



3—RMGC Chair McAteer pens inaugural column



4—Send e-letter to demand tax hike on millionaires



11—UUP Benefit: Pet Insurance

Also inside:

- 2 — Retiree election notes
- 2 — In memoriam
- Words from:
 - Judy Wishnia, p.4
 - Lawrence Wittner, p.5
 - Jo Schaffer, p.7
 - Daniel Marrone, p.8
- 7 — Volunteer opportunities

The Active Retiree

A Newsletter for Retiree Members of United University Professions

Disability issues

NDEAM, ADA celebrate key anniversaries in 2020

October 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The purpose of NDEAM is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

The history of NDEAM traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to NDEAM.

Workplaces welcoming of the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, are designed to build an inclusive community and strong economy. Activities during this month reinforce the value and talent people with disabilities add to workplaces and communities, and affirm the commitment to an inclusive community that increases access and opportunities to all, including individuals with disabilities.

Two months prior marked the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law July 26, 1990. The goals of the ADA include equality of opportunity, full participation, economic self-sufficiency, and independent living.

The ADA has played a historic role in enabling people with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of society by removing barriers to employment, public services, public accommodations, public and private transportation, telework, telecommunications, websites, online systems, mobile apps, and other forms of information and communication technology. Every person in the United States, not just people with disabilities, benefit from covered entities adopting principles of



universal design with respect to buildings, modes of transportation, websites, and other technologies procured and used by covered entities.

(Editor's note: Thanks to Oswego Chapter retiree Dr. V.M. Fichera for suggesting the source for this article on two important anniversaries. Learn more about the NDEAM & ADA by visiting the U.S. Department of Labor website at www.dol.gov/NDEAM.)

The Active Retiree

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

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Watch for your ballot

UUP chapter elections will be underway soon, and that includes chapter officers for retirees. Below are election dates to mark on your calendars, and a list of responsibilities of the officers for retirees.

Retired Membership Governing Committee Chair Charlie McAteer and UUP statewide Secretary/Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee are working on additional duties to include in chapter bylaws.

Chapter Elections 2021

Mail Chapter & Affiliate Nomination Forms.....	01/21/21 - 01/22/21
Chapter & Affiliate Nominations Close	02/17/21
Chapter Nomination Lists Posted to Web.....	02/19/21
Mail Chapter Elections Ballots.....	03/10/21 - 03/12/21
Chapter Elections Ballots Due.....	04/14/21
Count Chapter Elections Ballots	04/15/21 - 04/16/21

Some Chapter Officer for Retirees Duties:

- work with leadership to obtain the names of new retirees;
- help facilitate in-district and statewide advocacy;
- attend chapter executive board meetings and report on activities relevant to engagement of the chapter's retired members;
- serve as a conduit for information to/from membership, leadership and their Retired Membership Governing Committee (RMGC) representative;
- work with the chapter president and executive board to schedule pre-retirement workshops, and other events to involve retired members; and
- coordinate with leadership to promote the benefits of being involved with active and retiree activities in the chapter and region.

In memoriam

Let us remember those who have passed away since June 2020:

Edward Newsham	Oneonta
Olive Rudd	Oswego
Ram Chugh	Potsdam
Eulalie Noble	Purchase
Walter Wilson	Stony Brook HSC
Steven Perlmutter	Stony Brook HSC

From RMGC Chair Charlie McAteer

The days ahead

As I write this article, uncertainty is what comes to mind. We as retirees have lived a few years and, as we started 2020, we had the usual hopes of a new beginning. We will need all those years of experience to weather these uncertain times and to plan our future.

This winter we started our RMGC elections, but by spring—when those ballots were being counted—we were already in a new and uncertain world that continues today.

We have individually come up with plans to deal with COVID-19, as things continue to change daily. Those include no in-person meetings till further notice. (However, we are talking about when we can meet again, using a pencil with a big eraser!) We have met online and have attended virtual NYSUT retiree leader trainings and forums, representing our 6,000-plus UUP retiree members.

