

Freedom From Religion Foundation 47th Year — 2024

This report includes highlights and metrics from January through December 2024.

By Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor

FFRF membership climbs to 41,900

FFRF has more than doubled our paid memberships in the past decade, remaining the largest freethought association in North America (and the third largest in the world!). We're growing and are grateful to all of our members for your continued commitment.



By Chris Line

Who are FFRF members?

2024 Membership Survey

An impressive 11,000 out of 40,000 members filled out our survey! Here's what we learned:

Two-thirds identify as "atheist": Most of us are first generation freethinkers. The majority thought our way out of Protestantism, closely followed by Catholicism. About 15 percent had at least one Jewish parent. Fascinatingly, 39 percent left religion quite young, between the ages of 10–20, and found the process of rejecting religion "fairly quick." Why did you leave? Two-thirds chose "lack of evidence," closely followed by "the harm caused by religion in the broader world," "religious hypocrisy," "science" and "bigotry."

You're activists: We are impressed that 88 percent have spoken out or complained about state/church entanglements (kudos), 74 percent of us speak out freely about our lack of religion, 63 percent have a spouse or companion who is also nonreligious. A lonely third feel like the only nonreligious person in your area and have experienced social stigma or other prejudice as a non-believer. Changing that is one of FFRF's purposes!

FFRF is educated: 76 percent have at least a four-year degree — double that of the general population at 38 percent. (Almost 20 percent have some college or trade school.) More than a quarter have one or more master's degrees, 9 percent hold doctorates, 9 percent some graduate education, 4 percent law degrees and 4 percent are M.D., VET/DDS-DMS. Wow!

Average age: 66.6 (no kidding)! Two-thirds are retired or semi-retired. Slightly more than two-thirds are male, 32 percent female with remainder nonbinary, third gender or transgender. About 14 percent are LGBTQ-plus individuals. Twenty percent have or are serving in the military, a quarter are or were teachers, a fifth union members, 39 percent regular volunteers, 13 percent vegetarian or vegan and (a question thrown in just for fun) a fifth of you are regular bike riders.

Voters: We're proud that 98 percent of you are registered voters.

An overwhelming 94 percent (questioned in early summer) intended to vote for Joe Biden.

The issues: FFRF'ers chose as top concerns: reproductive rights, civil rights/racial equality and women's rights. Fully 98 percent support legal abortion as a woman's choice, 96 percent support same-sex marriage and civil rights for the LGBTQ community.

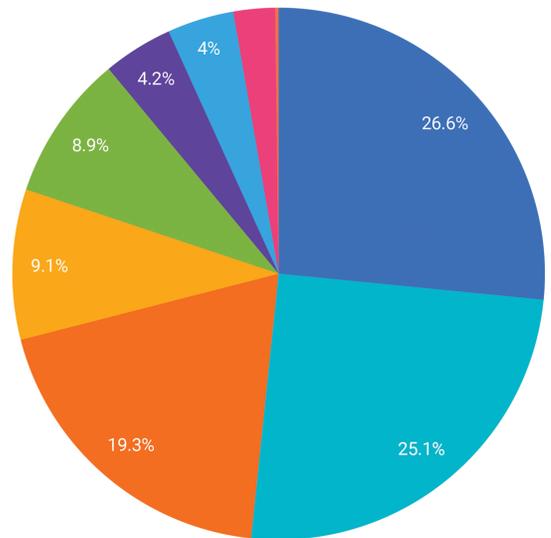


Events manager Sadie Pattinson. By Chris Line

FFRF Action Fund and political activity:

The FFRF Board created FFRF Action Fund last year as a c(4) lobbying, legislative adjunct. We found that you overwhelmingly consider the national and state action alerts to be a valuable service. Nearly 60 percent contacted your public official in the prior year. Two-thirds made a political donation —

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?



- Master's degree (one or more)
- 4-year college graduate
- Some college or trade school
- PhD
- Some graduate education (toward a master's or doctoral degree)
- JD
- M.D., VET/DDS-DMS
- High School or GED
- Less than High School

politicians should be wooing us! Many members were likely to display a political button or yard sign.

Membership satisfaction: We're so pleased that 99 percent register as "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with being an FFRF member and that two-thirds have recommended FFRF to a friend (thank you!).

FFRF members vs. "Nones." We also commissioned a scientific comparison of our membership with a random sampling of "Nones" (religiously unaffiliated).

