

## **Gary Giovino Info**

### **Why are you interested in serving on the co-op's board of directors?**

First, I love the co-op and want to see it continue to thrive. As an objective thinker, I trust that I will learn how the co-op functions and be able to make constructive suggestions for my colleagues on the board to consider. Second, by learning how a modern co-op functions, I will be able to provide an example from hands on experience to the students in my course on corporations and public health, which I teach at UB's School of Public Health & Health Professions. I think the values and principles of the cooperative movement will serve humanity better than for-profit entities run in ways designed to maximize shareholder value, often with little consideration for the worker, the consumer, and the environment. Think of the tobacco and fossil fuel industries as examples.

### **Summarize any experience you may have with cooperatives and community organizations. Be sure to note any leadership roles you may have held in these organizations.**

As a UB graduate student, I was a member during the late 1970s and early 1980s of the North Buffalo Food Cooperative, which was located on Main Street, near the UB South Campus. As a member, I provided monthly service by making a run to the Clinton-Bailey Market and transporting fresh produce back to the Co-op. If memory serves, their motto was "Food for people, not for profit." When we moved to Rochester in 1985, we often shopped at a small cooperative there. We didn't find any food co-ops in the Washington, DC, or Atlanta areas when we lived there during 1988-1999. But when we returned to East Aurora in 1999, we joined the Lexington Co-op and then of course our East Aurora Co-op when it opened. As a public health researcher and practitioner, I have worked with community groups focusing on reducing the disease burden of tobacco use. As a graduate student in the early 1980s at Roswell Park, I ran stop smoking clinics in the community. Later, I organized volunteers for a smoking cessation quit line in the Rochester and Finger Lakes area. In the early 2000's, I was a scientific leader of the African American Smoke Freedom Project (run by colleagues at Roswell Park). In 2006 I joined UB first as a professor in and then as Chair of the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior. We strove to create environments in which the healthy choice is an easy choice. Our cooperative does that well!

### **Summarize your professional experience and skills relevant to service on this Board. What unique skills, personal qualities, or perspective will you bring to the board?**

I trust the Board meetings will be serious business. That said, after running department and committee meetings in academia, I think Board meetings will be a lot of fun! I care tremendously about people, equity, and nutrition. I suspect that my experience as a public health scientist and practitioner will provide a unique perspective.

**Describe your experiences working collaboratively with others in a group setting.**

There are many, from working with classmates as senior class president in high school to coordinating faculty promotions at UB. Probably the biggest effort was working with colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (where I worked as a Branch Chief in the 1990s), Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, and the White House to enact tobacco product regulations.

**Based on your current knowledge and experience with being a Coop member, what is your:**

**a. Vision for next 3-5 years (near term)?**

For the co-op to continue to thrive and grow in the current location.

**b. Vision for next 10- 15 years (longer term)?**

For the co-op to move to a larger location, somewhere in East Aurora. (Also, eventually, to be net-zero – but by 2050).

**What do you think is currently the greatest strength of the Coop?**

The people, including all the staff and member owners.

**What do you think needs improvement at this time?**

This is a difficult one. I look forward to the day when the plexiglass barriers can safely come down.

**Just for fun...What is your favorite food?**

This is a difficult one, because I believe in and practice variety. I'll say breakfast food. Today I had quinoa, blueberries, flax meal, soy yogurt, and cinnamon. That's my favorite right now!

**Please add anything else you feel is relevant to your candidacy.**

I have offered to teach classes on lifestyle and health – but the COVID experience prevented that from happening. I'd like to do so, if there is interest.