



Student Honored for Analysis of Aircraft Mechanic Retirement

Alliance Educational Fund Awards Seidman Prize

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Washington, D.C. — The Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund awarded its sixth annual Bert and Annabel Seidman Prize for Advancing Social Policy to National Labor College (NLC) student Gary Schaible, a member of the Transport Workers Union of America from Lewisville, Texas. Mr. Schaible was awarded the prize for his senior project entitled, *Retirement? —Not In This Lifetime: How Retirement for Aircraft Mechanics Is Becoming a Dream of The Past.*

The prize, and its accompanying \$3,000 honorarium, encourages NLC students to research and analyze social policies that affect the older population. The winning entry conducted a thorough analysis focusing on why union members, specifically aircraft mechanics, have trouble securing a safe and lasting retirement.

Runners-up were Craig von Collenberg, a member of the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association (SMWIA) from Logandale, Nevada; Carl Simons, an SMWIA member from Fall River, Wisconsin; and Nicole Baker, also an SMWIA member, from Las Vegas, Nevada. Mr. von Collenberg's paper was entitled *The Best of Times: Combating the Negative Psychological Effects of Retirement*; Mr. Simons' was entitled *Pension in Crisis: The Importance of Recovering the National Pension Fund to Madison Sheet Metal Workers*; and Ms. Baker's paper was entitled *All Banged Up: The Harsh Reality of Sheet Metal Work and Its Damaging Effects to the Body.*

Mr. Schaible's paper discussing the ongoing struggle to secure a dignified retirement stood out because it addressed an issue to which every working American can relate. Specifically, he mentioned how easily defined pension benefits and jobs can evaporate in this era of uncertainty. In the fall of 2001, with bankruptcies in the aviation sector on the rise, airlines began gutting union protections and shipping maintenance jobs overseas. This, ultimately, stripped a respected profession of their dignity and forced aircraft mechanics to work well past the age of retirement as

a means of economic survival. By resurfacing and reframing this issue, Mr. Schaible has helped reenergize the fight for securing a fair and lasting retirement for all Americans.

The Alliance Educational Fund designed the prize to honor Bert and Annabel Seidman, whose lifelong passion for social justice and worker rights inspired their careers. Bert was the director of the AFL-CIO's Social Security Department for 33 years. After retiring, he was an expert consultant to the Alliance and the National Council of Senior Citizens, specializing in Social Security, pensions, housing, and health care. Annabel, a teacher and social worker, founded the National Nursing Home Information Service and was its director for 25 years. She was a strong advocate for senior citizens and people with mental disabilities.

“All of the submissions were standouts,” said Joan Seidman Welsh and Betsy Seidman Garaufis, who are on the selection committee. “We felt, however, that Gary’s paper really resonated because it embodies the life work of our parents to achieve retirement security for all Americans.”

Alliance president Barbara J. Easterling said of Mr. Schaible’s paper, "Bert and Annabel Seidman were very gracious people who were deeply committed to improving the lives of working Americans. I can think of no better way to honor their memory than Mr. Schaible’s paper on the importance of securing a dignified retirement for all Americans, the existence of which relies heavily on youth support and protection.”

The Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund focuses on growing senior grassroots involvement in public policy issues; educating on public policy issues that affect retirees; researching and developing written materials that address public policy affecting retirees; and working with other not-for-profit organizations on issues that affect retirees.

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