A fascinating analysis of how FFRF members differ from "Nones" in general is found on Page 1 of the November 2024 issue of *Freethought Today*. Spoiler alert: We're a lot more liberal and care a lot more about FFRF's twin pursuits of freethought and state/church separation.

FFRF's vital legal work

Nationally watched litigation: Suing in Louisiana over the Ten Commandments. FFRF is suing with a coalition of state/church groups in federal court against the outrageous law passed this year requiring large displays of the Ten Commandments in every single public classroom from kindergarten through college. We've filed for a preliminary injunction in the case, *Roake v. Brumley*, representing a diversity of nine religious and nonreligious families, with a decision expected by mid-November.

Suing in Oklahoma over bibles in schools.

FFRF filed suit in November to block Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters' unconstitutional mandate that all public schools incorporate the bible into curricula, as part of a coalition including the ACLU, the ACLU of Oklahoma Foundation, the Oklahoma Appleseed Center for Law & Justice and Americans United. We're representing 32 diverse religious and nonreligious plaintiffs. Walters requested \$3 million in taxpayer money to purchase a version of the King James Bible that coincidentally matches the \$60 Trump "God Bless America Bible." And he wants another \$3 million in 2025! We're asking the state Supreme Court to step in right away to stop this travesty.



FFRF court wins. Although FFRF bested Texas Gov. Greg Abbott more than a year ago in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals after he illegally censored FFRF's Bill of Rights nativity display in the Capitol, it took until 2024 to finally receive reimbursement for attorneys' fees: \$358,000 shared between our outside firm and FFRF.

In a second win, FFRF and a coalition of service and advocacy organizations had sued eight federal agencies to undue Trump rules allowing discrimination by faith-based providers, which finally was closed in 2024 when new rules reinstated safeguards.

In March, FFRF filed a lawsuit on behalf of The Satanic Temple (TST) against a Memphis-area school district for unlawfully discriminating against the After School Satan Club's request to meet in a district elementary school. The Good News Club, which is Christian, was being treated far more favorably. The district was charging the TST club excessive fees, canceling its reservations and refusing to communicate with it. The lawsuit was



Our legal department, with seven attorneys plus two full-time legal assistants, is overseen by Legal Director Patrick Elliott and Deputy Legal Director Liz Cavell. By Chris Line

settled after the district agreed to treat TST's club equally going forward. The district paid FFRF and our cooperating attorneys over \$15,000 in fees and costs.

Ongoing lawsuits:

- **Oklahoma Catholic charter school challenge.** FFRF and a coalition of groups and plaintiffs filed a federal lawsuit in July 2023 challenging the nation's first religious public charter school approved in Oklahoma. This is an egregious attempt to force taxpayers to subsidize overt sectarian education, in a scheme that the Catholic Church hopes to take around the country. Our case is in limbo while we await whether the Supreme Court will hear an appeal of the Oklahoma attorney general's successful challenge in state court. We're watching developments closely.
- **Arkansas Ten Commandments case:** *Orsi v. Martin*, a challenge of the Ten Commandments monument at the state Capitol, first filed in 2018, is awaiting a ruling by the federal district court judge.

Significant nonlitigation legal advocacy. FFRF attempts to end violations through education and persuasion when possible. We received 2,451 reports of violations from our members or members of the public, which all receive responses. FFRF attorneys sent 667 formal complaint letters to violating governmental actors, the vast majority to public schools.

And it pays to complain! FFRF has achieved **227 significant victories** in 2024 — most halting a variety of public school entanglements. Victories are reported monthly in *Freethought Today*.

Legal education. The "We Dissent" monthly podcast by women attorneys from three secular groups, featuring FFRF Deputy Legal Director **Liz Cavell**, has 38 published pod-



casts and more than 68,000 downloads. FFRF attorneys publish at least two blogs a month at *Freethoughtnow.org*, and have co-hosted 88 percent of the weekly YouTube episodes of "Ask an Atheist," sharing their wisdom and interviewing guests.

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FFRF/national FFRF Chapters' billboard near Centennial Park in downtown Atlanta.