The RMGC has formalized your regional networks to better work with the NYSUT Regional Council members. Your RMGC will meet online early in 2021, to access things and to develop plans and meeting alternatives, including a summer retreat with the RMGC and elected chapter officer for retirees.

Let us see how the national election turns out and how UUP will need us as the “daytime army of advocates” to promote public higher education, our retiree agenda and other issues in our union cause.

NYSUT has developed a “Union for Life” logo and we are part of the entire

union movement fighting to hold legislators to their words and promises.

Thank you for planning your VOTE and following thru with it. NYSUT sent out its Retiree Voter Guide to New Yorkers. I am pleased to report that UUP—with its VOTE/COPE, outreach and political actions this fall—sent emails and post-cards (a first at such a large scale) about state-specific voter information to UUP retirees and in-service members in a dozen key battleground states.

Speaking of elections, your RMGC members in June began their three-year terms, from 2020-2023. Chapter officers for retirees serve two-year terms, with elections planned for early 2021. Chapter officers for retirees serve on the chapter executive board. Working with RMGC members, they provide an important link in representing retiree issues at the local level. I encourage you all to consider running for or supporting your candidate for this position in the upcoming elections.

I want to congratulate and thank the eight elected RMGC regional representatives, Stacey, Paul, Loraine, Frank, Ray, Glenn, Eric and Irene; the two presidential appointees, Ottilie and Doreen; and statewide Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey. Also serving you with expert advice and counsel are Walter Apple, UUP retiree member services coordinator; Jo Schaffer, immediate past RMGC chair and NYSUT Retiree Action Committee member (I serve with her); Barbara Maertz of Farmingdale, RMGC finance subcommittee chair; and Karen Mattison, associate director of UUP



Media and Publications, who designs and helps me edit *The Active Retiree*.

Finally, congrats to Buffalo Center Chapter retiree Stacey Johnson, the RMGC’s elected rep for Western New York, for earning the union’s Pearl H. Brod Outstanding Retiree Award for 2020, for her union and community service. We are so proud of all the things Stacey has and continues to do for her community and the union movement as a whole. She is a model for the slogan “Solidarity Forever.”

And don’t forget to visit the UUP retirees webpage at <https://uupinfo.org/retiree/> or call us at (800) 342-4206.

Continue to stay safe.



What your beneficiaries need to know

Don’t forget to remind your beneficiaries that, upon your death, they need to inform the campus Human Resources Department and contact UUP Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter

Apple at (800) 342-4206. If they don’t contact the campus or UUP, they won’t get the survivor’s benefits: that’s \$3,000 from the state and \$1,000 from UUP. Remind them to make the calls!

We've come a long way, baby

by Judy Wishnia
Stony Brook

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there wasn't much of a celebration of the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote. There were a few TV documentaries about the brave women who marched and risked their lives with hunger strikes. But there has been very little analysis of how the vote changed women's lives. Frankly, until the emergence of the feminist movement in the 1960s, very little had changed.

Many of us can remember how few jobs were open to women and how the pay was lower than male wages. As late as 1964, I wore a button that said, "59 cents," the wage women earned compared to \$1 for men. In many cases, if you got married or pregnant, you lost your job. And the fear of an unwanted pregnancy interfered with your sex life. Contraception was difficult to obtain and numerous women died of illegal abortions.

When I taught my first women's studies class in 1964, only 6 percent of physicians were women (the same figure as in 1895!)

and only 3 percent of lawyers were female. Our beloved Ruth Bader Ginsburg could not get a position that used her abilities.

But things were beginning to change. In the early 1960s, Stony Brook women—tired of lower salaries and lack of promotion—initiated a class-action lawsuit, with UUP support, against the university. We lost the case, but Stony Brook did begin to hire more women.

