



WHITE COLLAR

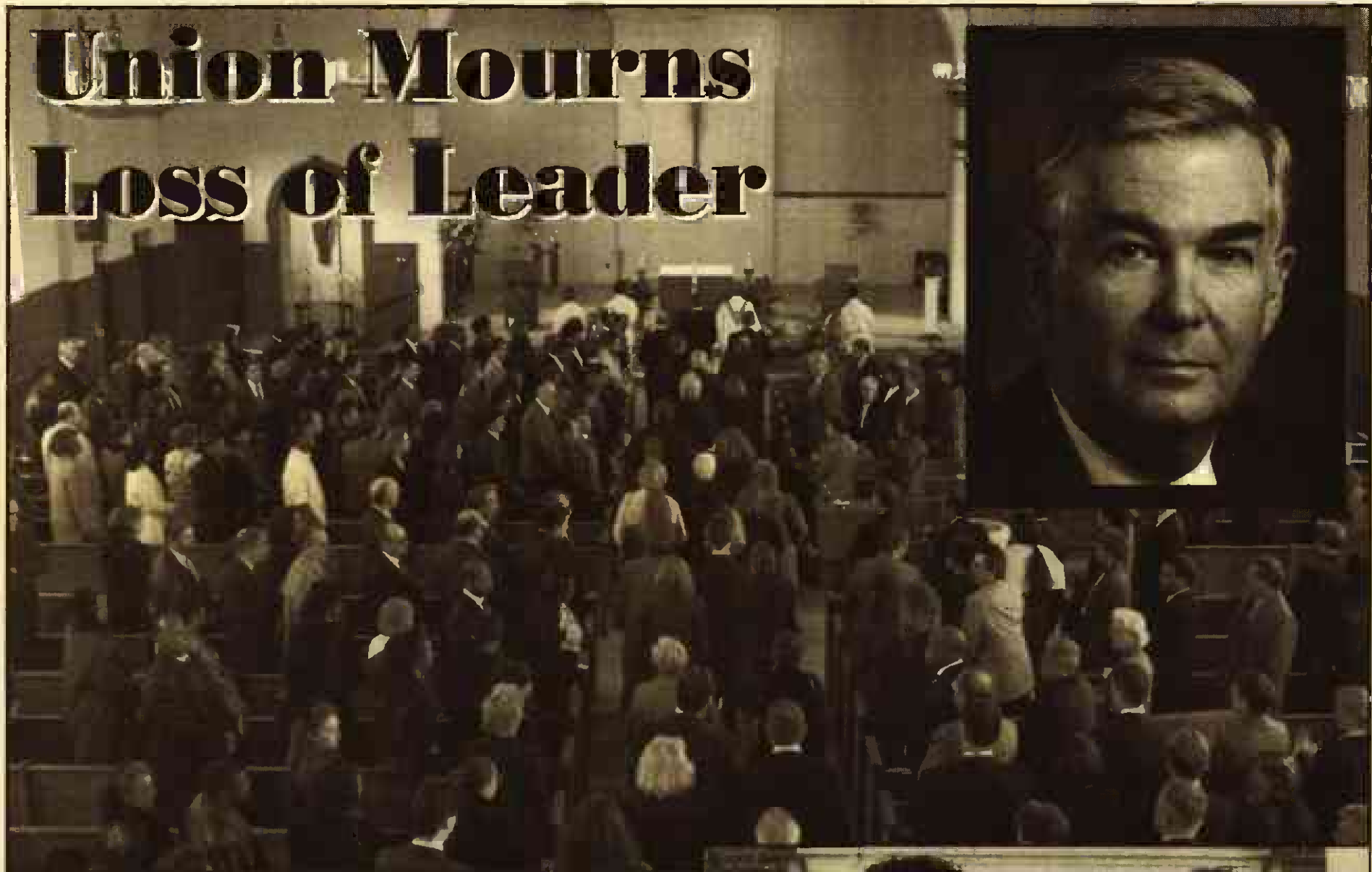
Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO and CLC

No. 450

1994 — Issue 1

President John Kelly Dies;

Union Mourns Loss of Leader



On March 10, 1994, Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) President John Kelly died of a heart attack in the union's New York headquarters. His untimely death was followed by a wake March 13 and 14, and the funeral March 15, 1994.

We are devastated by the sudden loss of our leader. John Kelly, it is generally considered, was a special person and labor leader. He was a mentor and friend to officers, staff and members alike.

Kelly grew up in a tenement house in Brooklyn, New York, raised by working class parents. And it was likely the discrimination he saw there, even against his own Irish Catholic parents, that made him a rebel and most particularly made him devote his life to ending discrimination, helping others achieve a better life.

A Life of Organizing

Kelly spent his entire adult life in the labor movement. At age 18 he began his union career as an organizer for the Retail Clerks International Union in 1946. He proudly boasted of his role as in-house organizer at Macy's and the fact that he was a good organizer, but a poor sales clerk.