Ten amicus briefs filed. FFRF filed 12 amicus briefs in 2024, including: two before the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, two before the U.S. Supreme Court, two in the 9th Circuit, and one each before the 7th Circuit, the Oklahoma Supreme Court, an Arizona U.S. district court, a N.J. district court and a Minnesota district court. Issues include: funding of discriminatory religious college courses open to public high school students, religious exemptions allowing discrimination in placement of foster parents and cancellation for religious reasons of a drag show benefit by a student club at a public university. FFRF weighed in objecting to the mifepristone ban before the Supreme Court, as well as a case involving a federal rule requiring hospitals to stabilize patients including providing emergency abortions. Read the briefs: ffrf.org/amicus-briefs

FFRF Advertises Freethought & Secular Values

Ron Reagan ads and voter awareness drive. FFRF debuted a 30-second spot on the dangers of Christian nationalism during the June presidential debate between Biden and Trump on MSNBC. FFRF's iconic TV ad featuring **Ron** ("unabashed atheist . . . not afraid of burning in hell") **Reagan** ran this year over broadcast TV again as funds permitted on "60 Minutes," "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," "The Daily Show," "The Rachel Maddow Show," "All in with Chris Hayes" and "CBS Sunday Morning." In a fall blitz, Ron's radio commercial ran on popular podcasts like "The Complete Guide to Everything," and "Factually! With Adam Conover," among others. The radio ad also ran on "Howard Stern," "Bloomberg Radio," "POTUS" and other Sirius XM shows. "**Vote Like Your Rights Depend On It**" ads ran over SiriusXM, delivered by SiriusXM hosts Stephanie Miller, Thom Hartmann, Sarah Silverman and John Fugelsang, among others.

Occasional educational ads ran in the New York Times, including one lambasting Alabama's theocratic IVF ruling, as well as in The Nation, The Progressive and Scientific American.



Supporters of Florida's pro-choice Amendment 4 gathered in the rain by FFRF Action Fund's billboard in Orlando to show their support. Thanks to FFRF Action Fund Board member and Central Florida Freethought volunteer Jocelyn Williamson for organizing the coordinating T-shirts and group photo.

Chapter billboard campaigns. Our chapters, led by Sacramento chapter leader Judy Saint, raised more than \$32,000 in funds to place "**Be a Voter: Save Democracy**" ads in all seven swing states near major public universities, plus a bonus ad in Florida. The Denver chapter paid for and erected a huge billboard saying "Keep freedom alive — Stop Project 2025" within blocks of FFRF's national convention there. Thank you, chapters!

FFRF placed a 14-by-48-foot bulletin billboard with the same slogan near the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. FFRF Action Fund, FFRF's advocacy arm, placed a billboard promoting Florida's pro-choice Amendment 4 and also distributed \$5,000 to each of the groups in 10 states leading abortion rights referenda in the general election.

Legislation/Lobbying achievements

Congressional actions. Congrats to FFRF Governmental Affairs Director **Mark Dann**, who this November was named a "Top Lobbyist" by the National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics for his ethical leadership, advocacy and commitment. With Senior Policy Counsel **Ryan Jayne**, Mark created a Dynamic Scorecard for the House and made sure FFRF led on critical bills such as the Health Share Transparency Act, judicial reform bills and repealing the Comstock Act. He arranged for FFRF to hire four campaign fellows at key universities in Wisconsin to focus on voter registration. He and FFRF established, with partners, the **first Congressional Reason Reception** on the Hill, among other achievements. Mark has developed key relationships with LGBTQ+ Victory Fund, We the People for Education and Our Schools USA. The team tabled at the National Conference of State Legislatures.



Mark Dann. By Chris Line

State legislative work. The legislative team including State Policy Counsel Ryan Jayne and State Policy Manager **Ryan Dudley** worked directly with legislators and advocacy groups to introduce a version of the Health Share Transparency Act in three states (Minnesota, Arizona and South Dakota). Engagement is

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FFRF Senior Policy Counsel Ryan Jayne, Wis. Gov. Tony Evers, FFRF Legal Fellow Kat Grant and State Policy Manager Ryan Dudley.

ongoing to introduce bills to remove religious exemptions for child neglect in a few key states. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers called on FFRF staff to attend two bill signing ceremonies for legislation we backed.

Action Alerts help your voice be heard. Ryan Jayne and Ryan Dudley monitored bills over the last full legislative session in all 50 states, tracking 1,600 bills and reviewing another 1,200. Via FFRF Action Fund, more than 300 timely alerts were issued to more than 45,000 advocates and more than 18,000 advocates took action, contacting government officials over 180,000 times. Thanks to Editorial Assistant **Greg Fletcher** for hard work on action alerts, and to **Caitlin Berray** as governmental affairs coordinator.

