

# A report from the Co-Presidents

Dear FFRF Member:

We've never had a year quite like 2014! Our staff has had many major accomplishments — while putting up patiently with a lot of bangs, building vibration and other unusual workplace inconveniences during an exciting and ongoing building expansion. The expansion, attaching a 5-story addition next to FFRF's landmark building in downtown Madison, is nearly complete. The elegant exterior is winning plaudits from Madisonians. But as this is written, the interior isn't quite yet ready for prime time! Thanks to the incredible outpouring of generosity and support by you and other members, we hope to move in sometime before the New Year.



We aren't "believers," but as executive directors of a 501(c)(3), we thoroughly believe in reporting what we do with your dues. We hope this summary will give you the inside scoop on our work and accomplishments in 2014. We look forward to turning up the volume next year in our more capacious new digs!

We personally send our warmest thanks for making possible FFRF's work. Principal FFRF Founder and President Emerita Anne Gaylor, who turned 88 in late November, adds her thanks: "Recent events show how critical freethought is — freedom *does* depend on freethinkers." May reason prevail! — **Dan Barker & Annie Laurie Gaylor**

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## Freedom From Religion Foundation 2014 Year in Review

### FFRF reaches more than 21,500 members this year!

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has reached more than **21,500** members this year, adding close to 2,000 members from October 2013 to October 2014.

**California, Florida, New York, Washington** and **Wisconsin** top the list for the largest state memberships. States with the tiniest memberships (under 100 members) include: Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming and Vermont . . . so spread the word!

FFRF has added more than 200 Lifetime Members (for a total of more than 2,200) so far in 2014, and several "After-Life" Members (a tongue-in-cheek category for those who wish their membership to live after them).

Every increase in membership gives FFRF more clout as a national state/church watchdog and the nation's largest freethought (atheist, agnostic, etc.) association. The best source of new members is other members — you!

There's a link at our website homepage, [ffrf.org](http://ffrf.org), where you can encourage friends, colleagues and family members to ask for more information, including a sample of FFRF's newsy newspaper, Freethought Today. Prospective members also can phone our office at 1-800-335-4021 and request information.

### Freethought Hall addition nearly complete — thanks to members



You've seen photos of the building progress in Freethought Today. FFRF Staff Attorney **Andrew Seidel** (also an accomplished photographer) set up a time lapse camera project, aided by Publicist **Lauryn Seering**. View the movie (it's fun!) and updates on FFRF's homepage at [ffrf.org](http://ffrf.org).

The auditorium with its three sets of French windows leading to balconies, full of wood trim, is already beautiful even without all the finishing touches.

The third-floor library atop our original building is also nearly complete. Phase II will continue into the New Year to renovate, repaint, recarpet and revamp heating of

FFRF's original 1855 historic building. Freethought is on the map in downtown Madison, Wis., two blocks from the Capitol.

We're grateful to all donors, and wish to single out several extraordinarily generous individuals:

**Joel B. Landon & Wanda Y. Beers**

— Freethought Library; **Brian Bolton**

— Executive Wing; **Charlie Brooks**

— for whom the auditorium is named; **Harold Erickson**

— Public Relations Wing, **Harry Lonsdale**, who very sadly

died in November — "No Hell Below Us" Administrative Wing; **Kenneth**

**Proulx**, for whom the "Above Us Only

Sky" Cupola will be named; **Steve and**

**Diane Uhl** — Stephen Uhl Friendly Atheist Studio, Diane Uhl Legal

Wing and Concert Grand Piano; and **Rose Zerwick** (in memoriam

and her family) — Memorial Garden & Courtyard. The impressive

entrance of our "reborn" Freethought Hall will be called the **Anne**

**Nicol Gaylor Lobby**.

If you had planned to purchase a vestibule tile or paving stone,

time is running out. Visit: [ffrf.org/donate/donate-to-ffrf-building-fund](http://ffrf.org/donate/donate-to-ffrf-building-fund).

