

4% and 4% For One, 4% and 4% For All

Summer Brennan

At a February 18th New York City Managerial Employees Association meeting with the New York City Housing Authority, the Department of Education, and the Comptroller's Office Chapters, participants came together to discuss the recently withheld raises for these groups and ways to address the problem. MEA President Stuart Eber and MEA Executive Director Linda Barnes introduced the proposed actions before facilitating breakout groups for the attendees.

"Over a year ago, District Council 37 and other unions received 4% raises effective March 1, 2008 and March 1, 2009," Mr. Eber said. However, none of the managers in the city received a raise then. In July 2009 many managers in Mayoral agencies received their 4% and 4% raises. "No manager in NYCHA has received a penny," said Mr. Eber, "while no one in the Department of Education received more than 2% and 2%." "Those earning more than \$90,000 in the Comptroller's Office were passed over for raises entirely," Ms. Barnes added.

"This issue will affect my pension for the rest of my life," said DOE Human Resources Manager Ronnie Loeshelle. Ms. Loeshelle, scheduled to retire in March, has worked for the Department of Education for almost 32 years. In lieu of a

raise, Ms. Loeshelle was given a lump sum payment of \$2,828, which was not pensionable, despite her high performance rating of 95 percent.

"I worked really hard for that," she said, adding that she often put in 9 to 10 hour days. "Is this the recognition that is given to a manager who works at peak perfor-

and the Commissioner and the Chair to agree that you guys should get the money that's due."

The MEA is advocating for the raises in a series of meetings with New York City Comptroller John Liu, NYCHA Chairman John Rhea and representatives of Chancellor Joel Klein during February and March. The attendees agreed to wait for the outcomes of these meetings before



Department of Education managers discuss options for addressing the Chancellor's decision to not follow the Mayor's lead and give all DOE managers 4% and 4%.

mance? That when it comes time to retire, she gets penalized for the rest of her life with a lower pension?"

"Everybody else got 4% and 4%, no matter what their salaries," President Eber said. "I am optimistic," he said, "that with the efforts of the people in this room we will be able to get the Chancellor

exploring other options, including legal actions.

"All managers deserve respect and pay equity. The MEA will continue to work hard advocating these three agencies' managers receive the same increases as their fellow managers across the City," concluded Mr. Eber. ●

Bits & Pieces

“A” for Action

Winners of the MEA election campaign, The Independence In Action slate (IAT), or “A” for Action Team, have already leaped into action. Committees have been created, an enhanced advocacy plan has been developed, and outreach activities have been established. The “A” Team also met with City administration to discuss salary increases for the New York City Housing Authority, the Department of Education, the Comptroller’s Office, and retired managerial employees.



Stuart Eber and Linda Barnes met with Deputy Mayor Edward Skyler (center) to discuss timely across the board raises for all employees covered by the Management Benefits Fund.

MEA 2009 Election Results

Stuart Eber

President

Shelly Shulman

Executive Vice President

Warren Lewis

Treasurer

Evelyn Correa

Recording Secretary

Cynthia Vail and Joel Fishelson

Directors at Large

The Race Is On

2009 was a banner year for increased membership! Now in 2010, the MEA is challenging all Chapter Directors do it again by using the “Circle of Friends” approach. Each manager is encouraged to ask a friend from their agency to join MEA. The top winners of 2009 were the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) in first place, the Financial Information Systems Administration (FISA) in second place, and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) in third. ●

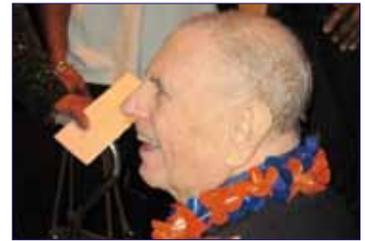
Tell Me Something Good

The MEA Holiday party was hailed as the best holiday event the organization had ever hosted. We plan to do more celebrations soon!

