



Above: Scott Clifton, an daytime Emmy Award-winning actor (currently Liam Cooper on “The Bold and the Beautiful” on CBS). Left: The audience watches a riveting excerpt of Clifton’s atheist YouTube series “Theoretical B.S.”



Rice University professor Anthony Pinn spoke on “How a Good Methodist Became a Better Atheist.”

Speakers — FFRF Convention 2014

Millenium Biltmore — Los Angeles, Oct. 24–26



Above: Jessica Ahlquist, 19, summed up what she learned as Rhode Island’s outcast high school state/church plaintiff and court victor.



Three of FFRF’s staff attorneys, Andrew Seidel, Rebecca Markert and Patrick Elliott, drew appreciative standing-room-only crowds for their workshop reporting on legal activism and media coverage.



Left: FFRF Member Barbara Mancini gave a cautionary speech, “From Accused to Activist,” about her father’s attempt to die with dignity.

*Photography by
Ingrid Laas*



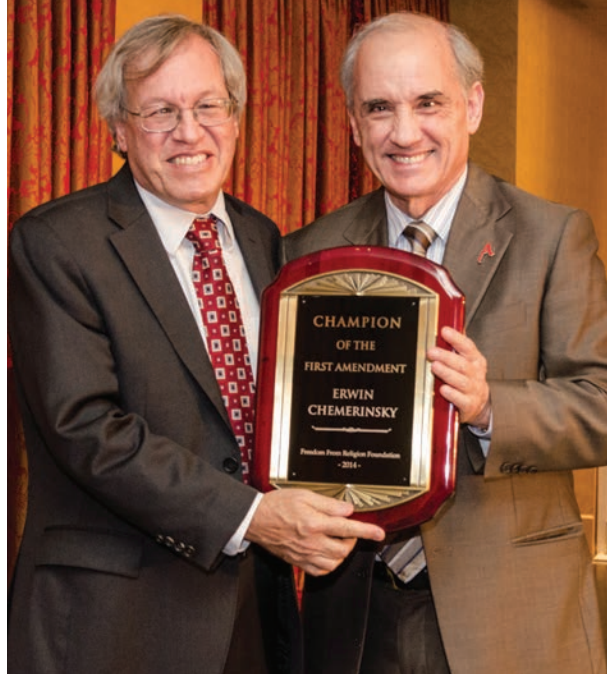
FFRF Co-President Dan Barker entertains at the piano after the banquet.



Talented photographer Chris Johnson sold out of his gorgeous photo book *A Better Life: 100 Atheists Speak Out on Joy & Meaning in a World Without God*.



Physicist and author Sean Carroll, holding FFRF's highest honor, the Emperor Has No Clothes Award.



Professor Erwin Chemerinsky, a "titan" in state/church scholarship, was awarded Champion of the First Amendment by FFRF Co-President Dan Barker.



Anthropologist and author Donald C. Johanson, discoverer of "Lucy," displays his Emperor Has No Clothes Award.

Honorees



Leading state/church scholar Marci Hamilton received FFRF's Freethought Heroine Award.



Susan Galloway (left) and Linda Stephens each received Freethinker of the Year awards as the persevering plaintiffs challenging governmental prayer in *Town of Greece v. Galloway and Stephens*.

Photography by Ingrid Laas

'Nothing Fails Like Prayer' Winners



Tim Earl with his "Nothing Fails Like Prayer" plaque, awarded on behalf of FFRF by Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott. Tim delivered his atheist invocation to the city council in Portage, Mich.



Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert hands Dan Courtney his "Nothing Fails Like Prayer" plaque. Dan historically gave a secular invocation in the town of Greece, N.Y., site of the Supreme Court challenge of governmental prayer.



Amanda Novotny receives her "Nothing Fails Like Prayer" plaque from Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel for her freethought invocation before the Sioux Falls (S.D.) City Council. The three winners delivered their winning invocations at the convention.

Chapters & Activists



FFRF state representatives Sheridan Chapin and Fairfid Caudle, both New Yorkers.

