The original Administration retired. The presented Administration was selected, and continued an even greater program of growth and development

Onward and upward.

**Watch for an announcement about our new faculty monument garden**



# Do You Recognize These People?



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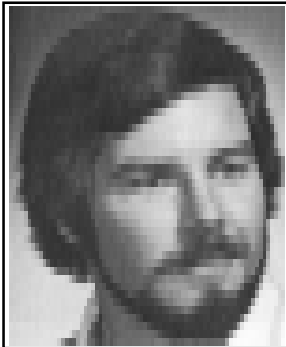
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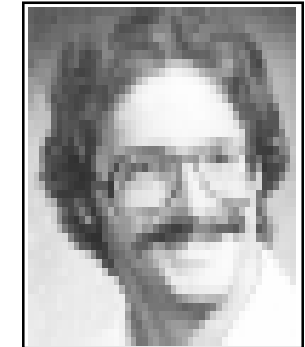
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Answers bottom of page 8:

## Spirit

(Continued from Pg. 1)

ulty to classes before 8:00 AM or after 5:00 PM the union filed a grievance arguing that it violated the maintenance of standards clause in the contract. The issue was settled, when the union agreed to the assignment of classes before 8:00 AM or after 5:00 PM if faculty who *volunteer* to teach such classes were permitted a four day teaching schedule. (See section 4.4 of the agreement for the details.)

When the administration sought to give added responsibilities to department chairs the union grieved again. As

a result, an arbitrator ruling for the union granted release time commensurate with each chair's responsibilities.

We can enumerate all of the specific benefits and protections the union contract offers, but in the end, for me at least, two are most central. First, is the right to negotiate fair terms and conditions of employment as professionals: fair salaries, fair benefits and a hospitable environment which is free from unwarranted interference or intimidation. Second, is the right to seek a remedy when we feel our rights have not been respected. The grievance procedure requires the administration to address "any claimed violation, misrepresenta-

tion or inequitable application" of our agreement. If the administration and the union fail to agree on the meaning of the specific contract language we have the right to have our grievances heard by an impartial arbitrator who can hand down binding award.

It is only when we are faced with a problem that we can fully appreciate the support that the union can provide. It is at the most difficult times that the words from the old song ring most true: "the union makes us strong." Let's keep the spirit of '69 alive on the campus and assure that our collective efforts keep the faculty strong.



Relive 60 Great



Years of WCCFT



History!

*Don't miss our gala 60th anniversary celebration at the December meeting!*

*We are inviting all Union members past & present to share historical moments and experiences*

- \* Wednesday*
- \* December 6th*
- \* 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.*
- \* SCI 102*



- |                 |                       |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Eileen Walsh | 4) Ruth Levy          | 7) Lou Rotando  | 10) Iris Cook         |
| 2) Laurie Corte | 5) Anthony Mezzatesta | 8) Tom Halsall  | 11) Walter Reifenberg |
| 3) Eileen Shea  | 6) Bill Bastansen     | 9) Frank Madden | 12) Michael Priano    |