

THE REPORTER

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Kevin Bailey; Vice-President - Alan Hall, The Reporter
is designed to provide periodic information on Guild
activities.

WHO IS K.T. WINTERS?

Last spring, the College paid K.T. Winters almost \$1200 for "inservice training." It was learned that in November of 1980, Mr. Thorne and Board member Floyd Hoffman went to Florida, at College expense, to attend a "union-busting" conference and heard a presentation by Mr. Winters. Since that time, we have received numerous inquiries concerning the identity of this man.

Kenneth T. Winters operates one of the largest management consultant firms in New England, located in Bangor, Maine. He has a seven person staff and represents management in labor relations situations. Although his clients include the University of Maine and Central Maine Hospital, most of his business is out of state as he sits as a management representative on the Maine Labor Relations Board and wants to avoid a "conflict of interest situation." Winters is a former Green Beret and paratrooper who also operates a tour guide service in Maine.

Winters claims that he is not anti-union, just pro-management, but feels unions do not fulfill a purpose as they steal from employees, are corrupt, and therefore unnecessary.

The approaches he employs qualifies him as a "human resource consultant," according to Winters, because his major advice to employers is that "unions are not necessary unless bosses fail to deal with employee problems." He maintains that "if management had their act together, and valued workers' resources, there would be no need for a union." So he advises clients to tell workers that bosses care about them, and view them as the best in their field. Many union-busters describe this as the "happy worker program." The employer attempts to convince employees that they will be looked after, that "we care about you and recognize your value," and that things are great if we all work together as a "family." He advises broadening employee decision-making or at least giving symbolic roles to workers, often called "input." Also, an expansion of lower level supervisory personnel should take place and an inclusion of this group in the formulation of decisions is essential.

Winters points out that some employers want him to help them "bust a union." He feels this is foolish and only a temporary, short term solution, for it fails to address the reasons for unionization and those causes still exist. However, Winters will aide them in this effort if they persist.

Other recommendations by "management consultants" like Winters include using front line supervisors to monitor union activity and intimidate workers and establish rigid rules to prevent pro-union workers from persuading others to join the union. This latter recommendation is apparently being emphasized at NHCC with the prohibitions against speaking about the union by the officers. Also employers are told how to hire people who will not be sympathetic with the union cause.

What about the future of unions? Winters sees a major upswing in union organizing activity in the 80's, primarily due to perceived threats from the Reagan administration. Public sector unionism will especially grow. How does Winters feel about this? Great! he says, for it will be good for his business.