

RETIREES
American Federation
of Teachers

AFTerwords

NEWSLETTER • LOCAL 2373
ROWAN UNIVERSITY
201 Mullica Hill Rd., Glassboro, N.J., 08028

Chapter Retirees Enjoy Special Invitation!

The Edelman Fossil Park & Museum Opens to Rave Reviews



The Jean and Ric Edelman Fossil Park & Museum of Rowan University, a world-class wonder, is now open to the public! Created as a “catalyst for good

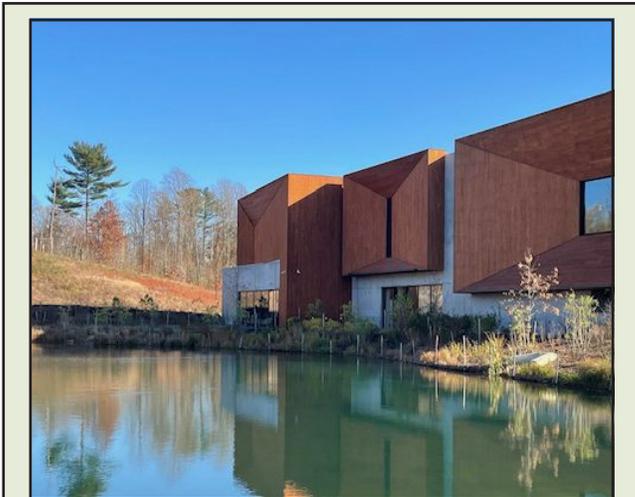
the Cretaceous Period.

According to Chapter member Joy Wiltenburg, one of the members who visited, “Walking through the exhibit, it's as if the dinosaurs are swimming above and around you. There are also some models of dinosaurs being eaten by sharks...it's very dramatic!” Full-scale dinosaurs, live animal encounters, free-roaming virtual reality, a fossil-digging experience in an active research quarry, and more await you. Indeed, at the Edelman Fossil Museum (EFM) visitors are transported 66 million years back in time.

renewable materials while reducing climate impacts, generous daylighting minimizes the use of artificial lighting, and the building's all-electric heat pumps draw energy from deep within the earth. Bird-friendly glazing and the use of native species across the 123-acre site reflect their dedication to biodiversity and natural habitat restoration.

The Jean and Ric Edelman Fossil Park & Museum of Rowan University was made possible by a generous \$25 million donation from these communications alumni, who graduated from then Glassboro State College in 1981 and 1980, respectively. With a profound commitment to advancing education through their philanthropy, Jean and Ric have lent their support to various programs at Rowan University, including the Ric Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts and the Edelman Planetarium.

Tickets, memberships, and gift cards are on sale now, so if you haven't already, be sure to plan your visit for a world-class experience in your back yard!



The Edelman Fossil Park & Museum is a highly sustainable structure that blends in with nature and connects visitors to the site's rich prehistoric past.

through the power of understanding the past,” it presents a first-hand discovery of fossils and an immersive experience in the epic story of dinosaurs, in keeping with its mission of “awe and wonder to inspire action for a better world.”

Several Chapter members enjoyed special visits to the Fossil Park on November 4 and again, on March 25, right before its opening on March 29 to the public, and they were indeed filled with awe and wonder. Old textbook science lessons come to life in this astounding presentation of the period when dinosaurs and other prehistoric species roamed the world, during what is known as

The Museum's webpage says that when an asteroid struck the Earth, it wound up wiping out the dinosaurs and 75% of species. The fossil park's four-acre fossil quarry, set into a 123-acre property in Mantua Township, is providing the best view ever into this

“pivotal, calamitous event that ended an Earth era.”

Dr. Kenneth Lacovara, founding executive director of the EFM said, “Right here in South Jersey, we've preserved millions of years of history in stunning detail, with each fossil telling its own unique story.” We also learn that the quarry's fossil record inspired the building design: the public galleries are conceived as “metaphorical lenses for viewing both the present and the earth's deep past.”

