Dr. Bob Zellner was born on April 5, 1939 and raised in south Alabama, the second of five boys born to Methodist minister James Abraham Zellner and school teacher Ruby Hardy Zellner. A 1957 graduation speaker at Murphy High School in Mobile, he received a BA from Huntingdon College, Montgomery, Alabama in 1961 with highest honors in Sociology and Psychology. After teaching at Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, Zellner was the first white southerner to serve as field secretary for SNCC (“Snick”), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Arrested 18 times in seven states, he organized in Macomb, Mississippi, Albany, Georgia, Danville, Virginia, Talladega, Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama, as well as New Haven, Connecticut, and Boston, Massachusetts. Zellner was charged with everything from criminal anarchy in Baton Rouge to “inciting the black population to acts of war and violence against the white population” in Danville, Virginia. From 1963 to 1965, Zellner studied race relations in the Graduate School of Sociology at Brandeis University. During Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964 he traveled with Rita Schwerner while taking part in SNCC’s and CORE’s investigation of the disappearance of her husband Mickey, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman.

When SNCC became an all black organization in 1967, Zellner and his wife Dottie joined SCEF, the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF) to organize an anti-racism project for black and white workers in the Deep South called GROW, Grass Roots Organizing Work, also called Get Rid Of Wallace. GROW built a residential educational facility in New Orleans and began organizing the Gulf coast Pulpwood Association while working in Laurel, Mississippi where a wildcat strike involving black and white Masonite factory workers and woodcutters spread across the southern states.

Following Nixon's ping pong diplomacy in 1972, Bob Zellner spent six weeks in China visiting paper plants, studying pulpwood harvesting, and lecturing at the National Institute for Minorities in Peking on SNCC, SCEF, and multicultural work in the white community.
Beginning in the mid-sixties, Zellner worked on documentary and feature films, traveling to Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and Mexico. The film *Mississippi Burning* so distorted the role of the FBI in the movement that Zellner toured college campuses lecturing on the real history of the struggle. J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI, far from being heroes of the movement, hounded Zellner's friend and mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King, and launched the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) a U.S. government attack designed to destroy the Freedom Movement.

In the early 1990s, studying at Tulane University for a PhD. in history, Zellner wrote a dissertation on the southern civil rights movement. While working on the dissertation, he taught the History of Activism at Rosemont College, Pennsylvania and Southampton College of Long Island University. Julian Bond, now the National NAACP chairman and Zellner organized the National Civil Rights Coordinating Committee. Zellner works with the Eastern Long Island Branch of the NAACP headed by Lucius Ware and with the Southampton Town Anti-Bias Task Force under the leadership of Dianne Rulnick.

As co-chair of the Town of Southampton Anti-Bias Task Force in 2000, Zellner's right elbow was broken when he mediated a dispute between the police and the Shinnecock Nation. Troopers attacked Dr. Zellner and members of the tribe who were protecting ancestral burial grounds from developer's bulldozers. All who were injured were charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. A Federal jury, in 2007, agreeing with civil rights attorney Frederick Brewington, ruled that Zellner and the Shinnecock were victims of false arrest, malicious prosecution, and denial of civil rights. They were awarded compensatory and punitive damages.

In 2005, Bob Zellner was a featured Civil Rights luminary in the award-winning documentary *Come Walk in My Shoes*. The Annual Faith and Politics Congressional Pilgrimage to Selma, Alabama and other sites of the freedom struggle was led by the Honorable John Lewis and filmed by Robin Smith, award winning documentary director and producer and president and founder of VideoAction.