

Western N.Y. NEWS & Views

2026-2027
Edition 1

NYSUT Retirees of WNY Officers RC 1

President

Tom Spengler
716-867-9180

Vice President

Nancy Keller
716-830-9530

Secretary/Treasurer

Nicole Davis
716-908-5571

NYSUT/AFT Alternates

Tracy Beatty/Maxine Knisley
716-803-5340/772-321-4974

Coalition President

Lynn Mele
716-632-2975

Coalition Vice Presidents

1st – Veronica Cavan
716-691-5190
2nd – Liz Dolce
716-662-2363

Coalition Co-Recording Secretary's

Amy Schaffstall/Nicole Davis
716-435-5013/716-908-5571

Coalition Corresponding Secretary

Kathy Stewart
716-998-4484

Coalition Co-Treasurers

Ed Haley
716-636-1827
Mark Shanahan
716-912-2887

Newsletter Editor

Gloria LaSota
716-998-0657

NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant

Janet Goddard
716-634-7132

janet.goddard@nysut.org

Reaching out to Retirees in Western New York Retiree Council 1—We are over 6,000 strong

From the 2026-2029 President's Desk by Tom Spengler



I'm Tom Spengler, and I am honored to serve as the new President of RC1 beginning in September. I retired in June of 2021 after a rewarding and diverse professional career. I began my professional career as a Laboratory Director for an environmental firm. Later, I made a career change and entered education, teaching science in the Kenton Union Free School District for 25 years. I was also Department Chair for over 10 years. During my tenure in Kenton, I always supported the Union and strongly believe in "Union for Life" membership. After retiring, I joined RC1 in the fall of 2021. It is truly an honor to serve as President of Retiree Council 1, and I look forward to working alongside our members to continue strengthening our organization and advancing the interests of retirees.

I would also like to encourage you to come to some of our activities such as the Fall Luncheon or the Holiday Luncheon. They are a great time and way to meet old friends and make new ones. Follow our newsletter for more information on these events. If you would like to come to one of our monthly Coalition meetings as a guest to learn more, feel free to. You may contact me at tjspengler3159@gmail.com.

Sincerely, Tom Spengler

A Message from Our Coalition President, Lynn Mele

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to two outstanding Board members. Kathy Brown and Veronica Cavan have served as Presidents of RC1 and RC3 for many years.

These women have been instrumental in helping make our Coalition more effective in the lives of our retirees. Both have given their time and energy to organize events, run activities and "rally the troops" to action. Although they are stepping down from their positions, they are not stepping away from our organization. Kathy and Veronica will continue to serve on the Board of Trustees for NYSUT's Coalition of Retirees of Western New York. All of us on the Board thank you for your dedication to helping Retirees.

Yours in Solidarity,
Lynn Mele



Have you opted in to receive our newsletter?
Scan the barcode at the left. Be sure to select
The newsletter delivery option that is best for you.



For up-to-date information on RC's 1, 2 & 3,
visit our website <http://rcwest.ny.aft.org>

SCAN the QR CODE to be taken to our Facebook Page!
Make a friend request; we are a private group.



CONGRATULATIONS TO TRACY BEATTY— 2026 NYSUT RETIREES OF WNY LEGENDS AWARD WINNER

Tracy began her teaching career in 1982. She was President of the Grand Island Teachers Union. In retirement she was an active board member of RC 1. She transitioned to Retiree Services Consultant for Retiree Councils 1, 2, 3, & 44, providing guidance for 7 years. Tracy has made many lasting contributions to her local and to NYSUT.

CONDOLENCES

GAIL ANN NIPARTS, (1952-2026) of Ellicottville, NY, formerly of East Amherst, passed away peacefully after a courageous battle with Alzheimer's disease. She dedicated more than 37 years to teaching English at Lockport High School, where she became a beloved and highly respected educator. She was named *Teacher of the Year* on multiple occasions and was remembered by generations of students for her passion, and boundless energy. Gail served for many years in leadership roles with New York State United Teachers. She represented her fellow educators at conferences and meetings across New York, advocating on their behalf before school boards and state officials. She earned the deep respect of her colleagues for her dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to public education.



SAVE THE DATE

RC 1, 2, 3 and 44 HOLIDAY LUNCHEON ~ December 8, 2026

Doors Open at 11:00 AM – Lunch at Noon ~ Salvatore's Italian Gardens, 6461 Genesee Street
Information and details will be in our next Newsletter and on the Coalition website.

A MESSAGE FROM KATHY BROWN, FORMER RC 1 PRESIDENT - RETIRED VOICES STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Although many of us have retired from the classroom, our commitment to New York's public schools continues. NYSUT is working to improve Tier 6 pensions, protect funding for public education, address the educator shortage, expand student mental health services, encourage the responsible use of artificial intelligence in schools, and oppose efforts to divert public education dollars to private school voucher programs.