Thanks to the rebirth of the feminist movement that began in the 1960s and the continuous fight for improvements by millions of women activists who marched and lobbied their representatives, the lives of many women changed. We now have female university presidents, and female who win Nobel prizes in science. We have female police officers, thousands of female lawyers, and females on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Women are voting in large numbers, and from one lonely senator in the 1960s, we now have dozens of women elected to Con-



Wishnia

gress and as governors. And after much marching and demonstrating, in 1973, the landmark *Roe v. Wade*, which allowed abortions, was passed.

But while much has improved for many women, we must keep up the fight. States have restricted abortion access and *Roe v. Wade* is in danger. Most women are still

in low-paying jobs, and are having difficulty paying for health care and child care. Many suffer from violence from partners. And we now know how widespread sexual harassment is for women.

We need to help the millions of women who are struggling to survive. We need to fight for a living wage, for health care for all, and for government-sponsored child care. We need to fight for the Dreamers and other immigrant women, for control of one's body and, of course, for an end to domestic violence and sexual harassment.

UUP has always supported its female members, and I am certain that the union will continue to stand with women everywhere in the fight to improve our lives.

PROTECT
PUBLIC HOSPITALS
and **PUBLIC HIGHER ED**

Show our heroes you care.
Pass an "ultra-millionaires' tax"
and "billionaires' tax"
to fund our recovery now!



**It's time to ask
the wealthiest
NYers to pay
their fair share.**

Tell your state senators and Assembly members to support, sign-on and pass an "ultra-millionaires' tax" and a "billionaires' tax" to fund our recovery and to make sure no one is left behind. These new revenue sources would provide crucial support to SUNY and its public teaching hospitals.

Go to bit.ly/2XaVxPB and send an e-letter today!

Memories of voter suppression

by Lawrence Wittner

Albany

Back in July 1962, when, according to Donald Trump, America was “great,” I was in the Deep South, working to register Black voters. It was a near-hopeless project, given the mass disenfranchisement of the region’s Black population that was enforced by Southern law and an occasional dose of white terrorism.

It all started in the fall of 1961, the beginning of my senior year at Columbia College. My roommate Mike Weinberg and I, both white, had joined the campus chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality and participated in a few of its New York City projects. The real action, though, was in the South, swept by sit-ins and Freedom Rides that demanded an end to racial discrimination and, especially, for the right to vote.

In the spring of 1962, Ronnie Moore, a Black CORE Southern field secretary, brought the news of the Southern freedom struggle to our Columbia CORE meeting. Having headed up desegregation efforts in Baton Rouge, La., Ronnie and three other students at Southern University, an historically Black institution, were out on bail on “criminal anarchy” charges. The laws under which they were charged and imprisoned dated back to the state’s early 20th century repression of union organizing among Black and white timber workers.

Stirred by what Ronnie told us, Mike and I went up to him after his talk and asked him how we could help the cause. Looking us in the eyes, he said, smiling: “What are you boys doing this summer? ... Any chance that you’ll get to Baton Rouge?”

That July, as Mike and I drove along Louisiana roads enveloped in an atmosphere of racial segregation, racist remarks and unbearably hot weather, the venture no longer seemed quite as amusing. Nor, after arriving in Baton Rouge, was it easy to find Ronnie, for CORE wasn’t listed in the phone book. But we did find a Committee on Registration Education, and figured—with the same acronym—it must be his group. It was. The state authorities had obtained a court order to shut down its predecessor.

Ronnie was delighted to see us and took us to an all-Black hangout for coffee. In his view, and ours, the only safe people in the South were Black. As for local whites, we considered them all actual or potential Nazis, and stayed clear of them and their institutions. Whether they would stay clear of us remained uncertain. Mike and I slept on the Moore family’s entry hall floor, and local residents had been known to fire bullets through the front door.

Although most of the voter registration campaign Mike and I worked on in Baton Rouge was rather mundane, one evening was particularly exciting. At dinner time, Ronnie suggested that we drive over to Southern University, from which he and the other CORE activists had been expelled for their “crimes.”