His organizing career was interrupted by the Korean War during which he saw combat as a Sergeant First Class in the army. There he served in the Medical Corps. He told many stories of the medics helping soldiers, even saving their lives. He was helping people even then.

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Celebrating a Life

Over the course of his many years of service to working people, John Kelly earned widespread respect and admiration for his uncommon dedication to trade union principles and his deep commitment to the well-being of OPEIU members and their families. His skill in demonstrating the values and advantages of a strong, vital and democratic union to office and professional workers has been invaluable to our movement, and his leadership will be truly missed.

—Lane Kirkland, *President, AFL-CIO*

John Kelly was the epitome of a labor leader. His legacy lives in the hearts, minds and actions of those who strive to ensure that all workers are treated with dignity and respect. I'm honored to have called him my friend.

—Mario M. Cuomo, *Governor of New York*

There's a song by John Mellenkamp with this verse: "You have to stand for something or you're gonna fall for anything." That was the great strength of our friend and leader John Kelly: He stood solidly for the values of America's working-class families—values like economic fairness, social justice and equal opportunity for all. By being so solidly rooted in these values and so committed to the cause of labor, "The Powers That Be" couldn't fool him . . . and "The Powers That OUGHT To Be" found inspiration in his example. It was a privilege to know and work with John.

—Jim Hightower, *Political Commentator*

There are few people who have meant more to the organized labor movement than John Kelly. To so many of us, he has served as an inspiration, as a symbol of progress and equity for all workers. He will be sorely missed, although we can all take comfort in knowing that his contributions will be felt for years and years to come.

—Jim Florio, *Former Governor of New Jersey*

I was saddened to hear of the death of John Kelly. As I told Louise [Kelly] last week, it was wonderful to work with John over the years. He did an excellent job for his union, his state and his country. He will be sorely missed.

—Robert Torricelli, *U.S. Representative (D-NJ)*

John Kelly was deeply committed to the people of New York, and his influence and energy made many valuable and lasting contributions to our city and our country. We will particularly miss his outstanding leadership and vision. Let us not remember John Kelly with sadness. Let us instead celebrate a life well led.

—David Dinkins, *Former Mayor, City of New York*

I always found it a delight to talk to John Kelly because of his warmth and charm. Also he was always one of the strongest supporters of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and women's rights. We need more labor leaders like him. His death is a tremendous loss.

—Joyce Miller, *Director, Glass Ceiling Commission, U.S. Department of Labor*

Working Americans have lost a dedicated and indefatigable leader who struggled for social and economic justice. He could always be counted on to be out front in this never ending battle. I have lost a friend and a brother.

—Jack Sheinkman, *President, Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union*

There are so many fond memories we in the Farm Workers have of John. We will always remember John's generosity towards the farm workers. He came out to our National Convention and to Cesar's funeral. He was truly a friend and beloved brother to all of us.

—Arturo Rodriguez, *President, United Farm Workers of America*

John Kelly was a friend of all workers and a special friend of the RWDSU. Both our International Unions made their homes in New York, but John was always mindful of the struggles of all union members, no matter where they lived and worked. He was always there when we needed him. He left a great legacy for those that follow him in OPEIU, and we know that Mike and Gilles will carry on that tradition and John's vision for the union.

—Lenore Miller, *President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union*

The labor movement has been enriched by the presence of John Kelly who led so capably and so honorably the Office and Professional Employees International Union as its president for many years. His contributions were vast; his impact on the lives of his membership and their families was enormous and his memory will long endure. . . . Under John Kelly's leadership, the ILA and OPEIU coordinated a number of organizing campaigns that brought success to both unions . . . On a personal level, John Kelly and I enjoyed a friendship that spanned more than four decades. He was a good and kind man, a devoted family man, an outstanding leader in the Irish American community and a man whose counsel was sought by leading members of labor, government and corporate America . . .

—John Bowers, *President, International Longshoremen's Association*

John was a unique and talented individual whose passing represents the loss of a valuable resource to the labor movement. I will miss his kind words, wisdom and guidance.

—John Sturdivant, *National President, American Federation of Government Employees*

I knew John in our important work as affiliates of the AFL-CIO. He was a fine person with an outstanding record of service in the labor movement. He always took a forthright stand on the important issues affecting the working men and women of this nation. In fact, we spoke only recently at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Bal Harbour. His work and influence will be missed.

—William H. Bywater, *International President, International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers*

I remember John Kelly for many things. He was a great union leader, a devoted family man and a staunch activist. He had a wonderful sense of humor, but it never hid his fierce determination to defend working men and women. He was an extremely intelligent man, one who could assess many situations in a flash. He was one of those rare people whom one could count on 100% of the time. I know, I had to count on him many times. Most of all, I remember him as a friend. That's what makes his death so difficult for me. I miss my good friend very much.

—Vito Pitta, *President, New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council*

We of the New York Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Brother John Kelly, one of organized labor's true champions. He was sincere; he was earnest; he was loyal; he was self-sacrificing, and I know of no one in the ranks of labor who tried harder to interpret the wishes of the thousands of men and women he led and served.

