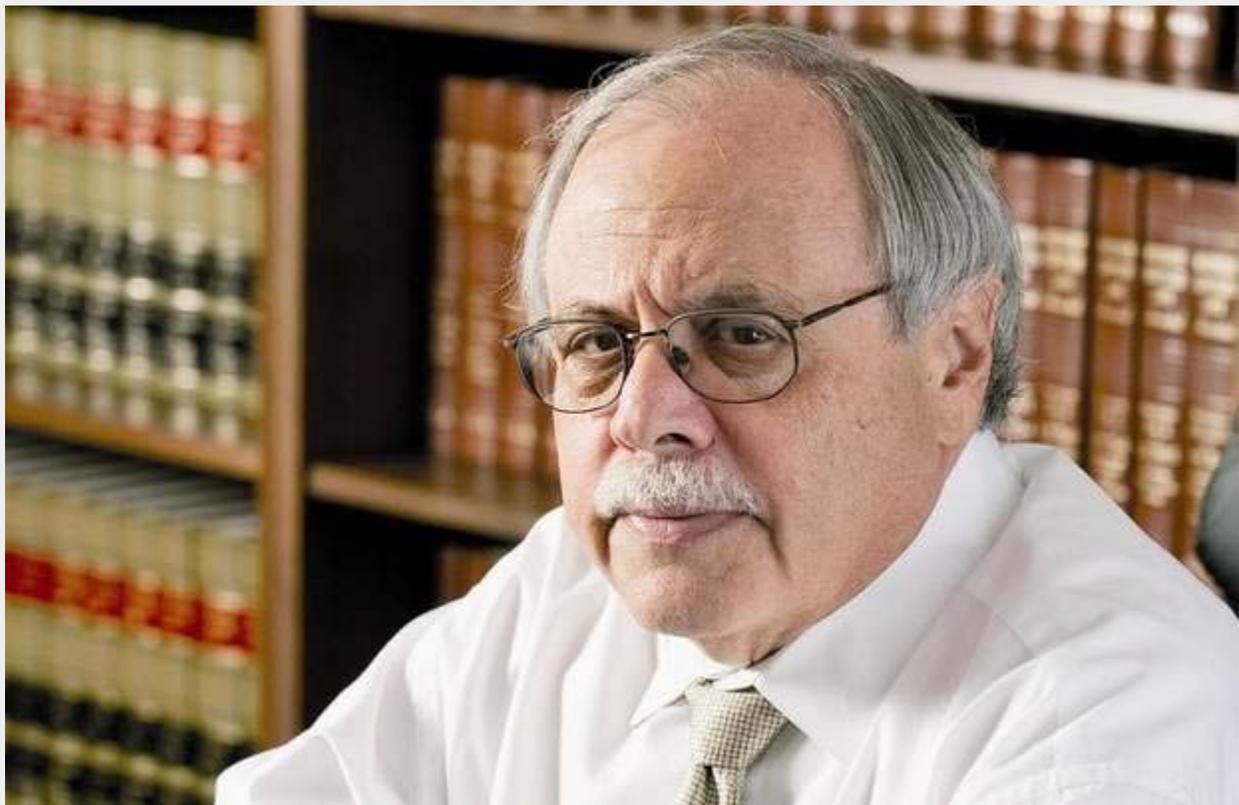


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WINNER: TRUSTEE: Executive's experience boosts benefits trust

By -- [Jay Greene](#)



GLENN TRIEST

Robert Naftaly is chairman of the trust that provides health care benefits to 875,000 UAW retirees. "We started with a blank piece of paper and first had to develop a process," he said of taking on the position in 2008.

Robert Naftaly
Chairman
UAW Retiree Medical Benefit Trust
Detroit

Robert Naftaly had a long career in health care as CEO of **Blue Care Network**, CFO of **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan** and as an independent CPA before retiring in 2001.

But in 2008, Naftaly, 73, was chosen by former **UAW** President Ron Gettelfinger to be an independent chairman on the newly formed 11-member board of the **UAW Retiree Medical Benefit Trust**. The board, which includes six independent trustees and five UAW appointees, voted Naftaly chairman.

The trust is responsible for providing health care benefits for 875,000 UAW retirees and their dependents of **Ford Motor Co.**, **General Motors Co.** and **Chrysler Group LLC**.

During a 12-month period, a Naftaly-led board helped to hire top executives of the trust, including Francine Parker as executive director, Mary Beth Kuderik as CFO and Eric Henry as chief investment officer.

"My best decision was to hire Fran," he said. Parker was formerly the CEO of **Health Alliance Plan of Michigan**.

With an annual budget of nearly \$5 billion, the board had to create from scratch a system by which the trust could govern, manage and invest three separate trusts with assets of more than \$50 billion, Naftaly said.

"We started with a blank piece of paper and first had to develop a process," he said. "The first thing we did was set up three committees: audit, investment and operations."

Early on, the board made a lot of initial decisions, Naftaly said. But as staff was added, including Parker, the board began to delegate authority and "interfaced" with staff or independent contractors, he said.

"We had a successful launch (in January 2010) and we are providing the care. The board should feel proud of what we have done. I hope the members feel the same way," Naftaly said.

UAW President Bob King said Naftaly's experience in health care and in the needs of retirees led to the successful launch of the trust.

"Bob's ongoing leadership is critical in guiding the trust as it provides retiree health care coverage for its members," King said in a statement to *Crain's*.

"Bob Naftaly consistently calls things as he sees them. He somehow always finds a common ground. These are qualities that make him a great chair for the trust."

Naftaly also serves on a variety of boards, such as **Meadowbrook Insurance Group**, **Sun Communities Inc.**, **Talmer Bancorp Inc.**, and **Metropolitan Realty Corp. LLC**.