The Museum is committed to sustainability. The timber structure, wood siding, and low-carbon concrete maximize



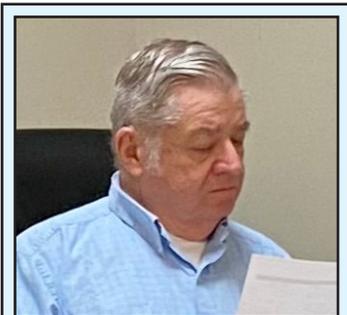
Life-sized Displays: An aquatic squamate reptile, a Mosasaur, that lived about 66 million years ago during the Late Cretaceous Era, greets the visitors.

A Sincere Thank You for Your Service by Harold Sahn

On the Occasion of Replacing Four Key Positions

Of the Rowan University AFT Retirees Chapter

How do you thank four people who have made your volunteer organization outstanding for the past four years? As President of the AFT Retirees Chapter, I imagine letting them always know during that four-year period that they were greatly appreciated and now I'm also letting the world know how important they have been to me and the Chapter.



Mike Miller served as our meticulous Treasurer for the AFT Retirees Chapter.

The four people are Nick DiObilda (a past president of Local 2373 and our liaison to the Local), Toni Libro (a former professor/dean and the Editor of *AFTerwords*), Jay Chaskes (a well-regarded Sociologist and our enthusiastic Director of Programs) and Mike Miller (an unassuming scientist and our meticulous Treasurer).

Mike Miller is my neighbor, shares my birthdate and besides providing accurate, easy-to-understand treasurer's reports monthly, has worked on revising our By-Laws, has

developed the naming nomenclature in digitizing our archives, has annually assisted in the development of our budget and has revised both tax deduction forms and member registration forms.

Toni Libro has not only founded and edited our award-winning newsletter for some 20 years but also has developed excellent glossy printed membership brochures and was the Co-Editor of our 2023 *A Centennial Collection of Memoirs*. We could count on her to design professional programs and agendas for Chapter meetings, welcoming membership certificates that were worth saving, and the little things that always added a "touch of class" in whatever she did. She also lent her moderating skills to a number of outreach efforts, most recently, our Retirees Workshop and Political Forum.



Toni Libro is Founding Editor of AFTerwords, completing 46 issues over some twenty years.

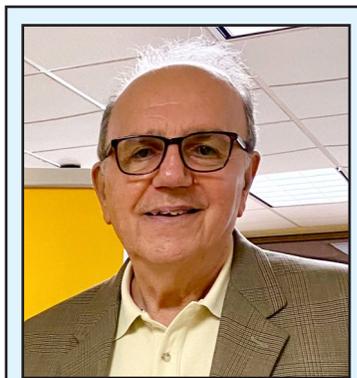
Jay Chaskes is the epitome of a retiree who has successfully aged because he has experienced so many challenges, in addition to



Jay Chaskes served admirably as Program Chair and donated personal Zoom services.

being a person who wants to share and assist. He has recognized the people we want to meet, the experts that we needed to hear and the activities that were necessary for us to pursue. He listened to our needs and was willing to pursue the unreachable. The icing on the cake is that he donated his personal Zoom services to us for four years, as well as hosting over 60 meetings. Jay also was the Co-Editor of the *Centennial Collection of Memoirs*, as well as the facilitator of our retirement seminars and educational forums.

Nick DiObilda was raised in a "union family" and had no hesitation in joining the AFT at Rowan. An AFT Leadership Seminar gave him the confidence to serve as the President of our Local which he did with distinction. His understanding of how the Local worked gave him the ability to clearly share both orally and in writing what was happening. In turn, he was an advocate for the Retiree Chapter and represented us well. In all our serious discussions, he provided the wisdom of a mentor and a valued stabilizing influence.



Nick DiObilda, our liaison between the Retirees Chapter and AFT Local, and Ex Officio.

These are four people who served our Chapter well. Four people who will not say goodbye but will give other people the opportunity to grow

as the new leaders of an involved voluntary organization. We wish each of these good and faithful servants all the best.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for your service!