As we entered the all-Black dining hall, students started yelling: “It’s Ronnie! It’s Ronnie!” Leaping onto one of the tables, Ronnie made an impassioned speech about the freedom struggle and, then, announced that he had brought with him two movement supporters from the North. “Get up here, Larry and Mike!” So we jumped up there, too, to deliver strong messages of solidarity. We

had just about finished when someone rushed in, warning that the campus police were on their way and that we had better get out of there fast! We did.

Ronnie suggested that Mike and I drive him to Jackson, Miss., where a CORE-SNCC conclave would be held at the local Freedom House. After dinner, we drove through northern Louisiana (where a local gas station operator threatened to kill us) and, then, through Mississippi to Jackson. Here, in an abandoned building taken over by the movement and around which police cars circled menacingly, we joined dozens of CORE and SNCC activists from the Deep South. At night, they had lengthy political discussions, in which they expressed their bitterness toward the Kennedy administration for its failure to back civil rights legislation or to protect movement activists from racist violence.

During the days, Mike and I joined Luvaughn Brown, a Black activist recently incarcerated at the county prison farm, to go door to door in a Black Jackson neighborhood and encourage its residents to register to vote. This was a tough job because people feared retaliation if they dared to exercise their voting rights and, also, because they would almost certainly be rejected. At the time, Mississippi used a “literacy test” to determine if a citizen was qualified to vote. A voting registrar would ask a potential registrant to define the meaning of a section in the lengthy state constitution. If you were Black, the registrar said you had failed the test; if you were white, you passed.

Voter registration work was not only frustrating, but dangerous. The following summer, Medgar Evers, head of the local NAACP, was murdered in Jackson by a white supremacist for his leadership in a voter registration campaign. The next June, three participants in the Mississippi Freedom Summer voter registration project met a similar fate.

Mike and I kept in touch, and were delighted when Congress responded to the scandal of Southern voter suppression with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed the discriminatory voting practices of the past and established federal oversight of any new voting procedures in the offending states.

Imagine, then, our sense of sorrow, mingled with disgust, when, in 2013, by a 5-4 vote, the Republican-dominated U.S. Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. This opened the door for numerous Republican-controlled state governments—many but not all Southern—to implement mass purges of their voter rolls, closure of polling places in minority neighborhoods, government ID requirements, felony disenfranchisement, and other barriers that deprived millions of Americans of the right to vote.

I wonder how Republican leaders can live with themselves when they betray the most basic principle of democracy. Of all the things they have done during their time in power, this is surely one of the most despicable.

(Lawrence Wittner is a professor of history emeritus at the University at Albany and the author of Confronting the Bomb published by Stanford University Press.)



Wittner

Retiree news and views

The Masked Seniors

UUP Active Retirees are rockin' their union face masks. At right, Judy and Arnold Wishnia of the Stony Brook Chapter adorn their UUP surgical masks, while Phyllis Sturm of the New Paltz Chapter, below, transforms her UUP bandanna into a safe face covering.



Organizing Your Vital Records booklet available online, by mail

Having your personal information in one place makes it easier to deal with the unexpected. The Retired Membership Governing Committee (formerly COARM) created a checklist designed to be an organizing tool that will help you and your family more easily navigate moments of change. It will assist you in aggregating your important data.

We hope this document helps give you a view of your vital information, and some measure of peace of mind for you and those you hold dear," said RMGC Chair Charlie McAteer.

The document can be found on the website at <http://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/OYVR2016fillable.pdf> or by contacting Walter Apple, retiree member services coordinator, at wapple@uupbenefits.org or at (800) 342-4206.



'I have underlying conditions'

by Jo Schaffer
Cortland

Yes, indeed, I have underlying conditions. While I would admit to having some of those in the image at right, the conditions to which I refer are ones I have developed over my years in the academic world served by my union, UUP.

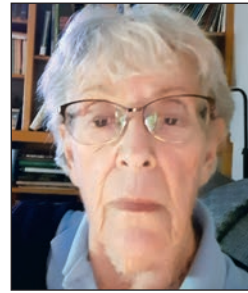
I have developed underlying conditions such as compassion, generosity, sympathy, concern, energy, involvement, and a consistent urge to help make my environment better for all around me. I guess this is the residual effect of having been with my union since its founding days more than 40 years ago. I had the experience of working with folks who had the same commitment as I to making the lives of their colleagues and students more equitable, secure and productive.

