

Tim Mattice, executive director The Election Center



Tim Mattice is retiring at the end of 2022 after 16 years at [The Election Center](#). He started as director of education and training in 2006 and became executive director in 2014. Prior to that, Mattice was the special projects coordinator at the New York State Board of Elections from 1995-2006. He worked as a senior trainer for SUNY Albany Sponsored Funds Program from 1984-1995. He has also done training for a major New York State corporation.

Why have you decided to retire at this time?

I've been in the elections field for 27 years and before that 11 years at a state university in NYS as a team member in a professional education training program. I decided after 38 years in the professional world, it was time to step aside and start spending more time with family and perhaps pursue some of my personal

interests. It was not an easy decision because of how much I care for the Election Center and the election administrators around the country.

You didn't start your career in elections, but have spent the bulk of your career in them. What was it that attracted you to first taking an elections-related job and what kept you in the industry for so long?

I started at the New York State Board of Elections because the then current Executive Director reached out and asked me to come on Board to facilitate the NVRA training program in NYS. The NVRA had just been passed and the Board wanted someone to go around the state and train all the agencies designated as voter registration sites on the specifics of voter registration. I also got to work with the local county election administrators in NYS and I was astounded at how much these dedicated folks loved what they did despite the obstacles that they had to overcome. I was hooked – I loved this profession because of the people that I had the pleasure to work and I wanted to be part of something so positive and so rewarding for as long as they would have me. After 11 great years at the NYS Board of Elections, I had an invitation from Doug Lewis, the Executive Director of the Election Center at the time, to come and visit the Election Center in Houston as he was looking for a training director. Long story short, Doug hired me as the Election Center's first Training Director in 2006. In 2015 Doug retired and the Board of Directors interviewed and hired me as the next Executive Director. My 16 years at the Election Center allowed me to continue working with professionals that I respected and cared for on a larger scale and one thing that I'll always treasure is the dedication, resilience and love for elections as a common thread among election officials across all states, including the U.S. Territories.

You were in New York City working for the NYSBOE on Sept. 11, 2001. Can you tell us a bit about what happened that day and how it impacted you?

On 9/11 I was scheduled to do training right behind the Twin Towers. I was on the subway that morning on my way to the training facility when the subway came to an abrupt stop and the conductor told us all to get off the train as quickly as possible. I came out of the subway entrance right in front of both Towers and saw they were on fire near the top. I couldn't imagine what horror had occurred but I started walking towards the towers to get to my training site. When I reached the towers, the firemen had a barrier up and told everyone in the street to run away from the Towers. There was so much commotion and so many people in the streets, some screaming, some walking around in a daze, I had no clue what had happened but knew at that moment that I needed to start running because there were hundreds of people turning and running away from the Towers. I got to the first block up from the Towers and the ground started to shake around me like an earthquake and I glanced back at the Towers and the first tower was collapsing so I turned and continued to run as fast as I could to get as far away as possible. Fortunately I escaped getting caught in the dust and flying debris as the towers both came down. It took me 3 hours to walk back to my hotel and it wasn't until I found an unoccupied phone booth (yes there were still phone booths in the city at the time) that I was able to call the office and find out what was happening. The building that I was scheduled to do training in was destroyed as the Towers came down. I didn't find out until several hours later, the devastation and loss of life that resulted from this horrific attack. I know that I will never forget that experience and to this day I pray for the families of the victims and the first responders who never cower or run for cover but do their duty to protect and serve their communities.

What's one of your fondest/most fun memories from your time at the Election Center?

I don't have one fondest memory but I look at my time spent in elections as a period of many fond and fun memories all of which were the result of the incredible men and women that work in elections. I always enjoyed hosting the hospitality suites after CERA/CERV classes were done for the day. To sit and talk with election officials and vendors from around the country and to hear them share with each other was very fulfilling and uplifting. I've made life-long friends on my elections journey and even in retirement those relationships will continue.

What do you feel is the most pressing issue facing elections officials as we move forward into 2024 and beyond?

It's a completely different world in elections today than when I started 27 years ago. I think the amount of knowledge and the variety of hats that election officials are required to wear these days supersedes most professions that I'm aware of. Professional education has become such an important commodity for election administrators and I think one of the most pressing issues is to provide as much education and connections to resources for election administrators that we can at the Election Center. One of my top priorities in my time at the Election Center was identifying and sharing FREE resources for our members. Connecting them to organizations like the USPS, EAC, CISA, EI-ISAC, etc. so they would have access to important tools and ideas to facilitate their work and perhaps make their jobs a tad more manageable.

What's next for you?

I'm sure that on January 2, 2023, I'm going to wake up my usual time (between 5-6 am) and start to get ready for work. It's going to take some time to get used to actually being in charge of my day but I look forward to chipping away at a 16 year to do list around our home. We have 5 children scattered around the U.S. so we will travel and spend time with them and I know that I'll be checking on my elections family often and continuing to be a champion on their behalf wherever and whenever I have the opportunity. Happy New Year to all my friends and colleagues and thank you for the opportunity to serve alongside you and I hope I did so with dignity and grace.