As retired educators, our voices still matter. By contacting our state legislators, we can remind them that we remain invested in the future of public education and the success of New York's students. Together, we can continue to advocate for the profession we love and help ensure that every student has access to a strong public education.

As I conclude my term as Retiree Council 1 President, I am grateful to know that our Council's advocacy will continue under the leadership of Tom Spengler. Tom was enthusiastically elected by our members in May and assumed the presidency in September 2026. A dedicated NYSUT advocate, he has consistently demonstrated his commitment to advancing the interests of retired educators while supporting the future of public education. I am confident that Retiree Council 1 will continue to thrive under Tom's thoughtful and dedicated leadership.

PARTICIPATION FEE FORM 2026-2027

If you have not already sent in your Participation Fee Form, we urge you to support our Retiree Councils by sending in your \$10 participation fee and by encouraging others to support the work we do for all of us. Thank you.

Name _____ District you retired from _____
Street Address _____ Years of Retirement _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Make your \$10 Contribution payable to: NYSUT Retirees of WNY

Mail this form to Lisa Byers, c/o NYSUT Retirees of WNY, 270 Essjay Road, Williamsville, NY 14221



NYSUT RETIREES FALL LUNCHEON HONORING NEW RETIREES



Join your fellow retirees and meet new ones as we get together
for our fall luncheon and NYSUT Retiree Recognition Day:

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026

DOORS OPEN AT 11:00 am with BUFFET LUNCH AT 12:00 pm
The Columns at 2221 Transit Road, Elma, NY 14059

Please complete the form below and ***return by October 2, 2026. This form may be copied. Use one registration form per person.*** No registrations will be accepted after **October 2**. No refunds will be issued.

Your check should be **dated, signed** and payable to: ***NYSUT Retirees of WNY***

Please send mail to: **Jill Wilkie, c/o NYSUT, 270 Essjay Road, Williamsville, NY 14221**

The cost of attendance is reduced this year! There will be open seating for this event.

New retirees will receive \$10 in NYSUT bonus bucks to be used on the day of the event.

There will be a BASKET RAFFLE and SHARE THE WEALTH to benefit the

NYSUT Retiree Coalition Mini Grant Program.

Please consider BRINGING TOILETRIES to benefit a local women's shelter.

Questions? Please contact Amy Schaffstall (716) 435-5013 or Jill Wilkie (716) 984-3674.

Please cut and return with payment.

Name: _____ District from which you retired: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Luncheon Fee: Please choose one option for your registration.

_____ I am a new retiree. I retired on or after September 1, 2025. I have enclosed a check for **\$20.**

_____ I retired before September 1, 2025. I have enclosed a check for **\$40.**

_____ I am a guest. I have enclosed a check for **\$40.**

MINI-GRANT DONATION FORM FOR 2026-2027

NYSUT Retirees of WNY awards mini-grants up to \$500 to in-service teachers to supplement special projects. Grant monies are funded by our "Share the Wealth" drawings and retiree donations. This past year we were able to award five more mini-grants to local teachers for a total of \$7,000. Information on our mini-grants has been sent to the Union Presidents of each district in our Coalition. Check with your in-service teachers to see if they have been informed of this opportunity to apply. Our mini-grants help make a difference! Please consider donating to this worthwhile activity.

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

DONATION AMOUNT \$ _____

Please send your donation payable to: **NYSUT Retirees of WNY** and mail to: **ATTN: Mark Shanahan,**
270 Essjay Road, Williamsville, NY 14221

How to maximize your NYSUT membership

Your NYSUT membership offers special advantages unavailable to the general public. Make sure you're utilizing all the savings opportunities below provided by NYSUT Member Benefits.

Member-Only Pricing: Protect your loved ones with various life insurances. Plan for the future with quality long-term care insurance plans. Select from multiple highly rated auto and home insurance carriers. Receive reimbursement for eligible pet care through Nationwide.

Unbiased Advice: Ensure your financial and legal affairs are in order. Receive expert guidance on personal legal matters with unlimited advice from attorneys through our legal service plan. Obtain unbiased, objective phone consultations with a certified financial planner or registered investment advisor with our financial counseling program.

Travel Savings: Bundle and save on flights, cruises, vehicle rentals, and over 850,000 hotels and resorts for the optimal travel experience with MB Discounts & Deals. Enjoy reduced pricing on over 80 explorations across 100 countries with Grand Circle Travel & Overseas Adventure Travel, including new "Immersions" options for more active travelers.

Free Benefits: Check out our free benefits! All in-service and retiree members receive unlimited access to the popular Calm app and can add up to five dependents (age 16 or older). Whether you have a specific matter or simply need an empathetic voice, the Peer Support Line can help. Other benefits include: \$5,000 accidental death & dismemberment insurance, travel assistance services, financial learning center, and more.

Feel confident knowing you have a trusted advocate on your side if you ever need us.

Find out all that's available from Member Benefits. Scan the QR code, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org, or call 800-626-8101.



**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
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Working to Benefit You

September/October 2026

