

## DAVID C. RANGLES

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It was in the early 1970's, shortly after the inception of the Taylor Law and in the very beginning of my career in labor relations, that I met Father Randles. Yes, besides being an arbitrator and mediator at the time, he was also the pastor of an Episcopal church in Clifton Park, New York.

I was working for the then-Narcotic Addiction Control Commission as one of two staff assigned to grievance and arbitration matters. The State had just negotiated its first contract with employee organizations representing State employees, and we were one of the agencies with several secure facilities employing Council 82-represented Narcotic Correction Officers.

There was a complaint from one of our incarcerated residents, as they were called back then, at one of our Adirondack-area facilities, to the then-State Investigation Commission (SIC), that there was drug and sexual activity going on between staff and residents at various levels in the facility. As an offshoot of that investigation, disciplinary action was proposed against several staff. Grievances for all the cases against represented employees were pursued through the grievance process to arbitration. I, along with one of our young agency attorneys who had no labor relations experience, was assigned to do the collection of evidence and to represent the State in the arbitration process.

As we got closer to the arbitration hearings, the resident, who had been released from detention by the time the matters came to arbitration, was reluctant to testify. We even had some trouble initially identifying who she was, because she had been granted identity protection by the SIC if she testified in their investigation. She was only known as "Miss X." After much effort, we were able to identify her and, after talking at length with her, she agreed to testify against the involved employees who were up on charges. She trusted the facility director's wife and asked that she accompany her to the hearing.

So, the first case was scheduled for arbitration, and Father Randles was assigned as the arbitrator. The hearing was scheduled on a Saturday, because Miss X, who had moved home and lived on Long Island, could only get a ride to Albany on a Saturday. Arbitrator Randles began the hearing and we reached the point where the testimony of Miss X had to commence. She came into the hearing room and saw Arbitrator Randles in his cleric collar. She bolted out of the room, refusing to testify in front of a priest.

After considerable discussion with myself and the union attorney, in his gentle, professional, unbiased manner, Father Randles convinced the parties, both of whom were reticent, to allow him to talk with Miss X privately. He did so for several minutes. When they came back into the hearing room, Miss X testified. Neither of us know what he said to her, but again his manner and persuasiveness prevailed.

Arbitrator Randles conducted a very fair hearing, showing extreme sensitivity while also honoring the rules of evidence and practicing good arbitration process. He was largely responsible for this case, the first, to move along to conclusion. His involvement made a lasting impression on me and had a strong impact on a young labor relations person who was learning the ropes.

The next time I came in contact with Father Randles was in negotiations with Council 82 in the late 1970's, when I had just moved to the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER). I was just a junior member of the State's negotiating team, but I observed Father Randles, representing PERB, working hard to help an emotionally charged negotiation process move forward. His whole approach again was one of respect, appreciation for both perspectives, as well as sincerity and honesty, and he was able to present options which, while not readily embraced initially, did eventually have an impact on the ultimate resolution of critical issues.

It is my belief that David Randles came along at the right time in the earlier years of the Taylor Law. He was one of the really true professionals who helped shape labor relations policy and practice in the public sector. I am proud to have known him.

Allen C. DeMarco  
*Arbitrator/Mediator*  
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