

**FRONTLINE -- a monthly publication by Stanford Staffers  
a non-profit association.**

**Stanford Staffers - networking since 1951-**  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/Staffers/>



<http://www.stanford.edu/group/Staffers/Board.html>

Stanford Staffers is a partnership of people within the Stanford community. This cross-section of employees, retirees, spouses, and partners exists to:

- . provide career support and networking opportunities
- . broaden our professional and university network
- . work together with a spirit of help, cooperation and compassion on community service endeavors
- . develop and cultivate if diverse workplace.

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In the early 1990s, Stanford Staffers distributed "Frontline",  
a printed newsletter for members, from which text below is extracted.

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## **Profile**

### **Stanford Staffer Board Member Jack Truher**

by Edie Bridges, April 1993  
(extract as appeared in  
Stanford Staffers' Newsletter, "Frontline")

"Activist" is without doubt the *mot juste* for Staffer Jack Truher that leaps to mind, the more you learn of his interest in labor issues over the past two decades. It's been an interest translated into doing; in the most practical sense, a willingness to take responsibility for counseling anyone who appeals for help in matters of labor vis-a-vis management. Jack schedules many noon and after-hours meetings to advise ether employees.

How was this interest born and nurtured? Possibly his early parochial school training? It is interesting that Jack's mother was a Professor of Elementary Education at Cal State LA. She was honored with a campus-wide "Outstanding Professor" award in 1977. Both Jack and his brother played high school football in Pasadena; both received their bachelor degrees at Stanford, where Jack concentrated on ROTC and his major, physics. Hired upon graduation in 1960 by the U.C. Livermore labs (LLNL), Jack remained there until his move to SLAC in 1965. After supervising accelerator operations shifts in the early years as an engineering physicist, "making the accelerator perform," Jack recalls, he later moved to technical and documentation support.

Jack opposed the Viet Nam war and became active in supporting the union movement at Stanford, although he himself is exempt and not eligible to be included in the bargaining unit. Around 1971, SLAC began to institute many layoffs and some injustices needed to be examined. Who could help in such cases?

It was during these years that he began to take on the role of pro bono advocate for workers at SLAC who had no one else to turn to. "I was someone who was willing to say what I thought. I have always been outspoken. A University community above all should protect the right to say what you think," he reflects. Indeed, "President Casper spoke of the very vital role of free speech in the university setting in one of his early addresses here."

And so it was that on weekends and after work hours, Jack began to spend a great deal of personal time speaking with laid-off employees, writing memos on their behalf and acting upon his firm belief in justice for the little person. A fellow employee has long nourished the opinion

that early on, Jack became the target of some suspicions by those in charge that he was less a "company man" at SLAC than an employee with a keen sympathy for those he believed were treated unfairly by management.

A sheaf of photo copies of memos, reports, and letters attest to Jack's efforts in recent years to appeal to human relations officers and management, suggesting alternatives to outright lay-off or asking for review and clemency in the case of employees who felt they were victims, sheared off by the ax-blade of down-sizing.

Organizing an advocacy group plus a weekly drop-in clinic at SLAC has given Jack and informal network of volunteers, a forum for discussion of SLAC personnel policies, events in Washington and their impact on SLAC, and an airing of "latest employee disclosures of mismanagement." Employees are invited to submit in person or by memo "any evidence of abuse of authority, favoritism, prejudicial or capricious violations of employee rights, issues of ethics, honesty, and integrity," or for that matter, good management practices. Special priority is given to punitive and retaliatory repression in the workplace.

Adding the additional impact of a newsletter Jack feels has helped in cases where "long-term staff were being dumped, pushed off the ship." Some cases on behalf of women and various minority employees have been ably addressed by the advocacy process.

A colleague sums it up: "Management has to calculate how Jack is going to react." Jack smiles, pleased at this thought. As Jack puts it, "an independent employee has tremendous power to influence management decisions. Individuals have enormous responsibility."

A remarkable March 1991 story in the Palo Weekly details stories of layoffs of quarter century employees of SLAC, the insensitivity of SLAC management, and Jack's activist role in labor issues during his employment. The story described Jack's assistance at the weekly rap sessions and his one-on-one aid to laid-off employees, helping them determine whether they have legitimate reason to file a grievance and to bring special cases to management's attention. The Weekly reporter continues, "perhaps most of all, Truher gives a forum for people to vent anger, and to see that someone at SLAC cares for them."

Jack's home life is shaped and designed for good counterbalance. With wife Nancy (she's a Stanford grad, a microbiologist and a quality assurance manager for a biotech firm), he enjoys bicycle touring to historic places like Pacific Grove, Point Reyes, or the gold country. Or day hiking in the local hills ("I'm not a camper," says Jack). A gardening enthusiast, he specializes in flower growing at his Los Altos home, composting "everything," and has constructed his own original compositing system. There are three grown children, #1 son is in computers, #2 son has a master's in EE from Stanford, their daughter is a senior at Stanford in human biology.

Relatively new to Staffers (he joined in 1990, Jack had been aware of the club much longer, but claims he originally regarded it as a women's group where he would feel "out of place". But in the past 2 years, Jack has noted the Board's emphasis has shifted to more networking as a priority for Staffers, long a priority close to his heart. "There has been a linking of the social dimension to workplace issues," Jack contends, which underscores his view of our Club's potential as a force for greater communication throughout campus. "Staffer membership can be a valuable asset for employees, a peacemaking force. I would like to see Staffers trust each other to the extent that we support one another in stressful job situations. We need to make ourselves available to each other if we wish to be supportive." Sounds worthwhile, doesn't it?

Activist, yes; perhaps "crusader" is also apt. Jack says it well: "I would prefer the role of peacemaker; I have for a long time been a proponent of mediation. Legal processes are hopelessly contentious and manipulated by the legal profession. Politically and ideologically I am always trying to find a middle ground. It's a constant struggle and there are never absolute victories" he says. This Jack Nicholson look-alike (just add a few pounds) has retained his good humor and ready to laugh. Jack isn't going to give up - you can bet on that.

end of extract as appeared in Stanford Staffers' Newsletter, "Frontline", 1993