Plan to take a tour next October, when FFRF's annual convention

will return to Madison, Wis.



**Diane & Stephen Uhl**

### FFRF in the news every day!

FFRF's state/church work, litigation and educational campaigns generated more than **1,186 bonafide news stories** about FFRF in daily newspapers this year through early November 2014, plus more than 160 local and some national TV news segments covering regional or national complaints. Staff Attorney Liz Cavell did a great job on "CBS This Morning," and Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor, and Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott tussled with national Fox TV (Annie Laurie took on Sean Hannity).

Read and watch media coverage or sign up to get coverage delivered to your inbox at: [ffrf.org/news/media/](http://ffrf.org/news/media/).

**FFRF generates own media.** FFRF publishes **Freethought Today**, our newspaper, 10 times a year, edited by veteran newsman **Bill Dunn**. **Dan Barker** and **Annie Laurie Gaylor** have never missed a week of **Freethought Radio**, FFRF's weekly radio show, interviewing authors, activists, reporting news and promoting freethought. By year's end, FFRF will have aired 448 broadcasts.

The radio show broadcasts originally in **Madison, Wis.**, 92.1 FM. It also airs in **Grand Rapids, Mich.** (WPRR AM 1680 and 95.3 FM Public Reality Radio), **KEOS 89.1 FM, College Station/Bryan, Texas;** **KOPN, Columbia, Mo., Ithaca, N.Y.** (W201CD, 88.1 FM and **Watkins Glen, NY, WRFI, 91.9FM**), and newly in **Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada**, as well as several online stations. Get details or listen at: [ffrf.org/radio/](http://ffrf.org/radio/) through I Heart Radio, on our website, via iTunes or streaming live.

All-time stats: **Freethought Radio has had 5.5 million podcast downloads since 2006**, and averages 58,000-62,000 downloads per month. FFRF also maintains a timely and detailed website full of news, views, blogs, archives, online versions of Freethought Today, ads, films and photos!

## Public relations/educational campaigns



**Ron Reagan TV commercial.** We did it! FFRF placed the first nontheistic commercial on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report" last spring. We've also had great return from running the ad online. Ron, a very kind honorary director of FFRF, recorded the commercial, saying:

*"Hi, I'm Ron Reagan, an unabashed atheist, and I'm alarmed by the intrusion of religion into our secular government. That's why I'm asking you to support the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the nation's largest and most effective association of atheists and agnostics, working to keep state and church separate, just like our Founding Fathers intended. Please support the Freedom From Religion Foundation. Ron Reagan, lifelong atheist, not afraid of burning in hell."*

To our shock, CBS has unilaterally censored the ad. (It's still OK to discriminate against "unabashed atheists.") We'll be airing the commercial in more friendly spots in 2015.

**Scientific American ads.** Every day our office receives friendly calls from readers of Scientific American who spot FFRF's new one-third page "testimonial" ads by scientists and scientific thinkers. The ads feature the face, name and a timely quote chosen by the featured thinker and directs readers to FFRF. The series debuted with **FFRF's Honorary President Steven Pinker**, and to date has included Honorary Directors **Jerry Coyne, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, Victor Stenger** (his ad appeared before his tragic accident and death) and Emperor Has No Clothes Awardees **Donald C. Johanson** and **Sean Carroll**. Look for **Daniel Dennett's** ad next year!