Festival Music Scholarship Fundraiser Slated for November 2, 2025 🎵🎵🎵

Our Chapter's scholarship fund-raiser, featuring festival music for organ and brass, will take place on November 2, 2025 at 3 o'clock hosted by Pflieger Concert Hall.

Program projections include Four Themes of Paintings on Edward Munch by Anthony Plague, featuring head of brass studies Bryan Appleby-Wineberg as trumpet soloist. Trumpet students, currently numbering 15, will share the Mouret Rondeau and Alan Hovhaness' Prayer of St. Gregory.

In addition to other brass and organ works, the program is scheduled to conclude with Walton's Crown Imperial, with Lawrence De Pasquale at the organ.

Offering baskets will be available for free-will donations. Checks should be made payable to Local 2373 AFT Retirees Chapter. One deposit will be made to the university's general scholarship fund from the chapter. Enjoy this special concert while supporting our general scholarship fund for deserving students!



AFTerthoughts

by Harold Sahn

Following the recommendations for successful aging is important to me. I drink plenty of fresh water. Daily exercise has always been “my time” anyway. Staying away from processed food because it is easy to grab and go, rather than making it “from scratch” is a challenge. But it can and should be done. And I do have a purpose for living.

Being able to accept change is the most daunting of the recommendations because it can either make you rethink your values on whether you can live with these values in the “new today” or not.

I joined the AFT Retirees Chapter because I wanted a link to Rowan University and who better to do it with than the people I worked with for 34 years. My realization was that we were the ones who bonded together to assure that our salaries and working conditions would be fair for everyone. Part of that fairness would be that we served as voluntary leaders to accomplish shared goals and to assure the continuation of our organization. Growing up, I recognized the sacrifices my mother made as President of my Elementary School’s PTA. My father served on the Church Council before I was aware of his

A Presidential Musing on the Future

Is It Mixed Feelings or Are My Values Too Rigid

service but I recognized his work as Judge of Elections when I was a teenager.

Volunteering was something people did for anything they believed. Their time, their purpose was for the good of the many. But parts of our AFT values are that people need to protect themselves from being over-burdened – their work is valuable and should be Compensated.

Our Retiree Chapter is 38 years old in 2025 and was established with these pure values – give your time and ability and then step aside to allow new people to assume leadership. However, our local AFT began to pay people for their leadership which was true to their inherent values – I work for you, you pay me for my work. Currently, your President (me) is ready to become the Past President and is faced with a non-succession situation – no one wants to be the President or Executive Vice President. To meet some of our needs, a paid individual from the Local will serve as the Liaison between the two groups and will assist in program development because that position is also unfilled.

Many years ago, the Nonprofit Risk Management Center warned, “paying volunteers money or anything of value that can be construed to be in exchange for their work is

confusing and potentially dangerous.” I believe that to be true and in my estimation the Retirees are not equipped to do just that.

Our Chapter, historically, has had 100 members each year and needs to recruit because our members do pass each year and not drop out. Members have challenged our dues of \$45/year which barely covers any real expenses each year. We couldn’t pay a President without really considering four other officers who should be compensated for their time – can you understand where this might start and will it end?

Will money even resolve the issue of no one wanting to serve in these three positions. We are not the first volunteer organization to have this issue. Options are for the president to walk away and see if others will bond to save the organization or the president can assist in officially closing the Chapter, which could be a true death knell as far as restarting a Chapter in the future.

Jay Chaskes has penned a serious review of our leadership and even membership woes. We need to change who we are to become who we can be. I am willing to work with other people to see the future but not willing to march by myself forever.

Edward Wolfe, English Department, Beloved Professor of Literature

Edward Lester Wolfe (Ed), 97, passed away peacefully on May 11, 2025, at Pitman Manor in Pitman, N.J. Ed joined the faculty in the department of English at Glassboro State/Rowan University in 1959 and retired as Professor in 1994 after a stellar teaching career. His specialty was Victorian literature and the Romantic movement, which he brought to life with his powerful personality and love for the subject.

Ed was an active member of the AFT Local; after retirement he joined and served as Vice President of the AFT Retirees Chapter for many years before stepping aside in his later years.