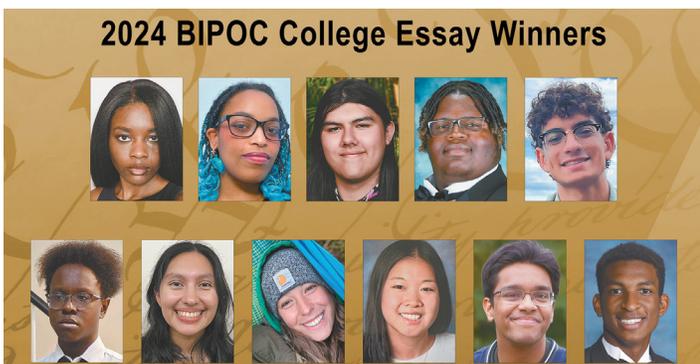
New Rapid Response Counsel: FFRF Attorney **Chris Line** is moving from legal complaint letters to a new position to permit more rapid response on policy and some legal issues, and to rev up FFRF Action Fund’s website, with a “Theocracy Watch” timely section coming soon! Thanks also to Chris, a talented photographer, for his wonderful photography for FFRF.



Chris Line. By Chris Line

\$130,000+ in student scholarships and support

FFRF this year has granted \$130,250 in scholarships and awards to freethinking students: \$18,850 in prize money to 11 major winners and seven honorable mentions in its David Hudak Memorial Essay Contest for **Black, Indigenous and Students of Color**; \$19,600 in award money to 12 top winners and seven honorable mentions in its Kenneth L. Proulx Memorial Essay Contest for **Ongoing College Students**; \$16,450 to 10 major winners



2024 College Essay Contest Winners



and five honorable mentions in the Cornelius Vanderbroek Memorial Essay Contest for **Grad/Older Students**; \$19,850 to 12 major winners and 14 honorable mentions in its William Schulz Memorial High School Essay Contest for **College-bound High School Seniors** and \$9,000 to three winners of the Diane and Stephen Uhl Memorial **Law Student** Essay Competition.

\$35,000 in tuition relief. In FFRF’s sixth annual distribution of the Forward Freethought Tuition Relief Scholarships, almost entirely funded by generous FFRF **benefactor Lance Bredvold**, FFRF gave \$5,000 each to six students, and \$2,500 to two additional students. All are first in their family to attend college. This scholarship is in conjunction with Black Skeptics Los Angeles. Additionally FFRF awarded \$2,500 for Lorraine Hansberry Memorial Student Scholarships to six high school students, splitting costs in conjunction with the Women’s Leadership Project.

FFRF student activist awards.

Yoshimi Garcia, a school board student representative who bravely objected to a proposal to start school board meetings in Prosser, Wash., with pastor prayers, received the **FFRF Student Activist Award** of \$2,000 endowed by a West Couple couple. Noah Dempsey, another school board rep who chimed in against this proposal, won the \$2,000 **Al Luneman Student Activist Award**. The proposal was quashed! Eli Frost received the **FFRF Al Luneman student activist award** of \$1,000 this year via Secular Student Alliance for campaigning against high school graduations taking place in a fundy megachurch. Three secular students at **Historically Black Colleges and Universities** received \$1,000 each from the FFRF Cliff Richards Memorial Student Scholarship Fund. A design student from Turkey won the **FFRF Yip Harburg Lyric Foundation Scholarship**, also via SSA.



Yoshimi Garcia and Noah Dempsey.

FFRF’s Secular ‘Underground Railroad. FFRF has given \$18,000 in grants for endangered nonbelievers, \$10,000 to IHEU’s “Protect Humanists at Risk” campaign. \$10,000 each to two volunteer abortion funds, \$10,000 to Black Nonbelievers and humanitarian grants of \$10,000 each to Doctors Without Borders for

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Gaza relief and to the International Rescue Committee for relief in Sudan.

‘Rational Radio & Blasphemous Broadcasting’



Bruce Johnson. By Chris Line

FFRF has its own media! FFRF publishes 10 issues/year of our newspaper *Freethought Today*, curated by Editor **PJ Slinger**. “Freethought Radio,” hosted weekly by FFRF Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor, is in its 19th year broadcasting in 10 states. Its podcast has had more than 1.7 million total downloads averaging

15,000 per month. Listen at ffrf.org/radio or through your favorite podcast provider. The duo report on FFRF and other news from the past week and interview leading authors and activists.