### Out of the Closet billboards/videos.

In December, FFRF is unveiling our "Out of the Closet" campaign in Chicago — featuring the appealing, diverse faces and witty and wise sayings of about two dozen freethinkers, atheists and agnostics on their own billboards, working with **Tom Cara** and the **FFRF Metropolitan Chicago Chapter**. Last spring, FFRF and its **Northern Ohio Freethought Society** chapter run by **Marni Huebner-Tiborsky**,



put together an amazing billboard display featuring area members. Add your freethought

"testimonial" to FFRF's online "out of the closet freethinkers" new video campaign here: [ffrf.org/video-landing](http://ffrf.org/video-landing). If you haven't made your own "virtual billboard," it couldn't be easier or more fun: [ffrf.org/get-involved/come-out-of-the-closet](http://ffrf.org/get-involved/come-out-of-the-closet)



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**New York Times ad.** FFRF ran a memorable full-page protest of the Hobby Lobby ruling by five arch-conservative Catholic Supreme Court justices in The New York Times. Welcome to new members found via all of our educational advertising.

## \$31,350 awarded to student essayists

In 2014, FFRF gave a total of \$31,350 to student recipients in scholarships in our three annual student essay competitions: college-bound high school seniors, currently enrolled college students and grad/older students. Lifetime Member **Professor Brian Bolton** continues to sponsor the graduate student essay competition, which had six winners receiving a total of \$8,550 in prizes. The college competition, a memorial to **Michael Hakeem**, who chaired FFRF's governing body for years, awarded a total of \$12,550 in scholarships to 19 college students. The **William J. Schultz Memorial Scholarship**, for college-bound high school seniors, helped 16 students. The very generous couple, **Dorea and Dean Schramm**, provided each winning student who is a member of a secular student club (or FFRF) with a \$100 bonus.



B. Bolton

## Special donor thank you's in order

In addition to so many who have helped FFRF build its new addition, FFRF would like to acknowledge **John Moe**, a longtime member who has aided our high school competition. John has terminal cancer and gave his "bequest" while alive, \$50,000 to support high school activism. This gift will make possible symposia for high school activists in our new facilities overseen by FFRF's young legal team. **Leslie Biggs** was so impressed with Ron Reagan's TV ad that she donated \$100,000 for advertising! This is a fabulous gift, given the prohibitive costs of network advertising. Additionally, **Adam Rose** this year matched **Monty Cleworth's** amazing \$100,000 donation last year to create the new Endowment Fund. As previously reported, **Cliff Richards** left a bequest this year for student activist awards, which will greatly supplement the awards currently endowed by generous individuals and make possible recognition of more amazing atheist and agnostic student activists. FFRF is indebted to these and many other "secular Santas" who may not wish to be named.

## \$11,000 awarded to 9 deserving student activists

FFRF so far this year has bestowed nine student activists awards. Awards are typically \$1,000 each. **Sophia Winkler, 16** — **Thomas W. Jendrock Student Activist Award:** for "starring" in Scott Burdock's documentary exposé, "Sophia Investigates the Good News Club" and being involved in other activism in her home state of North Carolina. **Max Nielson, Allen P. Wilkinson Student Activist Award:** for enlightening students and the community. Max is the original plaintiff in FFRF's South Carolina lawsuit against graduation and school board prayer and is now a college activist. **Dakota McMillan** — **Thomas Jefferson Youth Activist Award** (endowed by Len and Karen Eisenberg), combined with the **Cliff Richards Memorial Student Activist Award:** for being a plaintiff



in FFRF's South Carolina lawsuit against graduation and school board prayer. **Jacob Zupon — Strong Backbone Student Activist Award** (endowed by a New York member, age 80) combined



Kalei Wilson

with Thomas Jefferson Youth Activist Award (endowed by Karen and Len Eisenberg): for being a plaintiff in FFRF's South Carolina litigation against prayer by a school board and graduation prayer. **Amanda Scott — Catherine Fahringer Memorial Student Activist Award**: for outstanding activism as an Alabama college student. **Kalei Wilson, 15, the Paul J. Gaylor Student Activist Award**: for trying to start a secular student club at her high school in North Carolina. **Shelby Conway, 14 — Cliff Richards Memorial Student Activist Award**: for evicting a rogue preacher abusing atheist students from her Oregon public school lunchroom. **Kelvin Manjarrez, Black Skeptics Los Angeles**

**Award** via FFRF's **Cliff Richards Memorial Student Activist Award**: for exceptional humanist volunteerism, identifying as an atheist and aspiring to become an English professor. **Joshua Flashman, 14, Cliff Richards Memorial Student Activist Award**: for standing up for his right to sit down during the religious Pledge of Allegiance. To be tapped for future above-average activism: **Richard and Beverly Hermsen's \$5,000 student activist award** for significant achievement.