Photography by Andrew Seidel



Mark and Marni Heubner-Tiborsky. Marni is president of the Cleveland-based Northern Ohio Freethought Society, an FFRF chapter. Photo: Ingrid Laas



Enjoying FFRF's Non-Prayer Breakfast and the company were Steve Brady, attorney in FFRF's Orlando schools censorship case, Florida; Steve Salemsen, FFRF's new treasurer, Wisconsin; board member Mike Cermak Jr. with his father Mike Sr., both of Pennsylvania; and Stephen Hirtle, FFRF board chair, Pennsylvania.



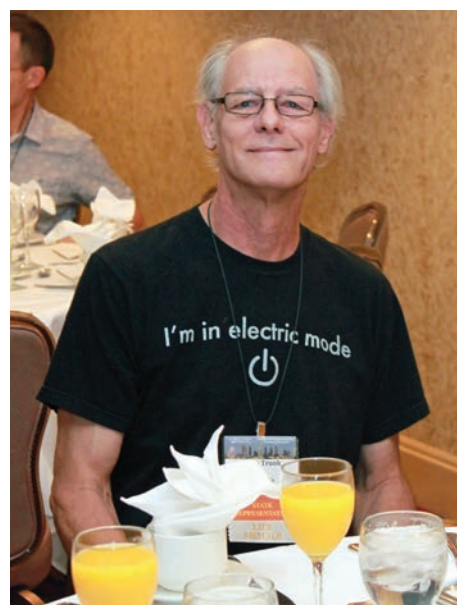
Richard L. Bolton, Wisconsin, who has litigated dozens of FFRF lawsuits, including its ongoing IRS challenge of the parish exclusion, introduces honoree Erwin Chermersinsky. Photo: Ingrid Laas



Ron Hermsen, founder of Freedom From Religion-Albuquerque, enjoys cake with another convention attendee.



Claudette StPierre, president of FFRF's Denver chapter, browses the book selection.



Steve Trunk, foxhole atheist, California state representative and plaintiff in the longest-lived state/church court case in history, the Mount Soledad cross case in La Jolla.



Cheryl Kolbe, president of FFRF Portland Area, and professor Stephen Hirtle, University of Pittsburgh, who chairs FFRF's Executive Board and helped select the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown for the national convention Oct. 7-9, 2016.

Convention Staffing



Scott and Beth Taylor, Washington state. Scott was convention videographer. Beth helped staff sales tables.



Sam Erickson, president of Atheists, Humanists and Agnostics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, served as convention IT guy. Buzz Kemper manned the audio.



Bookkeeper Katie Daniel was popular as the staffer who could process credit cards for sales items.



Staff Attorneys Andrew Seidel and Patrick Elliott, with Rebecca Markert (below), put on a popular legal workshop, then helped staff sales tables.



Membership Manager Jackie Douglas and Lisa Strand, director of operations, greeted conventioners and did "yeo-woman's" convention prep.



Photography by Ingrid Laas



Official convention photographer Ingrid Laas waits for Donald C. Johanson's autograph.



Eric Lawrence (left) and FFRF Executive Board Member Todd Peissig, who sold tickets for the annual "clean money" drawing (pre-"In God We Trust" currency from \$1 to \$100). Todd surprised his 15-year partner Eric with a Life Membership at the convention. Photo: Andrew Seidel



FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor with steadfast state/church plaintiff Jessica Ahlquist. Photo: Andrew Seidel



Claudia Kellersch Brumley, Calif., loads up on flair and books, including FFRF's signature "Imagine No Religion" book bag.



FFRF'ers filled the Biltmore Bowl at the elegant Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Chris Johnson, who photographed freethinkers around the world for his book *A Better Life: 100 Atheists Speak Out on Joy & Meaning in a World Without God*, shows a photo of Julia and Mulan Sweeney, Julia's daughter, who are included in the coffee table book.



The audience of over 500 let loose with numerous standing ovations during the 37th annual FFRF convention. Participants were from at least 32 states and three countries besides the U.S.: Canada, Brazil and New Zealand.