I think back to those first days at SUNY

Cortland, when as a newbie. I found that, as a woman, I was earning less than a less-qualified guy who was hired to do the same work as I. It was with the support and guidance of a UUP colleague that I had the nerve to approach the administration—which was, at that time, real hutzpah—to ask for a remedy to this injustice. Success!

Then, as I approached permanent appointment, I found that I was early denied that status by someone who wanted to be considered for my position. With help, once more, from a UUP colleague, I felt prepared to contest the one-sided attack on my status. Success!

All this help, to me and to others around me, made my commitment to use my underlying conditions to get involved in



Schaffer

UUP activities. I haven't looked back since.

You can call it "give back time" if you want. I believe developing these under-lying conditions was deeply rewarding.

Our fight goes beyond the current political environment. Our fight is to preserve our earned benefits, such as

Medicare and Social Security. I was born in the same year as was Social Security, and I want it to flourish, not just for me, but for generations to come

Real pre-existing conditions—such as aging and concomitant physical limitations—have slowed me down a little, but it hasn't diminished my sense of justice and fairness. I am still in the fight. I hope you are too.

The fight continues—la lutte continuera!

Volunteer opportunities

The following are great resources to support UUP coalition building, to meet people where they are, to build unity and to get involved. If you are interested in getting more active with any of our coalition partners, contact UUP Director of Organizing Kristie Sammons at ksammons@uupmail.org or at (800) 342-4206.

CITIZEN ACTION OF NEW YORK

- NY Paid Leave Coalition is working with NENYCOSH to provide education and training on worker rights to a healthy workplace and paid leave.
- Empire State Campaign for Child Care advocates for a path to universal, equitable access to quality child care; professional wages and benefits; consistent statewide policies; a seat at the table for parents and providers.
- NY Statewide Paid Leave Coalition promotes, educates and fills gaps in emergency and permanent paid leave benefits and rights.

For information on any of the above, contact Blue Carreker at (518) 466-8500 or at bcarreker@citizenactionny.org

• Alliance for Quality Education works for equitable funding for public schools; free pre-K; the End School to Prison Pipeline program; to protect health of teachers and children during COVID; and the Tax Billionaires to Support Families and Communities partnership. Contact Marina Marcou-O'Malley at marina@aqeny.org.

• Health Care for All NY is dedicated to winning affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality health care for all. Contact Bob Cohen at bcohen@citizenactionny.org or for more information, go to <https://hcfany.org/about/mission/>

• Revenue Coalition advocates to increase taxes paid by the rich to fund vital resources in New York. Contact Michael Kink at michael.kink@strongforall.org

NY RENEWS

- THRIVE aims to transform, heal and renew by investing in a vibrant economy. (UUP is an endorsing partner organization.) Contact Stephan Edel at Stephan@NYRenews.org or go to <https://www.thriveagenda.com/> for more information.
- Toolkits can be found at <https://www.nyrenews.org/toolkits>

LABOR-RELIGION COALITION OF NEW YORK STATE

unites faith, labor and community in a statewide movement for social, racial; and economic justice. Contact the Rev. Emily McNeill at emcneill@labor-religion.org or for more information, go to www.laborreligion.org

• NYS Poor People's Campaign is working to address poor people's issues, such as systemic racism, poverty and inequality. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/NYSPPC/> for more details.



Gov. Jay leads charge to abolish slavery in NY state

by Daniel Scott Marrone
Farmingdale

Before the Civil War, slavery was deeply ingrained in every state—in the north as well in the south. New York state had the dubious and evil distinction of having the most slaves north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Prior to 1799, 14 percent of the state's population was disgracefully in bondage. That year, Gov. John Jay fought to have this accursed practice abolished. As often occurs in politics, Jay had to accept a compromise measure that ended slavery, but not as immediately as he intended. It would take nearly 30 years to reach the final end of slavery in New York state. Nonetheless, Jay's abolition bill ultimately freed more humans than any other legal measure prior to President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of Jan. 1, 1863.