FFRF’s Stephen Uhl Friendly Atheist Studio is home to two programs: “**Ask an Atheist**” airing Wednesdays at noon Central via YouTube and Facebook is a topical program with FFRF’s staff and a variety of timely guests. “**Freethought Matters**,” a half-hour TV public affairs interview show with Dan and Annie Laurie overseen by Multimedia Director **Bruce Johnson** and Producer **Leo Costello**, airs weekly in six major cities plus FFRF’s YouTube channel. Find out more: ffrf.org/freethoughtmatters.

FFRF makes news and is in the news! FFRF’s Director of Communications **Amit Pal** has overseen more than 300 FFRF news releases plus the Weekly Wrap. More than 100 press releases have been published by the FFRF Action Fund. Staff and guest columnists wrote 100 FFRF blogs published at Freethoughtnow.org.

Social and other media: FFRF has 95.5K Twitter (X) followers, 459K Facebook friends, 59.3K YouTube subscribers with more than 570K video views, 20.4K Instagram followers and 28.6K TikTok followers (with 70.5K video views). Thanks to Digital Coordinator **Rowan Hahn**, Marketing and PR Director **Sara Tetzloff** and Rapid Response Counsel **Chris Line**. One post by a Reddit follower this year reached over 1 million views. Greg Fletcher compiles “FFRF in the News” and reports that FFRF actions



Co-president Dan Barker and Black Nonbelievers president Mandisa Thomas performed and judged at the humanist “African Awakenings” festival in Lagos, Nigeria, in October, co-sponsored by FFRF. Pictured are some of the students who competed for cash prizes.

have been covered by more than 500 bonafide news articles and nearly 40 TV segments. See coverage at: ffrf.org/news/media

FFRF on the road and outreach

General speaking engagements. International travel included to Finland’s “Spring of Exuberance,” co-sponsorship of the “Celebrate Dissent” conference in Oslo featuring ex-Muslims and a trip to Nigeria by Dan Barker accompanied by Black Nonbeliever President **Mandisa Thomas** as part of the “African Freethought Music and Art Festival.” Dan is speaking at the Third Latin American Freethought Conference in November along with Board Member **David Tamayo**, which FFRF has co-sponsored. Annie Laurie Gaylor is doing a debate on women and religion at the Cambridge Union, U.K., in November. Dan had a Virginia speaking tour in February in three cities.

Staff attorneys spoke at about a dozen events. FFRF attorneys made a dozen appearances at FFRF chapters, universities and events such as the Secular Student Alliance conference, the Kentucky Freethought Convention and the National Day of Reason at the Minnesota Capitol, among others. The legislative staff also spoke at several rallies and chapter events.

Co-sponsorships: FFRF co-sponsored the Secular Student Alliance annual conference, the Secular Day of the Dead international event, Celebrate Dissent and the first Reason Reception in Congress. It is a member of the Secular Coalition for America and an active member of the Thomas Paine Memorial Association, which has congressional approval to erect (finally) a statue of Forgotten Founder Thomas Paine in the nation’s capital.

Chapters, Boards, Staff



Ozarks Chapter Leader Chris Sweeney.

17 chapters around the U.S.: Hardworking volunteers lead FFRF chapters, overseen by chapter liaison **Sadie Pattinson**, in 17 regions. FFRF welcomes its newest chapter: Upstate New York Freethinkers. Chapters put on a variety of local activities: meetings, billboards, volunteerism and activism. Find out if there’s a chapter in your area: ffrf.org/about/ffrf-chapters

2024 Executive Board: FFRF’s Executive Board of Directors are: Michael Cermak, chair, Steve Salemsen, treasurer; Cheryl Kolbe, secretary; Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor co-presidents (each with a half vote) and directors at large: Jeremiah Camara and Granada Higgins (sharing a vote), Stephen Hirtle, Sue Kocher, Todd Peissig and David Tamayo.