Len Eisenberg, Oregon, and Charlene Couch, Maryland, are among the attentive audience. Len and his wife, Karen, also attending, generously endow the annual \$1,000 Thomas Jefferson Student Activist Award and produce those popular evolution T-shirts!

Irreverent Audience

*Photography by
Ingrid Laas*



Honoree Donald C. Johanson autographs his photo in Chris Johnson's *A Better Life* for photographer Chris, while activist Jessica Ahlquist waits her turn.



Ngozi Onwurah and her son Kanaya Kuchler, 11, listen intently to speaker Anthony Pinn, author of *Writing God's Obituary*.



FFRF provided a complimentary afternoon reception in one of the Biltmore's beautiful areas.

Right: Convention-goers enjoy the spread.



The memorable Millennium Biltmore setting.

Wearing a very cool tie (reading: "Infidel, Non-Believer, Freethinker, Atheist, Heretic") is Steven Lowe, District of Columbia. Photo: Andrew Seidel

Convention Ambience

Photography by Ingrid Laas

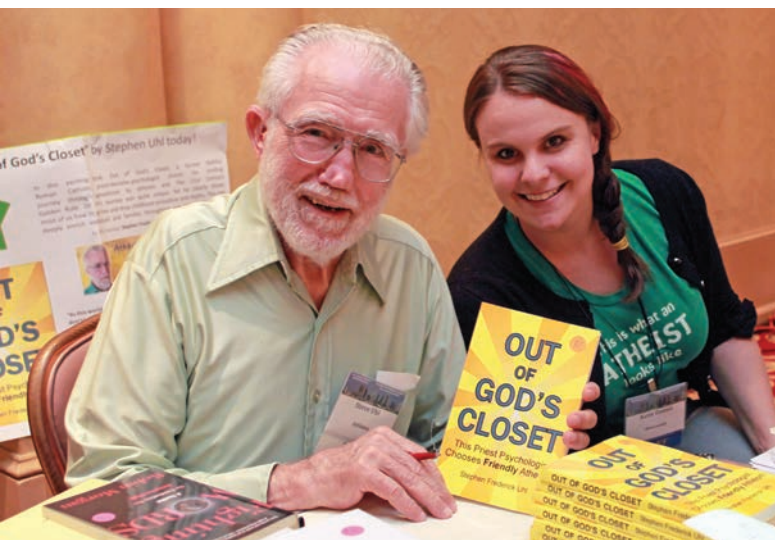
Watch convention slideshows: ffrf.org/convention



The Voices of Reason chorus, affiliated with Atheists United, serenades with a soothing 15-minute concert. Warm thanks to chorus members Diego Davidenko, Derek Houck, Christine Jones, Erin Keith, Amanda MacLean, Jeff Mock, Mark Nowitzky, Robyn Reagan, Yari Schutzer, Monk Turner and Kiahna Watkins.



As always, FFRF encourages conventioners to finish off the debut celebratory evening with some luscious dessert.



Priest-turned-atheist Steve Uhl, Arizona, signs copies of his book *Out of God's Closet*, the proceeds of which benefit FFRF. FFRF's new studio will be named the Steven Uhl Friendly Atheist Studio, thanks to Steve's generosity. The Diane Uhl Legal Wing and Diane Uhl Concert Grand Piano will soon open as well. Next to Steve is Katie Daniel, FFRF bookkeeper, doing a brisk business. Photo: Andrew Seidel

Inset right: Co-President Dan Barker introduces the traditional moment of bedlam, a highlight of FFRF's traditional Nonprayer Breakfast inaugurated years ago by President Emerita Anne Nicol Gaylor.