He contributed several valuable articles over the years to the Retiree’s Chapter newsletter, *AFTerwords*, which garnered praise and attention. Two of those articles were reprinted in the Chapter’s *Centennial Collection of Memoirs* in 2023.

Ed is also fondly remembered for conducting literary tours abroad to England and Ireland, among other sites, with students, faculty and friends. His jocular personality and hearty laugh will be missed by his former colleagues, family and friends.

He was devoted to his family, the life of the mind, and great literature. He was also attuned to the environment, and staunchly supported conservationist causes.

and during the Korean War. He was an avid gardener and enjoyed woodworking as well as being a handyman around the house. He was a member of the Pitman Democrats and was a socially conscious critic of the political scene. Ed was also an enthusiastic fan of the Philadelphia Eagles and the Phillies and celebrated their triumphs, especially the Eagles Superbowl win in 2025.

Ed was predeceased by his wife of 59 years, Jean Reeves Wolfe; his son, Christopher; his parents, Aletta and Merritt Wolfe; and his six siblings. He is survived by his daughter, Claudia Beth Green (Stanton); his son, Joshua Reeves Wolfe (Ursula); daughter-in-law Kelly Wolfe; several grand and great grandchildren, and extended family.

A celebration of life will be scheduled for a later date. Ed will be buried privately at Harleigh Cemetery in Camden, New Jersey. Contributions may be made in Edward Wolfe’s name to the Aldo Leopold Foundation Inc., dedicated to environmental stewardship, conservation, and preserving the natural world for future generations.



Ed Wolfe served the Retirees Chapter for many years as Executive Vice President, contributed several articles to AFTerwords, and is represented in the Centennial Memoirs Booklet.

Born in Barrington, N.J., Ed grew up in nearby Haddon Heights as the youngest of seven children. He served in the Army after his brother Milton was killed in World War II

Forum Probes Political Issues:

How Did We Get Here and Where are We Headed—Finding our Way Together

The Retirees Chapter sponsored a lively political forum on March 7, 2025, discussing political issues following the 2024 presidential election of Donald Trump. Dr. William Carrigan, Professor of History and Dr. Benjamin Dworkin, Founder and Director of the Rowan Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship opened the forum with their illuminating perspectives on the issues.

Dr. Carrigan presented an historical perspective, highlighting how terms of service played out for our presidents over time, with references to nineteenth and twentieth century elections. He pointed out that Grover Cleveland was the only president to mirror the terms of service of our present-day president. Comparisons as to the style, often turbulent nature, and state of mind of the presidency over time helped to better understand today's political climate.

Dr. Dworkin provided a political analysis regarding the political climate and how we got to where we are. He stressed the tempo of the times, particularly how swept up we all are as

technology races along, and we with it, making it more difficult to cultivate relationships and connections to local institutions, and to get involved, which he felt was essential if we are to improve our politics and our lives.

Some participants expressed their feelings regarding the alarming nature of today's political scene and the anti-intellectualism that continues to characterize our culture. Frustrations with our ability to make a difference were expressed, but suggestions as to how we might do so were offered as well.

The forum was presented to the Retirees Chapter and interested members of the Rowan community at large via Zoom. Some 40 participants connected to the forum and several contributed questions and comments to the facilitators. Jay Chaskes served as Program Chair, while Julie Mallory and Harold Sahn helped organize and support the program, with Toni Libro as program moderator. It was agreed that more successful forums like this would be a good idea.

Scholarship Winners Share Hopes and Dreams with Retiree Chapter Members

Our Chapter welcomed presentations from two of our three scholarship recipients at our February meeting via Zoom. As always, their stories were especially fascinating and Chapter members enjoyed hearing about their lives as they pursue their hopes and dreams.

Wendy Yannarella is a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in counseling. She hopes to become a school guidance counselor with a focus on middle school students and interact with students on a personal level in that age group. Also, by taking twelve additional credits and undergoing a lengthy period of supervision, she hopes to gain licensure in other counseling situations.

