

P.O. Box 38893, Houston, Texas 77088

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NEW BOARD MEMBER ELECTED

On January 17, voters in the North Harris County College district elected David Robinson to the College Board of Trustees over Lawrence Adams, a charter member of the Board. The vote was 1,571 for Robinson and 1,303 for Adams. Robinson carried the Spring school district 583 to 311 and the Humble school district 567 to 563. He lost the Aldine area to Adams in a close vote of 429 to 421.

Robinson is a professor at the University of Houston Downtown College and has been active in civic and community organizations, as well as in political affairs. His candidacy was endorsed strongly by the NHCC United Faculty Committee on Political Education. Our COPE endorsement carried with it significant financial and organizational assistance to the Robinson campaign.

This election represents the first direct political involvement of the NHCC-UF COPE and it must be labeled a major success. The local Texas United Faculty (TUF) guild of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was able to raise over \$1,200 in voluntary contributions for use in

the campaign. In conjunction with the Harris County AFL-CIO, the faculty organization was able to mail out over 10,000 leaflets announcing the election to labor union members who reside in the college district. The AFL-CIO provided significant support which made this effort worthwhile in the form of volunteers to prepare our mailouts. The guild also operated a phone bank, which called almost 1,000 voters urging them to support Robinson on election day. Finally, NHCC-UF arranged to have over 40 volunteers at the seventeen polling places on January 17. These volunteers passed out Robinson information cards to voters.

The North Harris County College guild feels that David Robinson's upset win was not only our victory but a victory for the entire college. Robinson brings with him a knowledge of the college district and the many problems facing higher education in Texas. On the Board, Robinson will be his own man. He is not owned by the union, as he should not be. We strongly believe that Board members should not be owned by anyone.

The Robinson campaign demonstrated the success that teachers, at all levels, can achieve when they are willing to contribute money, time, and energy to a worthwhile cause. Political action has become a necessity for teachers in a time of high inflation and cuts in benefits, and obviously it can succeed. In addition, this

election shows the potential of the American Federation of Teachers. No other faculty organization in Texas has ever entered a campaign like this and won. AFT has provided us with a vehicle and the knowhow that will bring success for teachers throughout this state.

A GENTLEMAN'S DISAGREEMENT

Substantive issues seldom determine the outcome of school board elections. Often, it is ~~a matter of one candidate herding his friends and neighbors to the polls, while an opponent is doing the same thing.~~ In this situation the victory goes to the person who can convince his folks to turn out in greater numbers than his foe's folks.

The NHCC trustee election followed this pattern with one notable exception. An issue was brought into the campaign which lacked either substance or legal foundation. The issue was the College's "gentleman's agreement"; an arrangement apportioning three seats on the Board to Aldine residents, two positions for Spring, and two for Humble.

This 3-2-2 representational scheme was upset in January's election when David Robinson from Spring defeated Lawrence Adams of Aldine. In the race for Position One, incumbent

Floyd Hoffman of Aldine beat NHCC student Mike McCollum of Spring. ~~From the time Robinson and McCollum filed as candidates,~~ Bill Thorne cried "foul" at their actions because the 1981 election was for Aldine residents only. Despite his inability at dissuading the two Spring renegades from filing, President Thorne kept the issue alive as college press releases picked up by local newspapers contained a discussion of the violation of the gentlemen's agreement in pre-election stories.

When the votes were counted and certified at the College around 8 p.m. on January 17, David Robinson was declared the winner of Position Two and was sworn in as college trustee. It must have come as a surprise for Trustee Robinson to see a page one banner headline in the January 21 issue of The Sun, a North Houston community paper, which read "NHCC Board Balance Tips."

The Sun article mentioned again the agreement which has no legal

standing in a Texas junior college district based on at-large representation. The following sentence appeared in this post-election story: "President Bill Thorne said the gentlemen's agreement by the founding fathers, if that is the right word, held through three Board changes resulting from moves from the district by board members."