## FFRF's legal accomplishments in 2014

**150+ state/church victories so far (about 250 victories from October 2013 to October 2014).** FFRF staff attorneys now number five: **Rebecca Markert, Patrick Elliott, Andrew Seidel, Elizabeth Cavell** and **Sam Grover**. Additionally, FFRF is pleased to announce its first



Legal Fellow, **Katherine Paige**, via William and Mary School of Law! Staff attorneys primarily engage in nonlitigation work, but may sign onto cases **pro hac vice** (meaning FFRF can be reimbursed for their work if we win the case) and have built many bridges with pro bono attorneys, and other litigation groups.

In a nod to their expertise, **FFRF staff attorneys taught two Continuing Legal Education (CLE) classes** to fellow attorneys and judges. All presented a CLE to the Legal Association for Women in Madison, Wis., in August: "Chipping Away at the Wall of Separation: A Survey of Recent Supreme Court Cases Regarding the Establishment Clause." Rebecca, Andrew and Liz were then invited to present a similar CLE to the Dane County Bar Association in October to rave reviews, with about 60-area lawyers and judges in attendance.

FFRF does not just complain about encroaching religion in government. We do something about it! Among the significant nonlitigation victories this year:

- Ousting bibles from public university lodgings at the University of Wisconsin Extension, Penn State and Iowa State Universities.
- Removing a Latin cross display, complete with bible verse, from a county park in Washington.
- Halting plans by the Iowa Economic Development Authority to grant \$140,000 in taxpayer money to a Christian park, the Shepherd's Garden, in Sioux City.
- Persuading an Alabama county to void a \$3,000 check to a

ministry for the purpose of recruiting men to go to church. (How's that for a secular purpose?)

- Removing nativity scenes from the grounds of public schools.
- Removing religious messages and icons from post offices.
- Halting use of county email to promote prayer breakfasts in Carmel, N.Y., and city coordination of a prayer breakfast in Slidell, La.
- Assisting a nonbelieving applicant to become a U.S. citizen after she encountered a religious test for a citizen oath.
- Removing a "Jesus can save your life" sign from a Wisconsin jail.
- Removing religious *eruvim* from a public park in Miami, Fla.
- Stopping a requirement that "Catholics only need apply" for a position as music director at Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

### Religion in the schools dominates complaints:

- FFRF persuaded several Ohio public schools to move their graduations to secular locations for 2015.
- FFRF halted many school-sponsored religious baccalaureate services around the country.
- FFRF stopped prayer at athletic events or graduation ceremonies, or coaches from leading teams in prayer, in public schools in many states.
- FFRF persuaded Madison County School District, Ga., to modify or remove an overtly religious monument from its football stadium featuring two New Testament bible verses.
- FFRF removed numerous prominent images of Jesus and crosses from an elementary classroom in Pulaski, Tenn.
- FFRF got Casey-Westfield School District in Illinois to remove crosses from their flagpole (a new violation for us).

The list of school violations halted by FFRF would fill this newsletter! FFRF also submitted a significant amicus brief, written by attorney **Marci Hamilton**, against Hobby Lobby's challenge of the contraceptive mandate.

## FFRF 2014 Litigation

**Court victory! No more prayer for Pismo Beach, Calif.** This spring, FFRF victoriously settled a lawsuit filed



in November 2013 against the city council of Pismo Beach, Calif., challenging sectarian city council prayer and the appointment of a city chaplain. The city agreed this spring to halt all prayer and abolish the city chaplaincy. This victory holds despite the Supreme Court's wrongheaded ruling approving city council prayers in *Greece v. Galloway*, because it was taken in state court. Congratulations to Staff Attorney **Andrew Seidel**, who won FFRF \$27,000 in legal fees, and to FFRF member and California attorney **Pamela Koslyn** for this firm victory!