A Slaveholder Who Bitterly Opposed Slavery

Jay was born Dec. 12, 1745, in New-York City. He was a graduate of King's College (today's Columbia University). On April 28, 1774, he married Sarah ("Sally") Van Brugh Livingston (1756-1802), daughter of New Jersey Gov. William Livingston. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Scot-Dutch ancestry Livingston family was the largest landholders in both New Jersey and New York. The family properties in New York alone comprised 95,000 acres! The couple was deeded, as matrimonial gifts, wide swaths of land in Westchester County and—shamefully—the slaves that tended farms and manor houses on these properties. Based on moral and religious principles, John Jay was ardently against slavery throughout his life. Yet on the day he married, Jay became a slaveholder himself. Here lies what has been deemed the "John Jay contradiction."

Jay represented New York in the 1st Continental Congress (1774). Two years later, he was tasked with authoring the New York State Constitution. Jay inserted a clause to abolish slavery in his final draft of the Constitution. However, slave-traders and the bankers that financed this dastardly practice across the state had sufficient political clout to force Jay to "strike off" the abolition clause. As a consequence, when the NYS constitution was ratified on April 20, 1777, this clause was absent. This did not deter Jay, for he subsequently submitted numerous bills to the state Legislature that called for the abolition of slavery. Opponents to his abolition bills pointed out his hypocrisy since he was, in fact, a slaveholder. Regrettably, his abolition bills met defeat.

He continued to fight against slavery by founding one of the nation's first legal aid societies—the New York State Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves. This group filed lawsuits on behalf of slaves and led boycotts against firms that used slaves. (The Legal Aid Society of New York that is still in existence was initially founded in 1876 for the purpose of assisting

Roman Catholic German and Irish immigrants, who faced ethnic and religious discrimination in housing and employment. In the present-day, this organization helps thousands of needy individuals each year.)

Jay again represented New York in the 2nd Continental Congress (1778-1779) and served a term in the rotating position of President of Congress.

On Sept. 27, 1779, he was appointed U.S. minister to Spain. Jay's next assignment was in Paris to assist Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, who were negotiating a peace treaty with British diplomats to end the Revolutionary War. Though virtually all of the fighting ended in 1781, it took two more years to secure a peace treaty. On Sept. 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed and an independent United States of America became a reality. Just as Thomas Jefferson authored the Declaration of Independence, Jay, a superb writer of legal documents, authored the Treaty of Paris.

After Jay returned home from Paris, he was elected to the U.S. Congress and served there from 1784 to 1789. On March 24, 1785, Jay penned an open letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush that expressed his opposition to slavery. Jay wrote: "I wish to see all unjust and all unnecessary discriminations everywhere abolished, and that the time may soon come when all our inhabitants of every color and denomination shall be free and equal partakers of our political liberty."

In 1787, he established the New York African Free School. By the year of his death in 1829, tens of thousands of African American children and adults had received tuition-free education at this outstanding institution.

In 1788, Jay collaborated with Alexander Hamilton and James Madison in authoring essays highlighting the urgent need for a central government and a comprehensive nationalized constitution. These essays became known as the Federalist Papers.

Jay served simultaneously as the nation's first secretary of state and as the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Though newly inaugurated President George Washington chose Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state, the Virginian was in Paris serving as minister to France and thus unable to serve during the first six months of the Washington administration. In his place, Washington had Jay act as secretary of state from Sept. 26, 1789, until March 22, 1790. This position was in addition to Washington's permanent role for Jay as the first chief justice. He is credited for setting numerous U.S. Supreme Court precedents and procedures that nearly three centuries later are still in effect. Jay's chief justice tenure spanned from Sept. 26, 1789, until June 29, 1795—two days



Marrone

before taking the oath as governor of New York.

