



ANN FRANCO

DCTA ETHNIC MINORITY COUNCIL LEADER



Hispanic DCTA leader, Ann Franco is a “Northside” Denver native and a career-long DPS teacher of 31 years. Fourteen years ago, Ann began teaching at Colfax elementary, a school close to her heart because it is located in the same community in which she grew up. Ann is a strong well-trusted DCTA member within her building and respected mentor in our DCTA community. As a DCTA leader, Franco was heavily involved with our Ethnic Minority Advisory Council (EMAC) to help bring more teachers of color into leadership. Ann has several accomplishments in the DCTA community and dedicates those accomplishments to her ability to gain trust in members.

Ann went to Adams State College to earn her bachelor's degree. She originally went to school to become a typing teacher but later decided she cared more about working with younger students rather than learning business law. When she returned to Denver to teach, she was highly respected in her community as a Hispanic educator. Being a Hispanic woman in education was not always something that Ann recognized. She shares,

"People didn't see Hispanics in the education field and people would point that out to me. It didn't mean much to me at first but people would tell me how much they respected me for it. I never singled myself out, it was something I was supposed to do."

Ann's DCTA involvement began in 1995, when DPS decided they wanted to resign the school she worked in, which violated her contract. She decided to file a grievance and began connecting with DCTA leaders like former president, Andrea Giunta and union leader, Bernie Lopez. During this, she began trusting DCTA's leadership and the power of many using their voices to fight for what was right. Ann began organizing with members in her school, which helped them instill a lot of trust in her. This led them into winning a class action grievance. From there, Ann's voice and leadership skills began to flourish.



Ann's initial involvement with the Ethnic Minority Advisory Council (EMAC) was unexpected. Former DCTA president, Lennard Fox had identified Ann as a Hispanic leader in DCTA and invited her to a meeting where CEA members were discussing their plans on meeting the 3-1(g). The 3-1(g) the Association's most effective and comprehensive measure for encouraging racial/ethnic diversity in leadership at all levels of the organization. Franco became interested in doing work for the 3-1(g) and began encouraging our BIPOC members to attend leadership trainings and run for elected positions within the union.

In 2006, Ann was one of 16 teachers chosen to serve educators nationally on the NEA Minority Leadership Training Cadre. She felt proud of her accomplishment and explained "CEA met the 3-1(g) that year and gave me kudos to being the key to that success." Today Ann continues to encourage DCTA leaders of color to use their voices and run for elected positions and shares these words of advice,

"Rear View Mirror- Always remember who helped you get where you are but always look for whom you can bring forward."

This is something she reminds herself of today and it is also something others remind her.





ANN FRANCO AND FELLOW DCTA MEMBERS RIDING AROUND THE CAPITAL DURING THE 2019 STRIKE.

Being a DCTA member has created a great sense of community at Colfax Elementary, something Ann Franco is very proud of. She explains how gaining trust from her colleagues to join DCTA is one of the reasons why DCTA membership is so high at Colfax. Having a strong union presence in her school was extremely visible during the strike in 2019, as they had over 90% of their educators join the picket line. National and local education association leaders joined educators at Colfax during the strike including, former NEA President, Lily Eskelsen García and Colorado Education Association President, Amie Baca-Oehlert. Ann was in awe with how many community members joined the Colfax picket line saying,

“I didn’t realize the relationships I’ve built state-wide and nationwide because of DCTA, CEA and NEA.”



Teaching is something that Ann is extremely passionate about. She explains how she teaches her students about influential leaders of all cultures and origins. A leader she likes to teach her students about in specific is Cesar Chavez. Chavez is a Hispanic a union leader and labor organizer. Ann admires him because his story allows her to connect her life as a Hispanic union member with her students. When Ann was asked about why she loves to teach she explained,

“I love watching the students grow from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. You really get to see the growth with primary students.”



Ann Franco is a true leader within DCTA and her community. She has constantly advocated for her people and instilled a lot of trust in them to create the union leaders we have today. Every year Ann Franco auctions off one of her Broncos season tickets in the NEA Fund auction, calling it “The Ann Franco Experience.” The Ann Franco Experience includes tailgating, attending the game and participating in post-game festivities. Whoever has experienced time with Ann, knows they are lucky to be in her presence because she is a leader who will help you keep moving forward!