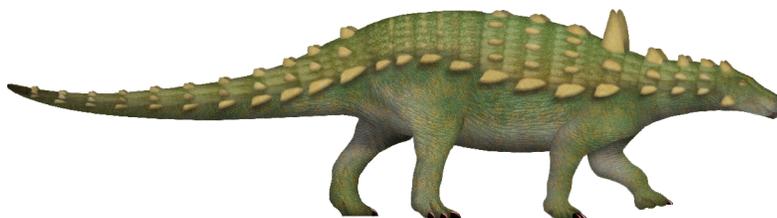
Amanda Valentino is a nutrition major who already has an associate's degree as a dietician. She became interested in this major because of her artistic accomplishments as a ballerina. She has performed in two ballet companies in the United States and still teaches ballet to students. As a ballerina, she had to give special attention to her diet to conform to the aesthetics of dance. She is also interested in obesity and diabetes studies, as well as athletic diets and sports nutrition.

Amanda volunteered to make a special presentation regarding nutrition for our chapter in March by tapping into her expertise as a dietician. She pointed out some problems with processed food and gave tips for improving one's diet, such as eating foods that are fresh and local whenever possible and reading labels carefully.

This critical look into the food industry, presented by one of our own scholarship recipients, was greatly appreciated by Chapter members, who are doing their best to stay healthy and informed. Indeed, we will think twice when purchasing that sugary drink or bag of Cheetos at the super market!



Julie Mallory, VP for Political Affairs and Holly Willett, Chapter Archivist, attend the Annual Scholarship Dinner with three of our scholarship recipients. Upper left: Students Wendy Yannarella and Amanda Valentino with Julie Mallory; Lower left: Holly Willett with student Abigail Vickers. Congratulations Scholarship recipients for 2025!



Joseph A. Robinette, Distinguished Theatre Arts Professor, Tony-Nominated Playwright

Joseph Allen Robinette, 86, of Richwood, N.J., died April 24, 2025, after a long decline from dementia. He joined the faculty at Glassboro State/Rowan University in 1971, where he taught theatre arts until retiring as Professor in 2005, where he helped to shape the University's performing arts legacy. He was a longtime member of the AFT Retirees Chapter.

"Dr. Joe," as his students fondly called him was born in Tennessee in 1939 and raised in Jasper, Georgia. He earned his B.A. from Carson-Newman College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University. He received the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award among others. He loved to travel and visited all 50 states along with many destinations abroad. He was an avid sports fan, especially of basketball and baseball.

He was the author of numerous plays and musicals, including his best-known work, *A Christmas Story: The Musical*, for which he

received a Tony Award nomination for Best Book of a Musical in 2013. He also collaborated with E.B. White on the authorized stage adaptation of *Charlotte's Web*, and stage versions of *Anne of Green Gables* and *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, among many others.

In a "poetic twist," his beloved wife, Helen Robinette, died less than 24 hours after his death, testament to a lifetime of devotion and marriage of 59 years. He is survived by his five children, John, Anne, Michael, Christopher, and Andrew, and nine grandchildren.

A joint viewing for both Helen and Joseph Robinette was held on May 9 at the McGuinness Funeral Homes, Sewell, and a Funeral Mass at the Catholic Community of the Holy Spirit Church, Mullica Hill, with Interment taking place at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations to the Catholic Community of the Holy Spirit Church in Mullica Hill would be appreciated.

Helen Robinette, College of Communication Advisor, Instructor, Assistant to Dean

Helen M. Robinette, 83, died peacefully on April 25, 2025, less than 24 hours after the death of her beloved husband of 59 years, Joseph A. Robinette. Helen was graduated from Marygrove College with a degree in art history, and held a master's degree in theatre and drama from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. There she met her husband Joe, "a dashing and outgoing southern boy from Georgia." They were married six months after in 1965.

After Helen and Joe completed their graduate work they moved to New Jersey and eventually, to their forever home in Richwood, N.J., where they raised their family of five children.

Helen returned work after the birth of her fifth child as an instructor and advisor in the College of Communication, eventually

becoming the Assistant to the Dean of Communication. She was a devoted parishioner and lector at the Catholic Community of the Holy Spirit and sang in the choir.