**Victory – IRS to resume church audits.** FFRF and the IRS reached a nationally publicized agreement that resolves FFRF's federal lawsuit against the agency for failure to enforce its restrictions against political activity by tax-exempt churches. FFRF filed suit after the presidential election in 2012, based on the agency's reported enforcement moratorium. The IRS has satisfied FFRF that it no longer has a policy not to investigate violations by churches. But FFRF can resume the lawsuit if it has evidence of non-enforcement.

**Two new lawsuits:** FFRF, with pro bono help from **Attorney David J.P. Kaloyanides**, filed a federal lawsuit Nov. 13 against the Chino Valley Unified School District Board of Education (Calif.), whose meetings resemble a church service more than a school board meeting. FFRF Member **Douglas Marshall** is suing the city of Warren, Mich., after his request to install a "reason station" in

the atrium of city hall, where the city permits a prayer station, was rejected. FFRF is working with Americans United and the ALCU on the case, filed in federal court in July.

**Ongoing litigation:** Two federal challenges of Ten Commandments in front of Pennsylvania public schools remain in district court; we're awaiting a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit over a "shrine to our Lord Jesus Christ" on federal property in the Rockies and a ruling by the Colorado State Supreme Court in FFRF's victorious challenge of a Colorado Day of Prayer; a challenge of prayer at graduations and before school boards in a school district in South Carolina, with pro bono representation by **Aaron Kozloski**, continues in district court. FFRF, with attorney **Stephen Brady**, sued Orange County Public Schools, Fla., for permitting "passive" bible distribution while censoring much of FFRF's materials. While the district then caved, agreeing to permit FFRF to distribute all its materials in 2015, it's looking promising that the district will close its "public forum" for distribution of religious materials altogether. Stay tuned!

**IRS cases:** FFRF won a resounding victory a year ago in federal court in *FFRF v. Geithner*, challenging tax benefits for "ministers of the gospel," known as "the parsonage exemption." The 1954 law rewards ministers for fighting "godlessness" by allowing churches to pay "housing allowances" which ministers may deduct from taxable income. This November, the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals (one of the most conservative appellate courts) ruled that Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor lack a "concrete injury" giving them standing to sue, even though FFRF pays them in part through a housing allowance they cannot claim. This challenge is not over yet! Dan and Annie Laurie will be filing for tax refunds soon . . . we shall see what happens! We're also in district court in its federal challenge, with our chapter **Triangle Freethought Society**, N.C., to sue the IRS for exempting churches from filing annual accountability Form 990s, which all other charities must file. FFRF is represented in all its IRS cases by attorney **Richard L. Bolton**.

FFRF lists its current lawsuits at our website: [ffrf.org/legal/challenges/ongoing-lawsuits](http://ffrf.org/legal/challenges/ongoing-lawsuits)

## Outreach – Campus events

Co-President **Dan Barker** spoke on more than 23 campuses and about 15 other events around the country, including six debates. Dan, who is fluent in Spanish, was the only U.S. speaker to the first Humanist Association of Guatemala conference in July. Dan and FFRF Co-President **Annie Laurie Gaylor** spoke in Kamloops, B.C., at the annual "Imagine No Religion" May conference, at the 3rd Annual Freethought Festival put on by AHA!, at the University of Wisconsin, where Dan debated Matt Slick, and both spoke at the annual Lake Hypatia July 4 event put on by FFRF and its chapter, the Alabama Freethought Association directed by Pat Cleveland. Annie Laurie spoke at the 2014 Pennsylvania State Atheist/Humanist Conference in August.