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FFRF's current State Representatives help represent their states and elect the executive board. They are:

Daniel Barker (WI), Darrell Barker (WA), Charles Bender (IN), Sheri Bender (IN), Lance Bredvold (MT), Robin Buckallew (NE), Chris Calvey (CO), Jeremiah Camara (GA), Tom Cara (WI), John Cavin (KS), Michael Cermak (PA), Sheridan Chapin (NY), Dianne Cooper (IA), Margaret Downey (PA), Mike Dubik (VA), Annie Laurie Gaylor (WI), Carolyn Golojuch (HI), Kevin Gough (CT), Ken Gould (AR), Alice Heath (MT), Ed Hensley (KY), Mikel Hensley (KY), Granada Higgins (GA), Stephen Hirtle (PA), Ken Hofbauer (IL), Linda Hollar (TX), George Iddon (WA), Julie Iddon (WA), Linda Josheff (WI), Sue Kocher (NC), Cheryl Kolbe (OR), Aleta Ledendecker (TN), Jodette Lenser (MO), Steven Lowe (DC), Douglas Marshall (MI), Rob Moore (WI), Julie Nichols Legg (MN), Paul Novak (IA), Julie Olsen (AK), Todd Peissig (WI), Robert Pierce (ID), Nancy Rattman (MN), Judy Saint (CA), Betsy Salemsen (NH), Steve Salemsen (WI), Tom Schottmiller (PA), Sue Schuetz (WI), Nick Sheridan (MD), Steve Solomon (MO), Claudette St.Pierre (CO), Bonnie Stormo (SD), Gary Stormo (SD), David Tamayo (VA), Ray Vensel (ME), David Williamson (FL), Jocelyn Williamson (FL), Lisa Willman (TX).

Losing a friend

We sadly said goodbye to dear advocate and brilliant philosopher **Daniel C. Dennett**, who died this spring.

FFRF Staff. FFRF's growing staff of 36 full-timers plus one part-timer, is ably overseen by Director of Operations **Lisa Strand**. Welcome to new full-time employees this year: **Sammi Lawrence** as staff attorney after serving as a legal fellow for two years; **Chris Line**, a staff attorney, is moving to rapid response counsel; **Leo Costello**, our first producer to help with video, radio and TV shows; **Bella Benoy**, HR manager; **Sara Tetzloff**, our first



Daniel C. Dennett.
By Ingrid Laas

marketing/PR director; **Hirsh Joshi**, our Anne Nicol Gaylor Legal Fellow; and **Kyle Steinberg**, our Patrick O'Reiley Legal Fellow. Congratulations to new Legal Director **Patrick Elliott** and new Legal Deputy **Liz Cavell**. Info on all staff may be found at: ffrf.org/about/staff-board

Legal Interns. FFRF thanks this year's law students Cara Hendrix, Grace Kraimer and Preston Bowden, and undergrads Ethan Morris and Aiden Culver.

Volunteers: FFRF is grateful for our cadre of some 30 dedicated volunteers who read and judge hundreds of student essays, and help FFRF nurture the next generation.



2024 Legal interns.
By Chris Line

See you in Myrtle Beach, S.C. — 2025



Charles Blow. By Steve Solomon

666 is the magic number. That was the number of registered participants at FFRF's well-received 47th annual convention in Denver representing 46 states, D.C., Nepal, Canada and the United Kingdom. **Ron Reagan** wowed with a hard-hitting but humorous keynote, New York Times columnist and honoree **Charles Blow** awed with a spellbinding speech on Christian nationalism, and experts and authors such **Katherine Stewart**, **Kate Cohen** and **Michelle Goldberg** informed us. Honoree **Bonnie Garmus**, author of the bestselling "Lessons in Chemistry," shared a funny losing-my-religion story and autographed many books.

If you couldn't make the convention, no worries. **Talks are already viewable at ffrf.org/convention2024.** Speeches will appear in upcoming issues of Freethought Today. Special thanks to convention planners and logistics-handlers Events Manager Sadie Pattinson, Membership Manager Lily Pocs, Lisa Strand, Video Director Bruce Johnson and crew, Audio for the Arts Engineer Buzz Kemper and crew, Shop Manager Katina Gehn and the rest of the hard-working staff who ran the convention.

See you at the 48th annual national convention taking place at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort, S.C., on Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning, Oct. 17-19, 2025.

Scopes Centennial Conference. And look for info soon on the Scopes Trial Centennial next July that FFRF is co-sponsoring with the Center for Inquiry.



Extreme conservative commentator Todd Starnes' quote about FFRF, which FFRF proudly embraces, was on our World's Only Atheist Digital Marquee the day a staff photo was taken. By Chris Line