

**Dennis Ancinec**

**From:** Jim Mahler [aftjim@pacbell.net] **Sent:** Fri 7/18/2008 9:36 PM  
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# Inside AFT

THE E-NEWSLETTER FOR AFT UNION LEADERS

**July 21, 2008**

[New Leaders Take Over Obama for President Farewell to Ed and Nat](#)

  

**Weingarten, Cortese and Johnson Elected To Lead AFT**

Delegates to the 2008 AFT convention elected a new slate of national officers on July 13 in Chicago, voting to install Randi Weingarten as president, Antonia Cortese as secretary-treasurer and Lorretta Johnson as executive vice president. Weingarten has served 10 years as president of the 200,000-member United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in New York City, the largest union local in the United States. Cortese has served the past four years as AFT executive vice president. Johnson, president of AFT-Maryland, also serves as president of the Baltimore Teachers Union's paraprofessional chapter. "The three of us are committed to improving schools, hospitals and public institutions for children, families and communities," Weingarten said. "We will build on this union's great tradition of confronting injustice, embracing the excluded, questioning conventional wisdom, challenging the status quo—and working 24/7 to improve the institutions where our members work." [\[Read more and watch video.\]](#)

**Labor Gets Its First Openly Gay National Union President**—Jesse Russell reports:  
New York based United Federation of Teachers President, Randi Weingarten has been elected to succeed Edward McElroy as President of the American Federation of Teachers. The election makes Weingarten the first openly gay labor leader to be president of a national labor union. Weingarten served for 10 years as UFT head, and under her tenure she negotiated a 43 percent increase in educator salaries and helped organize 28,000 home childcare workers in New York City.

**Workers Independent News**

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*Also this week:*

Spotlight on

**Convention Highlights Complete convention coverage, including daily summaries and more than a dozen videos, is available on the [AFT Web site.](#)**

### **Weingarten Vows To Fight for National Reform Agenda**

In her first address as AFT president, Randi Weingarten said she will fight for a national reform agenda that protects and improves the institutions where AFT members work, while bettering the lives and prospects of those they serve—particularly those in need. "This agenda will embrace everything AFT members do—early childhood education, K-12 education, higher education and public services of all kinds." Speaking at the convention on July 14 in Chicago, Weingarten asked AFT members to rededicate themselves to strengthening their respective institutions in order to give every American the services he or she deserves. [[Read more and watch video.](#)]

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### **Delegates Overwhelmingly Endorse Obama for President**

Shortly after earning the union's endorsement for president of the United States, Illinois Sen. Barack Obama asked AFT convention delegates for their help in securing a new direction in education—one that offers true opportunity for all students and steers clear of attacks on teachers masquerading as public school reform. "I want to lead a new era of mutual responsibility in education, where we all come together—parents and educators, the AFT, leaders in Washington—citizens all across America united for the sake of our children's success," Obama told delegates in a July 13 address. Moments before the Illinois Democrat made his remarks, AFT members rose to their feet, waved "Obama 2008" signs, and resoundingly approved a special order of business endorsing the senator's historic run for the White House and pledging "tireless and resolute" support in helping him secure it. [[Read more and watch video.](#)]

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### **Hillary Clinton Rallies AFT to November Challenge**

Sen. Hillary Clinton showed AFT convention delegates that she came out of the 2008 primaries the same way she went in—fighting to help build a better America. The hall filled with cheers and standing ovations on July 12 as Clinton addressed delegates with passion and conviction, vowing to continue her battle for strong healthcare, excellent schools, equal opportunity and other goals that matter most to working Americans. That fight resumes immediately, she said, with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put America back on the right track by electing Sen. Barack Obama the next president of the United States. "I know Sen. Obama," she said. "I know his story represents the American dream. And I know he wants to take that experience into the White House to make that dream available to others." [[Read more and watch video.](#)]

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### **McElroy and LaCour Wind Up Long AFT Careers**

AFT convention delegates bid farewell to AFT president Edward J. McElroy and secretary-treasurer Nat LaCour July 12 in a session filled with videos and tributes—and long and enthusiastic standing ovations. McElroy winds up his AFT career after four years as president, 12 years as secretary-treasurer, and almost 20 years before that as an AFT vice president. LaCour's career as a national AFT leader—vice president, executive vice president and secretary-treasurer—also dates back more than 30 years. The careers of

McElroy and LaCour were highlighted in video tributes that showed the impressive contributions both men have made at the local, state and national levels in everything from education and labor to politics and human rights. Delegates also passed special orders of business honoring both retiring leaders and giving them the titles of president emeritus and secretary-treasurer emeritus. [[Read more and watch video.](#)]

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### **AFT Leaders Deliver Petitions on Behalf of Illinois Healthcare Workers**

The AFT took care of some unfinished business after the close of its convention on July 14. A delegation of AFT vice presidents traveled to Resurrection Health Care's corporate headquarters in Park Ridge, Ill.—not far from the AFT convention site in Chicago—to deliver petitions bearing the signatures of more than 2,200 AFT convention delegates. The petitions call on Resurrection to end its campaign of intimidation against workers seeking to organize with HEART/AFSCME Council 31, and to live up to its charitable mission and obligations to the community by increasing the level of charity care. [[Read more.](#)]

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*Inside AFT*, an electronic newsletter for leaders and activists, is prepared by the AFT editorial department. Contributors and sources for this week's edition include the AFT public affairs department, Mike Rose, Barbara McKenna, Roger Glass, Annette Licitra, Kathy Walsh, Adrienne Coles, Lou Nayman, Jared Schwartz. Dan Gursky, editor; Jane Feller, copy editor.

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