Helen is survived by her five children, John, Anne, Michael, Christopher and Andrew, and their nine grandchildren. There was a joint viewing for both Helen and Joseph Robinette on May 9 at McGuinness Funeral Home and a Funeral Mass at the Catholic Community of the Holy Spirit Church, Mullica Hill, N.J, with Interment at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations to the Catholic Community of the Holy Spirit Church in Mullica Hill would be appreciated.

Diane Hughes, J. D., School of Business, Accounting and Accounting Law Professor

Diane Y. Hughes, 68, of Williamstown, N.J., passed away December 26, 2024. She was an associate professor of accounting and accounting law at Rowan University before retiring from her 36 year career, from 1987 to 2023. She was a member of the AFT Retirees Chapter upon retirement.

Born in Camden, N.J. she was educated in the Upper Pittsgrove School District and Woodstown High School. She earned a B.A. in Economics from Rutgers University, New Brunswick; an MBA from Long Island University, Brooklyn, N.Y.; and a Juris Doctor from Rutgers Law School, Camden, N.J., She practiced law as well as teaching in the Department of Accounting and Finance at Rowan University.

Diane greatly enjoyed traveling and had visited 29 of our 50 states. She also enjoyed making her own clothes, painting, and crocheting afghan blankets. She cherished her time with family and friends and was lovingly known as "Aunt Di" in the role of surrogate mother to her several nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by her sister Denise King in 2023, Diane is survived by her sister Deborah Minatee (Ellis); nephew and godson Ellis Major Minatee; niece Karen King, and extended family.

A viewing was held January 11, which was followed by the funeral service at May Funeral Home in Sicklerville, N.J. Interment followed at Chestnut Grove Cemetery in Elmer, N.J. Memorial contributions may be made to her favorite charity St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Kenneth Albone, Communication Studies and Public Speaking Textbook Author

Kenneth R. Albone, 70, of the Masonic Village in Burlington, N.J., passed away on March 31, 2025. He joined the faculty at then Glassboro State College as a member of the Communication Studies department in 1982 and retired as Associate Professor after serving 40 years in 2022. He was a member of the AFT Retirees Chapter.

Dr. Albone held a B.S. from Lake Superior State College; an M.A. from Miami University; and a Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University. Born in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, he earned the lifelong nickname "Scooter" since he never crawled, but rather scooted along the floor. He also took pride in being a "Yooper," a term for residents of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

He is survived by his former wife, Helena Whitty, and daughters Elsie and Nina. Together they hosted exchange students in their home, including a Bosnian exchange student whom they officially adopted. Dr. Albone treasured his family and enthusiastically supported his daughters' higher education at Rowan University and all their pursuits.

A Funeral Mass was held in Burlington, N.J. on April 9 and private burial took place at Manahath Cemetery in Glassboro, N.J. Donations may be made to Rowan University in his honor through Rowan Foundation.

Bridging the Distance

Special to AFTerwords for Retirees Chapter Members

by Jay Chaskes

Two years ago, at our September luncheon for new chapter members, I gave an address in which I asserted that our generation of faculty and professional staff were bridge builders. We built a bridge that supported the transition from a multipurpose college to an R1 research university. We are experienced and accomplished at building bridges across generations of Rowan faculty and professional staff.

The university that most of us retired from has only superficial similarity to the current Rowan University. When I began at Glassboro State College in 1969, the total enrollment was about 4,500. When I began as a new assistant professor, there was only “the college.” What is now the College of Humanities and Social Sciences was the Social Studies Department, and the Departments of English, Communication and Psychology. The academic chain of command was department chairs reported to the dean of the college; dean of the college reported to the president, and president reported to the recently created board of trustees. Most students were commuters, and yes, parking was an issue for students and employees. Many residential students left campus on Friday and did not return until Sunday night.

Today’s enrollment is now 22,903, including 3,384 graduate students, including 1,342 PhD students. Now Rowan has nine colleges, seven schools and more than eighteen research centers and institutes. The university employs 4,100 people, has a budget of \$753 million, a \$440 million endowment and 18 Division II sports teams.