While Thorne threw three improbable strikes past Robinson, it was the President's man, Larry Adams, who was thrown out on election night. Following Bill's last pitch, David Robinson wrote the following letter to the editor of The Sun: In regard to one of your lead stories in last week's Sun concerning my recent election to the North Harris County College Board of Trustees, I would like

to suggest NHCC Trustees represent the whole NHCC district, not just the particular school district in which they happen to live, whether it be Aldine, Humble or Spring. It therefore should make little difference in which of the three districts a particular trustee might live.

NHCC's most able president, Bill Thorne, lives in Aldine, yet he represents- as president of the college- the whole district, not just Aldine. I, too will, as a trustee, represent the whole NHCC district."

If President Thorne is still concerned over this Spring imbalance on the Board, I might suggest that he ask either Mr. Wells or Mr Haught of Spring to resign his position. The Board could then reappoint Larry Adams as a trustee which would would put things in balance at least until the next election.

Bob Locander

STATE/LOCAL NEWS

As of January 1, 1981, the AFT Professional Liability Insurance Plan has been increased from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. This plan provides coverage on a per person per occurrence basis with no aggregate limitation. This benefit is provided to each AFT member as soon as they join. In addition, the AFT policy pays for

all defense costs in a suit against a teacher and it pays up to \$25,000 in the defense of criminal charges, when the member is exonerated.

At a December 15 meeting in Houston, TUF officers voted to recommend a dues increase to \$10-a-month,

effective September 1, 1981. This recommendation must be acted upon by the entire TUF Executive Board and may be taken up at the annual convention this spring.

TUF has come to the defense of Professor Alejandro Perez of Laredo State University. Perez teaches business and was pursuing a Ph.D. in mathematics. The college provided a stipend while he pursued a higher degree and paid him for graduate hours accumulated up to 60. When Perez received his doctorate, Laredo State refused to pay him at the Ph.D salary stating that his degree was in an area he did not teach. Perez has contested that decision, and the case is expected to go to court soon.

The first issue of "Texas Faculty", TUF's newsletter, was sent to 18,000 university and college faculty members in the state. In the future, this newsletter will go to union members as a way of keeping them informed about educational matters in Texas.

Teachers in the North Forest Independent School District have organized an AFT chapter as part of the Houston Federation of Teachers. North Forest is the first suburban school district in the Houston area to

form a federation chapter, although a number of Aldine teachers are looking into forming a union in their district under HFT.

Texas Federation of Teachers (TFT) President Ron Wilcox has resigned to work full time as president of his local in Austin. The officers of TFT selected John Cole as the new president of the state federation. Cole was president of the Corpus Christi Federation of Teachers which is one of the largest and most successful locals in Texas.

On January 16, a federal judge in Dallas issued a court order barring Dallas school officials from interfering with a petition drive by the Dallas Federation of Teachers of AFT that had been halted on orders from Superintendent of Schools Linus Wright. Dallas school officials said that they wanted to prevent "ongoing political activity in our schools." However, U.S. District Judge Robert Porter issued a restraining order telling the district to "cease and desist from interfering with the rights of the individual plaintiffs and their fellow teachers to freely circulate copies of the petition." In a related development, the Brownsville I.S.D. backed down on its attempt to block a petition drive in their schools by the Brownsville Federation of Teachers.

Three state agencies were ordered January 23 to give all employee associations, including unions, equal privileges in representing employees and using agency facilities. District Judge Jim Dean issued injunctions against the Departments of Health, Human Resources, Highways and Public Transportation.

Texas United Faculty has established a committee on "Quality Educational Standards for Teachers" (QUEST). The committee is chaired by Marguerite Gillis of Southwest Texas State University.

Initial organizing efforts have begun on the campuses of San Antonio College, Texas Southern University, Lee College, all seven Dallas County Colleges, Southwest Texas Junior College, as well as at colleges in Midland-Odessa and El Paso.