FFRF Staff Attorneys **Rebecca Markert** and **Patrick Elliott** teamed up to present a legal workshop for the Secular Student Alliance West conference, and attorneys **Andrew Seidel** and **Elizabeth Cavell** presented at the SSA's annual Cleveland conference. Rebecca spoke to the Lake Superior Freethinkers in Duluth, Minn., a chapter. Patrick debated vouchers at the University of Wisconsin Law School, spoke to Oshkosh, Wis. students and at a religious forum at UW-Parkside. Sam Grover did a high school classroom debate in Rhinelander, Wis.

Staff Attorney **Andrew Seidel** made several UW-Madison appearances, spoke at Drake Law School, Des Moines, Iowa; before the Greater Sacramento Chapter of FFRF, Lewis and Clark Law School, Portland, Ore., in connection with FFRF's Portland chapter; to the Denver chapter and the Colorado Springs chapter and to Occam's Razors, an Arkansas student club, and at Lake

Hypatia, Ala.

**Chapters and partnerships:** FFRF welcomed several new chapters in 2014: **Freedom From Religion Atlanta, Ga.**, — Michael Scott; **FFRF Maine (Brunswick)** — Tom Waddell, and **Central PA Rationalists (Harrisburg, York)**— Dabis Camero. FFRF has a total of 17 current chapters. Look for one in your area: [ffrf.org/about/ffrf-chapters](http://ffrf.org/about/ffrf-chapters) FFRF partners with the Secular Student Alliance to defend nonbelieving students' legal rights. FFRF is part of **Atheist Alliance International** and has joined **Secular Coalition of America** and participates in its weekly briefings.

## Office growth continues



We thank all of our hardworking staff of 14, especially **Lisa Strand**, director of operations, who has overseen much of the building expansion, finances, database/website issues and managing our growing staff. FFRF said goodbye in

November to **Scott Colson**, its webmaster of 6 ½ years, and welcomed **Maddy Ziegler**, a recent UW Law School grad, who is working as fulltime **Legal Publicist**. More staff, including a graphic designer and FFRF's first legal secretary, are in the works as soon as we move into bigger digs! Board Member **Todd Peissig** is a regular and appreciated volunteer, and FFRF appreciated having as reading judges of its essays many area volunteers: **Dan Kettner**, **Dan Killelea** and **Dan Roman** (yes, that's a lot of Dans!) and **Charles Hoornstra**, a retired law professor.

**Interns.** This spring FFRF had its first legal extern, **Maddy Ziegler**, who earned legal credit for her work for FFRF on state/church issues. **Jarvis Idowu**, continued working as an intern, and **Aaron Loudenslager** interned spring and summer. **Olivia Mote** interned this spring. **Neal Fitzgerald** was a full-time summer clerk, all University of Wisconsin Law School students. **Lexi Palmer** was undergrad intern for the 2013-14 academic year. **Sam Erickson**, president of one of the largest secular college clubs, AHA! (Atheists, Agnostics and Humanists) at the UW-Madison, worked gratis as FFRF's first wonderful graphic design intern last summer, also doing administrative work with the legal department. Prescient Professor **Lester Goldstein** helped endow FFRF's Internships.

## 38th Convention set for Madison, Wis.

FFRF held its 37th annual national convention at its most gorgeous convention site ever, the Millennium Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, with about 500 participants from some 32 states, plus Brazil, Canada and New Zealand, in late October. Every speaker and honoree was first rate. We were honored to have top legal eagles **Erwin Chemerinsky** and **Marci Hamilton**, and top scientists **Donald C. Johanson** and **Sean Carroll**, as well as *Greece* plaintiffs **Linda Stephens** and **Susan Galloway**, among the speakers.



Convention attendees

Mark your calendar now for the 38th annual FFRF convention at the **Monona Terrace Convention Center**, Madison, Wis., the weekend of **Oct. 7-9, 2015**. Also tour the "reborn" **Freethought Hall**. See you next year!