

NFFE News



NFFE FSC Vice President (CCC's) Beverly Tobin Ford Speaks at 2019 IAM Women's Conference

April 9, 2018

Last week, hundreds of IAM activists from across the country gathered at the Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas, NV for the 2019 IAM Women's Conference. This year's theme is "Women Rising: Unite the Fight," which accompanied an impressive agenda of panel discussions and inspirational speakers.

NFFE's own, Beverly "Bev" Tobin Ford, was a featured inspirational speaker headlining in a room full of activists and academics. Bev offered a rare insight into her life as a fighter for equality and opportunity. Currently, Bev serves as a Council Vice President representing the Civilian Conservation Centers (CCC) Locals within NFFE's Forest Service Council.



Beverly Tobin Ford, addresses attendees at the 2019 IAM Women's Conference in Las Vegas

At the women's conference, Bev energized the crowd as she described overcoming adversity throughout her life, detailing events from when she was ten years old that first helped to shape her into the leader she is today. Throughout many applause and ovations during her speech, Bev touched on the tribulations of enforcing bargaining agreements while at the same time fighting for the survival of the very program that operates the CCC's: Job Corps.

"I'm very proud of the work that Bev has done for our members working in the CCCs and for our union as a whole," said NFFE National President Randy Erwin. "The CCCs have been under attack for many years, and Bev has been there fighting to protect the members of this union threatened by those attacks. A lot of NFFE-IAM members owe their livelihood to Beverly Tobin. I am so glad she was recognized with a speaking role at the IAM Women's Conference. She deserved it."

As Ms. Ford explained at the Women's Conference, Job Corps provides economically disadvantaged young people with life skills, job training, and employment opportunities. She touched upon the many benefits of the program noting that many students are trained as wildland firefighters, serving as first responders to forest fires, floods, hurricanes and other disasters at no cost to the government, saving American taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

“For ten years, Bev has tirelessly advocated on Capitol Hill and within the Forest Service and the Department of Labor to keep the CCC’s open,” remarked Steve Lenkart, NFFE executive director. “It’s one thing for me to lobby on the issue, but it is an entirely different force altogether when Bev comes to town carrying with her the explicit knowledge and history of the program. I’ve seen senators and representatives from both parties stop her in the halls just to talk with her.” Lenkart added, “Don’t underestimate Bev. If you do, you lose the fight.”

“In my business, you have to be tough,” Ms. Ford stated in her comments at the Women’s Conference. “You have to be focused. You have to be willing to make sacrifices of time and energy because you have to fight Goliath even if it means taking on the President of the United States.”

“I fight for what’s right,” Ms. Ford concluded.

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