A moment of bedlam, not a moment of silence! That's Kathy Jackson in yellow, who is married (to her right) to Judy Saint, who directs the Sacramento FFRF chapter. Claudia Kellersch, Brumley, Calif., protects her ears from the enthusiastic response. Photos: Andrew Seidel

Meet FFRF's Board & State Representatives



FFRF's Executive Board, pictured at its preconvention meeting Oct. 24 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles: (front, left) Director Joe Cunningham, Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor, Director Mike Cermak; (back) Director and outgoing Treasurer Jim Zerwick, Chair Stephen Hirtle, Director Todd Peissig and incoming Treasurer Steve Salemsen. Not pictured are Secretary Jim Bredeson, Director Patricia Cleveland and outgoing Director Phyllis Rose. Warmest thanks to Phyllis, who retired in October as a director, for her years of volunteer work and wise counsel.



State Representatives at the annual post-convention meeting Oct. 26 in Los Angeles: (front, left) Todd Peissig, Wis.; Nick Sheridan, Md.; Sheri Bender, Ind.; Cheryl Kolbe, Ore; Fairfid Caudle, N.Y.; Dianne Cooper, Iowa; Wayne Bartz, Calif., (back) Annie Laurie Gaylor, Wis., Sheridan Chapin, N.Y., Steve Aldrich, Tenn.; Steve Trunk, Calif.; Darrell Barker, Wash.; Dick Hewetson, Calif.; Michael Jacobson, Nev.; Charles Bender, Ind.; Gary Stormo, S.D.; Robin Buckallew, Neb.; Michael Garstin, Texas; Bonnie Stormo, S.D.; Sheri Bender, Ind; Mike Cermak, Pa.; Dan Barker, Wis.; Steve Salemsen, Wis.; Jim Zerwick, Wis.; Kevin Gough, Conn.; and Stephen Hirtle, Pa.

Photography by Ingrid Laas

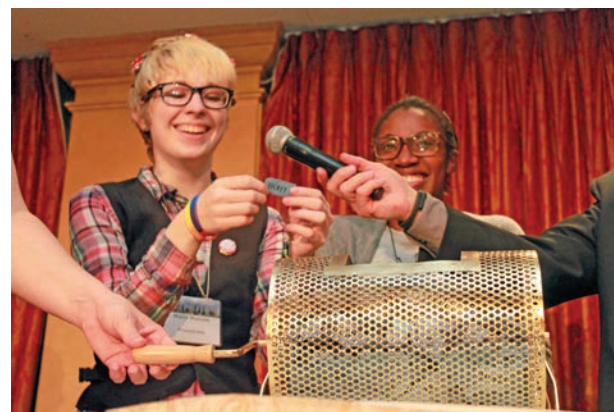
Godless money drawing 'clean' fun



Two 17-year-olds, Ife Kuchler, Calif., and Maria Mancini, Pa., did the honors of drawing winners for FFRF's annual "clean money" raffle to win from \$1 to \$100 in pre-"In God We Trust" currency. Photo: Andrew Seidel



Conducting the drawing were FFRF staffer Katie Daniel with helpers Maria Mancini and Ife Kuchler and Buzz Kemper, announcer of Freethought Radio.



Maria reads a winning ticket.

And the winners are . . .



James Miller, Calif., shows off his four prizes: two "clean" 1935 \$1 bills (one donated by Diane Oxley, N.C.), a \$20 1950A bill (donated by Grant Hazel, Calif.); and the grand prize \$100 bill, 1929 series (donated by Michael Jacobson, Nev.).



Happy winners of the 2014 FFRF "clean" money drawing, proving U.S. currency used to be entirely secular: (left) Charlene Couch, Md., accepting on behalf of Sharon Thomson — \$2 1953B (donated by John Frank); Larry Sugarman, Calif. — \$1 1935A; Rob Hayworth, Md. — \$1 1935 series; Joy Meininger, Calif. — \$10 1950E (donated by Warren Smith, N.Y.); Robert Zadra, Calif. — \$5 1953C (donated by Dennis Anderson and Deanna Sewell, Ore.); Mary Riley Sanders, Ga., — \$50 1934A (donated by Dr. D.A. Rickards, Ohio); John Steinberg, M.D., Md. — \$1 1934 series.