“*...we are being challenged to once again build a bridge: to reach out and make connections.*”

The university’s increasing footprint in the Boro and in South Jersey is head spinning. The university now has eight campuses and over one hundred educational, clinical and research sites across New Jersey.

Rowan is now a residential university with thousands of residences, and yes, parking is still a problem! Rowan

University now plays a prominent role in the economy of New Jersey. Its reputation regionally and nationally is growing.

Where am I going with all this? We, the current AFT retirees, are faced with a challenge. How do we assist our currently employed AFT brothers and sisters make a successful transition from Rowan as an R1 university to their retirement as, cohort by cohort they draw near to their retirement? If we want our AFT Retirees Chapter of Local 2373 to thrive, we are being challenged to once again build a bridge: to reach out and make connections. These connections will ensure a smooth transition of retirees from our current faculty and staff to the next generation. Going forward, many potential members of our retirees’ chapter will come to us with a very different Rowan work experience from our own. The common Glassboro State and Rowan University experience we retirees now share, and which supports our sense of “us” will not be shared by our future retirees.

THE ROWAN UNIVERSITY THAT WAS SO MUCH A PART OF OUR LIVES SIMPLY NO LONGER EXISTS!

The quantitative changes I have noted above have also fashioned significant internal qualitative changes as well. What happened when Rowan University grew significantly in size and scale of operation, and with astonishing speed? Leaps in size and scale of operation entirely surged through the entire university. This unprecedented growth radically altered the university’s organizational structure, internal politics, faculty and professional staff relationships, and Rowan’s evolving organizational culture. What follows is a brief bullet description, in no order, of some of what I believe to be the most significant qualitative changes that are and will continue to impact.

- The university’s model for management is very corporate with students seen as “customers” and the faculty and staff seen as “human resources.” Faculty “production” is measured by publications and successful external grant acquisition. Effective teaching is still valued but more of it than ever

before, is carried out by the nontenured ranks of instructors and adjuncts. Scholarly pursuit is more valued and rewarded than in the past. Thus, colleague relationships become more competitive, especially within departments concerning tenure and promotion.

- There has been a total change in the academic orientation of the university as an institution of higher education. The academic orientation is increasingly professional and employment oriented, including the liberal arts and sciences as well as fine and performing arts. Education is essentially understood as a commodity and STEM is king!
- The faculty is more diverse regarding geographical origins, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, professional training and academic disciplines. They are also very skilled users of digital technology. All to the good!
- Because of the number of colleges, schools and departments, the faculty and staff only interact with a small proportion of their peers. They are relatively ghettoized departments and colleges or schools. This situation is exacerbated by the geography of a more sprawling campus with buildings housing specific colleges. Social relationships are more likely to grow within departments and colleges rather than across these divisions. The increasing number of campuses only adds to the segregation. That sense of “us” as faculty and professional staff is a thing of the past.
- An increased amount of decision-making power has been given to deans and in some cases, department chairs. The entire administrative decision-making apparatus is far more decentralized and complex than anything we can imagine. One can only guess what this means for the faculty and professional staff in terms of “shared governance.”
- The undergraduate students, more so than ever before, are focused on the employment and the financial reward aspects of their degrees. Can you blame them? They are faced with daunting debt upon graduation. They define their relationship to

the university more like purchasing a commodity than as an intellectual and social growth experience. They are very adept at the use of digital resources to “smooth out” the challenges of academic rigor. They also appear to be the most supportive generation of diversity and inclusion. At the same time, we have proportionally more students with psychological and behavioral issues than ever before.

There are laudable aspects to the university’s transformation, but they seem less relevant to the argument I am making. The above description is not comprehensive. I chose those things I thought to be most applicable and illustrative for my thesis, which is as follows:

I REPEAT, THE ROWAN UNIVERSITY THAT WAS SO MUCH A PART OF OUR LIVES, SIMPLY NO LONGER EXISTS!