The MEA also extends congratulations to long-standing MEA members **Burton Blaustein** and **Jo Ann Orr** on their retirements.

Mr. Blaustein, a Deputy Commissioner with a 47-year career in the Human Resources Administration (HRA), was honored by over 225 people at his retirement party on February 5th. Former HRA managers MEA President **Stuart Eber** and Recording Secretary **Evelyn Correa** presented Mr. Blaustein with a plaque

Burton Blaustein



from the MEA. It read: “Burton Blaustein’s incomparable integrity, humanity, loyalty and humor will be missed by his coworkers and the countless people he served for more than 45 years. We all wish him health and happiness in the coming years.”

Ms. Orr, also an HRA career manager, retired the week before and was presented with a plaque by MEA **Director at Large Cynthia Vail**, which read: “Jo Ann is a role model for anyone trying to balance family and career. Her staff and fellow managers will miss her wisdom and humanity. We all wish her health and happiness in the coming years.” ●

Walk The Talk

Linda Barnes “pounds the pavement” in her position as Executive Director. Recently, she conducted outreach at the Division of Homeless Services and listened to member concerns. She also conducted test prep training helping prepare managerial employees for the Administrative Community Relations Specialist civil service exam. In December of last year, Ms. Barnes met with **Department of Parks and Recreation Assistant Commissioner David Stark** to discuss the need to conduct outreach at his facilities. Mr. Spark provided a representative from his agency, **Mr. Joseph Trimble, Director of Labor Relations**—and a member of MEA—to assist in the efforts. ●

Spring General Membership Meeting

June 3, 2010 at 6 pm ,
125 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

Georgia Williams, 88, an African-American pioneer in New York City administration and in the MEA began her career as a medical social worker in the early 1940s. A graduate of Brooklyn College, she earned a Masters Degree in Social Work from New York University.

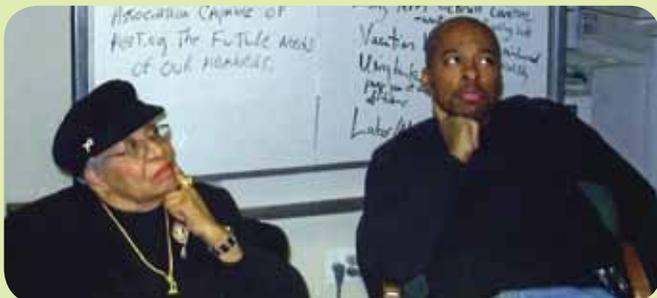
However, before coming to New York from South Carolina at the age of 7, Ms. Williams had never been to

school. The Great Depression had put an end to generations of farming, and her family moved to a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in the Bronx. She was the only African American pupil at P.S. 75. The teachers decided to try her out in first grade, and when she aced that, they moved her up to second. Before long she was zipping through the New York school system with the Rapid Advance Program, completing each year's work in six months, a path she stayed on all through high school.

At Brooklyn College, Ms. Williams volunteered for the Women's Prison Association at a residence for prostitutes. Just 17 years old, she was inspired by the "fantastic" social workers assigned to help them. It was during this time, while organizing dances and Sunday morning ministries for African-American soldiers at the YMCA in Harlem, that Ms. Williams came under the mentoring wing of a group of wealthy African-American men who helped her hone her leadership talents.

In 1944, although jobs were hard to come by, she was recommended for a caseworker job with the New York City Department of Welfare. From there she went on to work at the American Red Cross and the Hospital for Joint Disease, where she considered becoming a doctor. Witnessing a surgery changed her mind. "I saw the way they cut things up," she said.

The Hospital's doctors also mentored Ms. Williams and she often accompanied them to their clubs for lunch. Al-



Ms. Georgia Williams and Mr. Harry G. Sigmone, III Chapter Director, Administration for Children's Services.

Profiles In Courage

**Georgia Williams,
Pioneer and
MEA Member**

though the owners were surprised to see her—a young black woman in a group of white, male doctors—she was always treated "beautifully".

