



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NWSEO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet NWSEO Lifetime Member Suzanne Sims



(January 9, 2021) Please meet NWSEO Lifetime Member, **Suzanne Sims** of Tucson, Arizona. Ms. Sims reflects on her time as a member of NWSEO, which began in 1995.

1. Briefly tell us what sparked your interest to pursue a career in weather?

My father was a meteorologist. He got his MS from the University of Wisconsin and worked as a meteorologist at Fort Huachuca when I was growing up in Southern Arizona. There was always a NOAA Weather Radio in the house, and rain gages being measured, and my father taught me how to identify different cloud types at an early age. My parents actually met at the

University of Arizona, in the Atmospheric Sciences department when my father was a research scientist, and my mother was Dr. Louis Battan's secretary. Dr. Louis Battan is well known for his research on radar meteorology and cloud physics. So, when I ended up studying there, the professors knew my parents and welcomed me aboard. In other words, my career in weather was sort of predetermined.

2. What is your history working with the NWS?

I began my career in February 1990 as a Met Intern at Weather Service Office (WSFO) Phoenix. In 1994, I was promoted to a Journey Forecaster position in Sacramento, then transferred to neighboring Monterey in 1998. I was promoted to Lead Forecaster a year later and worked in Monterey until I retired at the end of February 2020. After retiring, I immediately returned to my home state of Arizona, and now live in Tucson.

3. Describe the most unusual/interesting experience in your work.

During the first summer of my career, I got the chance to take a flight on one of the Hurricane Hunter planes during the Southwest Area Monsoon Project (SWAMP) as NOAA and National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) researchers studied monsoon thunderstorms in Mexico. It was also during that summer that I took the weather observation that closed down Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport when the temperature hit 122 degrees. The density altitude charts only considered temperatures as high as 120 degrees then but were modified by the following summer to account for temperatures as high as 130 degrees.

4. Why did you join NWSEO?

I joined NWSEO in 1995 when a government shutdown and a possible furlough loomed. I should have joined much earlier in my career.

5. Briefly discuss your leadership roles and your active participation with our union.

I served as branch steward and vice-steward at both the Sacramento and Monterey offices. I became Western Region (WR) Chairperson in 2013 and served in that role until this past October. I was also on the NWS Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Negotiations Team.

6. Would you recommend joining and supporting NWSEO to others; if so, why?

Absolutely! Being part of NWSEO gives bargaining unit employees a means to steer the course of the NWS by participating in local, regional and national teams, and providing feedback on future contracts. Join NWSEO! Go to conventions, get involved, and run for office! Honestly, the most rewarding aspect of my career was serving as WR Chair. Relationships that I fostered in that role directly helped employees in WR, and our Regional Labor Council actually got important things accomplished within our region.

7. If you could improve one thing about the job you held, what would that be?

As stated previously, I should have joined NWSEO earlier in my career.

8. What is the best place you've traveled to and why?

Hawaii!! The Big Island and Kauai are my favorite of the Hawaiian Islands, but they are all wonderful.

9. Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

Up until recently, I had never watched the TV show *Lost*. I read somewhere that it was the perfect show to binge-watch during a pandemic, and since I had never seen it, I gave in. It is now my latest TV obsession. Don't tell me how it ends, though...I'm now in the final season.

The NWSEO congratulates Ms. Sims in her retirement. We are grateful for her service and tremendous support of NWSEO membership and the Political Action Committee (PAC) funding and also for participating in the NWSEO Spotlight article.

NWSEO recognizes and congratulates *Suzanne Sims* and all of our **Lifetime Members**.



We hope feature stories like this will encourage NWSEO Members to get to know each other from across the nation, connect even more, and together, support each other in the work of NWSEO and in strengthening our membership. Please submit your Member Spotlight suggestions and comments to Christy Fox, mediarelations@nwseo.org.

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No one works harder for NOAA employees than NOAA employees.

We are NOAA employees. We are NWSEO.

NWSEO proudly represents more NOAA employees than any other Union. NWSEO serves bargaining unit employees of the National Weather Service, NESDIS Office of Satellite and Product Operations, Office of General Counsel, Aircraft Operations Center, and Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.