

I Knew Him When...

This week's letter is centered on a big change coming for our union. Friday, October 1st, will be Angel Morales' final day as our Education Mn Field Representative since he has submitted his retirement notice. Angel came to Rochester in 1998 to serve as our field rep and is the most senior field rep in Minnesota. With his resignation comes many mixed emotions. While I am happy for him, I am sad to see so much Rochester history and knowledge walk out the door. He not only was our field rep, he is a parent of 2 children that went through our district. Being involved in his children's schooling and volunteering within the district gave him a unique perspective on what we are trying to accomplish as a union.

What, might you ask, does a day for Angel look like? Let me give you a brief glimpse. We meet often to see which one of us is working with a member, so that we can stay up to date on the happenings in all of our buildings. These meetings can often time be spent with our HR department or just counseling a member on what choices are out there to address a situation. Along with that, he attends our executive board meetings, faculty representative meetings, our weekly HR meetings and has a seat at our negotiation table. Now add to that list meetings with the Rochester paraprofessional union, and the other locals he represents such as Byron, Stewartville and Pine Island and that adds up to a full day! When I was notified that Angel put in for his retirement, I knew that this meant changes for us. I was glad to advocate that Rochester had utilized Angel to the fullest extent and that we would need a seasoned person to fill his position. Thankfully, we did get that person. Curt Rock will be our new field rep from EDMN. He has worked out of the Rochester office for the past 3 years and has worked in northern Minnesota and Florida as a field representative. We have already talked some regarding what we need for our Local and I have introduced him to the negotiations team during one of our planning sessions. I have given him our calendar and will be getting those meetings set up as well. I will do some traveling to buildings with him, so we can do introductions and get Curt's face out there for people to know and recognize.

It will be interesting to see what course change this will make for our union. We could always count on Angel to give a talk on how important it is to lobby and communicate with our legislators regarding the state budget and how public education needs to be funded. He is a fierce advocate for public education and hopefully we won't lose his fire. If you ever went places with Angel, he always knew someone to introduce you to or, if he didn't know them, would walk up and introduce himself!

Never a dull moment around him. As he was cleaning out his files the other day, he commented on how many relationships he found within the district and all the people that he had worked with over the years. There is no doubt, Curt has large shoes to fill as comes into his new role.

I want to thank Angel for all the work and effort he put into Rochester all these years. He was a great mentor to me. When I came into this position, he made sure that I had the tools and connections to work on your behalf. Finally, Angel and I also knew each other well outside of work. Not only did Angel live in my neighborhood during his early years in Rochester, our sons were classmates and spent many hours together with their common interest in music. On any given day, Angel and I could blow off steam by talking about how our day went. He would always tell me to take it one day at a time or it will eat you up. He was correct with that advice. So as we say good bye to Angel, I will take it one day at a time as we break in Curt to the world of the Rochester Public Schools.

Angel – Thank you a million times over from the REA and all the people you have helped over the past 23 years! Your guidance, camaraderie and friendship will be missed!

Congratulations!

Dan