However, she faced more than her fair share of prejudice and discrimination. After years of excellent work at the Department of Social Services as a Medical Social Worker, she was in line for a promotion. A colleague warned her "Look, Georgia, they will try to pass

over you." They had done it before. "It was racism all around," Ms. Williams observed.

This time her colleagues went to bat for her, and she was promoted to Director of the entire Medical Social Work program. "It's good to have friends," Ms. Williams said.

Moving on to Staff Development and Training, Ms. Williams supervised training specialists and agency supervisors in the same department.

She joined the ranks of manager in 1978, and in 1985 finally retired from city service.

In 1980 she heard about MEA from a colleague and got involved, starting with the revitalization of MEA's Chapter in the Human Resources Administration and later serving as Chapter Director. She also began the Chapter for MEA Retirees and over the years held the post of Assistant and Chapter Director. She has served MEA as Vice President, Executive Vice President, Acting President and President.

This summer Ms. Williams will meet with President Obama and Michalle Obama, as the organizer and one-time president of the Queens Branch of the National Association of University Women, a group that will celebrate its 100th birthday in August.

Looking back on her career, Ms. Williams says she feels grateful. "I had opportunities that a lot of people did not have and I grew with each experience I had. That made me who I am."



**Georgia A. Williams, Past President
NYC Managerial Employees Association**

— **Summer Brennan**



New York City Managerial Employees Association,
50 Broad St., Ste. 1101, New York, NY 10004.

FROM THE FRONT LINES

A Series about MEA Members Giving Service Throughout the World

Kandahar, Afghanistan —There had been so many deaths at Donal Sexton’s base –CE1– that the flag has always been flown at half-mast. The troops— “a good bunch of folks” as he called them—were feeling the fatigue of long working days with no time off. The daily grind of war was taking its toll on morale.

When Thanksgiving came and went without a rest, Sexton, wrote to friends and colleagues back home with an idea to boost morale; he would send a flag back to his Housing Preservation and Development colleagues in the states, requesting that they fly it on their HPD flag pole at full-mast for the first time.

His colleagues loved the idea. Once they received the flag they contacted City Hall and the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, who agreed to let the flag fly at Ground Zero.

Back home, Sexton works for HPD’s Division of Architecture, Construction and Engineering. He is now serving his second tour in Afghanistan with 28 electricians in his platoon.

“This is probably the most difficult experience that most of us will ever have in our lives,” he wrote in an email from the front. “It makes the last Deployment seem like a trip to Disney World.”

The conditions on his base have been like a refugee camp, with hundreds of tents as far as the eye can see, and the constant buzz of fighter planes and helicopters overhead.

Conditions worsened in January when three suicide bombers exploded and two roadside bombs were detonated inside the camp. Rocket attacks also intensified, and an assault was launched on the camp perimeter itself.

Sexton and his platoon attend Ramp Ceremonies almost every week. The troops assemble on the flight line in the middle of the night to pay their final respects to departing troops killed in action. “When you see as many as six caskets pass you by and look in the faces of their friends . . . it can steal you breath away,” he wrote.



Donal Sexton

Because only Port Authority staff are permitted on site at Ground Zero, Sexton’s HPD colleagues gathered at the 100 Gold Street flag pole on February 18th at 1:15pm for a salute to their friends and family in the military, including Sexton, Spc. Ricardo Anderson now serving in Afghanistan, and Staff Sergeant Frank McCoy now serving in Iraq.

The flag will be returned to Sexton with photos of that ceremony, as well as a certificate from the Port Authority stating that it was flown over Ground Zero. ●

We want to share any other MEA member’s stories about service to their country. Please email all information to lbarnes@nycmea.org



Visit our website nycmea.org and read all about **Julia L. Elmaleh-Sachs**, winner of \$1000 scholarship and the other 18 MEA Scholarship winners.

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