

NFFE News



NFFE National Business Representative Liz Pittaluga Retires

July 19, 2023

Liz Pittaluga, longtime IAM member and NFFE National Business Representative in the Southeastern territory officially retired on July 1, 2023, concluding 12 years of service with NFFE and 34 years of IAM membership. While Pittaluga may be stepping away from full-time representational work, she has no plans to discontinue her membership or stop serving our great union.

Pittaluga became a unionist long before she held her first job. As the daughter of two Machinist Union members, she remembers listening in as her parents and their co-workers huddled around the kitchen table to strategize before going into contract bargaining. Young Pittaluga served them coffee and learned early on how important solidarity and collective action were to her family's health, safety, and well-being.

After completing high school, Pittaluga went to work for a company that made fetal heart monitors. She made 75 cents less per hour than her male counterparts and was consistently passed over for promotions. Frustrated with the constant unfairness at the non-union plant, Pittaluga joined the Airforce. As the only woman who lasted more than the first six weeks on the job, she continued to face discrimination in the workplace, but she refused to give up.

Following her honorable discharge in 1980, Pittaluga used her GI bill to study electronics and computer sciences at Hesser Vocational College before accepting a four-year apprenticeship at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Pittaluga joined the Metal Trades Council there giving her personal experience with Union membership.

In 1990, Pittaluga transferred to the Trident Refit Facility in Kings Bay, GA where she achieved a work leader position as an Electronics Integrated Systems Mechanic. Pittaluga joined IAMAW LL-2783 and became deeply involved. Over the course of the next two decades, Pittaluga served in multiple local lodge positions. She valued the relationship with the Command and served as chair of the Federal Women's program and co-chaired the EEO advisory committee.

Pittaluga joined NFFE's team of Business Representatives in 2011 when she was hired to run the Midwest Territory. There she cut her teeth negotiating contracts, standing up previously defunct local lodges, and providing trusted council and representation to our members. Pittaluga volunteered to represent NFFE on the Veterans Service Steering Committee and was a certified Crisis Intervention Specialist for the IAM.

As Pittaluga looks back on a lifetime of service to working people in the Labor Movement, she's most grateful to have had the opportunity to help prepare the next generation of unionists and open doors for more women, people of color, veterans, and young people within the union.

"I'm going to miss the workers, members, and union staff that have become like family to me. When we call each other brother and sister it means something. I'm stepping away from my work family to spend more time with my wife Gladi, but it's going to leave a big hole. I'll carry the friendships I've made in this job with me forever," Pittaluga remarked.

"We are so lucky to have had the privilege of working with and learning from Liz over the last 12 years. She is as good a Business Representative as they come, and we are excited that we are not losing her completely to retirement. She is the perfect fit to teach our up-and-coming unionists at the Harbor," NFFE National President Randy Erwin concluded.