- The future of our chapter depends upon recruiting the next generation of its leadership and membership base from the coming stream of retirees.
- We must rethink everything we believe we know about the coming generation of retirees.
- We need to reach out to current members of the local. By engaging with them, and programing with them, we will better understand their Rowan experience and build a chapter that reflects their experiences. We must build a new bridge to help them realize a successful and rewarding transition to retirement nurtured by our chapter.
- This summer it is not too soon to create a strategic plan, with realistic goals and begin goal directed activities. If we cannot do this, the future of the chapter is bleak.

Let’s use this proposal as a starting point for discussion and action. This is not my final word. These are my observations and suggestions. I want to hear other ideas and perspectives. The only investment I have in this proposal is my desire to save the AFT Retirees Chapter of Local 2373.



Poets and Poetry Take Over the April Chapter Meeting with Lively Exchange

April is National Poetry Month, and Jay Chaskes, Chapter Program Coordinator, dedicated our April program to poetry. The yearly celebration was introduced in 1996 by the Academy of American Poets to increase the awareness and appreciation of poetry nationwide.

The Academy sponsors a national poster contest each year and the winning entry becomes, with much fanfare, the official poster for that year. Free posters are made available to teachers and librarians nationwide and you can download a PDF of the 2025 poster.

Toni Libro facilitated the poetry program and also mentioned that April 17 is International Haiku Day, when haiku is honored and

celebrated around the world. Haiku is a brief seventeen syllable poem about nature that catches a moment in time. Toni encouraged everyone to try their hand at writing haiku as well as other forms of poetry, and read a few of her haiku aloud, along with other poems.

Some participants read their own poems, and some read favorite poems by others. Some of those who participated were Harold Sahn, Jay Chaskes, Julie Mallory, Larry DePasquale, Esther Mummert, Bill Kushner, and Richard Grupenhoff, among others. Our thanks to all who contributed to the lively poetry program. We can experience the pleasure of expressing our thoughts and feelings in the various forms that poetry allows, as evidenced by our program.

Three Haiku on a Theme of Flowers

long walk after the nasty news buttercups	scattered on the floor too pretty to sweep up... peony petals	pink moon deep in the photo album a pressed corsage
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—by Toni Libro

Box

The world is packaged, wrapped, sealed
Make it, break it, slice it, squeeze it but
Put it in a box.

It's the only way.

Won't soil, can't spoil, stack it, whack it
Have it stored for life.

Cover, top, encase, enclose
Matters not, sand, air, water, souvenir
Contain it, lid it, sell it!

One warped sliver of wood
In the right sack
Will delight the eye
Long enough to move the hand
Beneath that cash
To buy that junk.
Purpose? None.
Need? None.

It's in a box, who cares.
And before long the box and the gem
Are tossed onto the heap
with the same neglect.

—by William Kushner

New Executive Committee

*Congratulations to the New Officers
July 1, 2025*

Harold Sahn
President

Julie Mallory
VP of Political Affairs

Seth Bergmann
Treasurer

Esther Mummert
Recording Secretary

Larry DePasquale
Corresponding Secretary

Joy Wiltenburg
Communications

Jon Foglein
AFT Local Liaison/Programs

Mark Your Calendars

September 11, 2025

Annual Welcome Back Luncheon
Shpeen Hall @ Noon

November 2, 2025

Scholarship Fundraiser Concert:
Festival Music for Organ and Brass
Pfleeger Concert Hall @ 3 p.m.

Fall Meetings via Zoom

2nd Wednesday of the month
October 8 — November 12

What the Fields Know

My soul searches with longing
to understand life
floats above fields
wanders lonely between mountains
seeking a secret
discernible only through faith.

Its eyes seek through faith
clarity, while longing
for reassurance the secret
meaning of life,
whispered daily to the mountains,
is not lost on the hungry fields.

My soul wanders the mountains,
searching with longing
accompanied by faith,
beckoned by hungry fields
holding an ancient secret—
the sacred secret of life.

Others, knowing the secret,
whisper together in the fields.
The Chosen leave no map of life
for the soul but faith.
With each passing, the longing
sends my soul back to the mountains.

I go longing to the mountains.
Faith struggles, fields watch.
The secret—to live.

— by Julie Mallory

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