NHCC-UF members Kevin Bailey, Alan Hall, Gary Hall, and Bob Locander attended a January 10 breakfast at the Harris County AFL-CIO headquarters. The event was sponsored by the AFL-CIO's Volunteers in Politics and was a salute to pro-union state legislators in Harris County. It was intended to coincide with the convening of the Legislature on January 13. Elected officials in attendance who discussed

issues facing the lawmakers were Senators Lindon Williams and Chet Brooks, and Representatives Al Luna, Gene Green, Paul Colbert, Clint Hackney, John Whitmire, Erwin Barton, and Ed Watson. Because of a pre-session committee meeting in Austin, Tony Polumbo sent an assistant from his office to attend the breakfast. Representative Green noted that he was the chief sponsor for a public employees collective bargaining bill, and that while the outlook for passage in 1981 was not good, the future should be brighter in future sessions of the Legislature.

The officers of NHCC-UF have been in contact with area legislators regarding educational issues that will be addressed in the 1981 Texas Legislature. Their reactions have been positive and we will be in constant contact with them throughout the session. Our organization will benefit from the work of over 45 full time lobbyists who work for the AFL-CIO, TFT, and TUF. The United Labor Legislative Committee (ULLCO) will be promoting higher educational legislation beneficial to faculty as well as attempting to prevent harmful legislation. The NHCC-UF will attempt to keep faculty members aware of legislation during this session.

On January 27, AFT national representative Bob Jensen arrived in Texas where he has been assigned. Jensen will be located in Houston where he will concentrate on organizing new guilds and assisting established guilds.

On November 15, the 3,500 member Texas Association of College Teachers' (TACT) affiliation committee decided to recommend a loose affiliation with the Texas United Faculty, as well as other higher education groups. The TACT house of delegated meeting is scheduled for February 27 and 28, at which time the recommendation will be acted upon.

The TUF constitutional revision committee, chaired by Kevin Bailey, is meeting this spring to revise the TUF constitution. Final action will take place at the annual convention this spring.

Houston attorney George Kirk has been selected as the general council of the Texas Federation of Teachers. Kirk, a former teacher, was one of the organizers of the Corpus Christi local. He also worked on two lawsuits against San Jacinto College involving successful suits brought by faculty members Patsy Goss and Johnny Johnson. Recently, Kirk was named as chairman of the Houston chapter

of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA).

The fall semester has brought an increase in NHCC-UF membership on campus. Presently, around twenty-five per cent of the full-time faculty have joined AFT, representing four divisions of the College. A few part time faculty have joined and recently, a handful of support staff have inquired about membership. The NHCC-UF Executive Board has made no decision on eligibility for support personnel to join the guild.

December 30, 1981 U.S. District Judge Ross Sterling issued a temporary restraining order requiring the North Forest Independent School District to allow the North Forest chapter of the Houston Federation of Teachers to distribute organizational literature to teachers on its campuses.

Sterling said Friday that the order will be in effect until Feb. 9, when he will hold a hearing on a suit filed by the HFT against the school district and its deputy superintendent for administration, Charles Matthews. The suit alleges that Mathews, acting for the district, has prevented Willie Patterson, a North Forest teacher, from distributing newsletters and pamphlets in teacher mailboxes and during teacher's non-duty time.

****NHCC-UF GOALS FOR 1981****

1. A 25% raise for fulltime faculty.
2. A 33% raise for secretaries and support personel.
3. A 33% raise for part time faculty, plus job protection.
4. 100% health coverage paid for by the college.
5. The creation of a faculty lounge.
6. The right of all faculty organizations to meet on campus.
7. The establishment of the position of academic dean.
8. Promotion of faculty interests to the Board of Trustees.
9. The election of pro-education public officials.

PLEASE RESPOND!

We urge you to compare TUF benefits with those of other faculty organizations. We are convinced that only the AFT provides the kind of benefits and support that college faculties need.

If you want more information or would like to join, simply fill out the information below and send it to an NHCC-UF member or mail it to: NHCC-UF, P.O. Box 38893, Houston, Texas 77088.

I would like more information.

Sign me up!

Name _____ phone _____

Adress _____

Division/Extension _____