While serving as chief justice, in 1794, President Washington requested that Jay sail to London to negotiate with Great Britain for the purpose of preventing a second war between the nations. After nearly a year of tireless effort, a peace accord was reached titled, “The 1794-1795 Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation Between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America.” Known as “Jay’s Treaty,” the bilateral pact achieved the following: (1) Avoided war with Great Britain; (2) attained from British Crown authorities trading concessions for U.S. merchants; and (3) reverted lingering Revolutionary War claims and border disputes to neutral arbitration. The latter achievement was especially important because the border between the U.S. and British North America cited in the 1783 Treaty of Paris was based on rudimentary, imprecise surveys and measurements. By virtue of “Jay’s Treaty,” the international border was fixed from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes (though the border between Canada and Maine was later revised).

John Jay Elected Governor of New York State

While Jay was in London finalizing negotiations with the British, Federalist party members submitted his name as a candidate for New York governor. Opposing him was Robert Yates (1738-1801), a staunch Democratic-Republican. When votes were tallied in May 1795, Jay received more than 13,000 votes compared to Yates, who had less than 12,000 votes. That month, he was still in London. When he arrived back in the U.S.A., in June 1795, Jay was informed—no doubt amazed—that he was elected governor of New York. Elected by the people of New York, Jay hoped to set an example to others by freeing his slaves. In light of the extreme evils of slavery, this action was grossly insufficient. Furthermore, he should be excoriated for his prior position as a slaveholder. As governor, he strove to repent for this sin.

Jay was re-elected governor with a landslide majority in 1798. He viewed this stunning victory as a mandate for finally abolishing slavery in New York. Within a year after his re-election, Jay submitted to the Legislature a bill that would immediately abolish slavery in the state. In order to effectuate approval, Jay spent months of arm-twisting to gain support for his bill in the Legislature. As often occurs in politics, in order to get a bill passed, compromise was required. The final bill achieved Jay’s

goal of ending slavery, but not as immediately as he wanted, rather over an extended period of time.

In 1799, the Legislature passed: “The Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the State of New York.” Key provisions of Jay’s abolition bill included: (1) As of July 4, 1799, international slave trading in New York was prohibited [nine years before the 1808 nationwide ban]; (2) compensation to international slave-dealers, as result of this law, was denied; (3) children born to slave parents would immediately gain limited manumission. Instead of “held in bondage” status, these children were now under the less restrictive laws governing “indentured servants,” and (4) these children would attain full freedom at age 28 for males and at age 25 for females. A follow-up legislation to Jay’s bill was passed in 1817. This latter law freed all slaves within 10 years.

As of July 4, 1827, slavery was completely abolished in New York state. The famed publisher of the *New-York Tribune*, Horace Greeley (1811-1872) noted in an 1854 editorial: “To Governor Jay may be attributed, more than to any other man, the abolition of Negro bondage in this state.”

On June 30, 1801, Jay was formally renominated for a third term as New York governor. He declined, however, because his wife had become ill with cancer. Sally Jay passed away May 28, 1802, at age of 46. John Jay lived for another 27 years, until May 17, 1829, when he died from a fatal stroke at age 83. Fort Jay on Governors Island and John Jay Park in Manhattan are named after him. Towns and counties that bear his name are found in New York, Maine and Rhode Island. Jay Street is a prominent thoroughfare in the Borough of Brooklyn. The U.S.A. and Canada have ac-

claimed Jay’s efforts in establishing precise boundaries between the nations. For this achievement, the mountain range that separates Alaska and British Columbia was named, with the approval of both nations, Mount John Jay.

Besides ending slavery in New York state, Jay’s greatest legacy is the higher education institution John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The college was opened in 1964 as a unit of the City University of New York. This West 59th Street, Manhattan, institution is rated No. 1 among all criminal justice educational institutions, according to <https://zoomtens.com>.

(Daniel Scott Marrone, Ph.D., is a distinguished service professor emeritus from SUNY Farmingdale.)



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Portrait of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Jay by Gilbert Stuart (1794).

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