

RETIREE NOTES

Before My Union

*An Interview with Christine Turner,
Chapter 31 Executive Board Member*

What was your job when you were a public employee?

I worked as a Dietary Aide in the Illinois Department of Mental Health.

What was work like before the union?

Before the union, it was difficult to afford my bills. Salaries were extremely low and I was worried about income most of the time. I didn't need to be rich, but I did want to afford to take care of my family.

I remember the way the supervisors would treat us. They threatened to fire us on the spot all the time. Supervisors didn't need any reason to fire you. They could fire you if they didn't like you! I was scared I was going to get fired each and every day. I needed my job. I couldn't afford to lose it.

How did the union change your work life?

After the union, the salaries got much better. I was able to afford more for my family. The union made me feel safe at work. The supervisors couldn't treat us however they wanted to anymore. Because my co-workers and I felt protected, we got along with each other better. We also worked efficiently after we unionized because we were not anxious about losing our jobs.


Why are you still active as a retiree today?

Even as a retiree, I can still stand up for the same rights I was fighting for when I was a working member. When I retired, my passion for the union didn't stop.

As an AFSCME retiree, I fight with my brothers and sisters for our retirement security, but I can also stand in solidarity with our working members. Why? I have children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who will live and grow up in this state. I am here to protect their rights and the future of the union as well.

What would you say to current AFSCME members about the importance of staying union strong?

I would tell them that we will get over the impact of the Janus lawsuit, just like we overcame threats to unionize in the first place. We have to stand with each other, not just for us, but for the future workers of Illinois. We have to continue to teach members how important it is to stay strong in hard times as well as good.

That's what retirees can teach younger members. We have marched for our rights before. My legs hurt more than they did when I was younger, but I will never stop putting one foot in front of the other for our union. 



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AFSCME Retirees Show Solidarity at Day of Action

On February 24, more than 5,000 proud union members showed up in Chicago's Daley Plaza to take part in the national Working People's Day of Action on the eve of oral arguments in *Janus vs. AFSCME Council 31*, a case at the Supreme Court that seeks to ban union fair share fees.

AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 members from across the state joined in the Chicago rally to show solidarity for the fight ahead. Among the crowd was Sub-chapter 86 member Jim Dixon.

“We need to support our working members,” he said. “A lot of retirees remember what it was like before the right to bargain.



“Solidarity doesn't stop at retirement.”

We remember how it felt to be intimidated by supervisors and to be treated poorly at the workplace. Solidarity doesn't stop at

retirement.”

One Chapter 31 retiree attended an action in another state. David Spinner, Sub-chapter 87 president, attended a rally in Orlando, Florida, while on vacation with his wife.

“I had to attend,” Spinner said. “I couldn't make it to the Chicago action so I looked online for other actions. I know how important this lawsuit is and how it's going to affect union members across the country. I needed to be part of the movement and stand with those fighting for retirees and working members alike. The union helps us all.” 