—Annie B. Martin, *President, New York Branch, NAACP*

The passing of John Kelly is a loss to all who knew him. His leadership and encouragement will be greatly missed in the struggle to better the lives of white collar employees and workers in all sectors. Remembrances of his wit and wise insights are gifts that will be cherished by all whose lives he touched. I count myself fortunate to have been one of them.

—Jack Golodner, *President, Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO*

The organized labor movement has suffered a great loss. John epitomized what the labor movement is all about: honor, integrity and leadership. He will be greatly missed.

—Edward Cleary, *President, New York AFL-CIO*

I am among the many who will miss John Kelly. I always looked forward to a dinner when I'd be sitting next to John, because his no nonsense, straightforward approach to the issues was always a pleasure to hear. In a world in which too many people talk round and round, John always got to the point, humorously, directly and cogently. He epitomized the best in the urban union leader, and I will very much miss his friendship and counsel. Very few people could be a source of as much education and enjoyment in a fairly brief conversation as John.

—Barney Frank, *U.S. House of Representatives (D-MA)*



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Official Organ of

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC

JOHN KELLY
President

GILLES BEAUREGARD
Secretary-Treasurer

GWEN WELLS
Managing Editor

CALM
ACPS

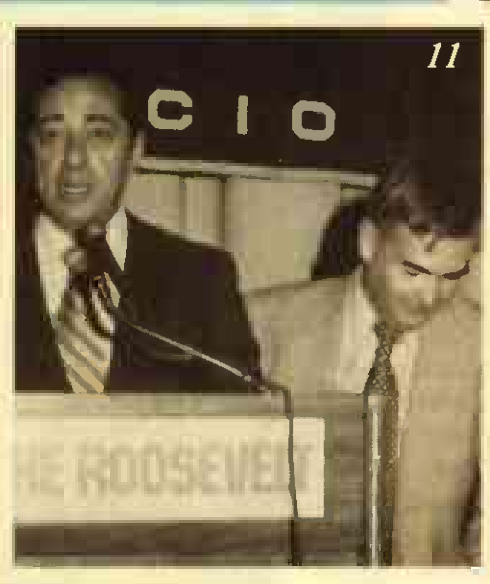
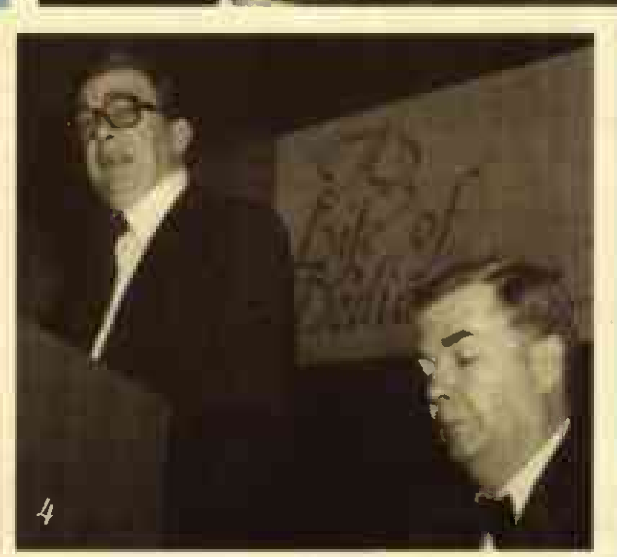
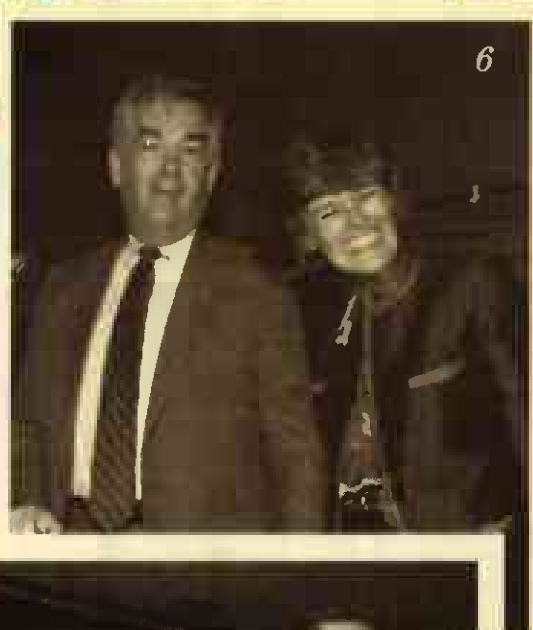
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- 4—with AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland
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- 6—with U.S. Representative Pat Schroeder (CO)
- 7—with U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd (CT)
- 8—with U.S. Senator Jim Sasser (TN)
- 9—with U.S. Representative Bob Torricelli (NJ)
- 10—with U.S. Senator Howard Metzenbaum (OH)
- 11—with New York State Governor Mario Cuomo





Grieve not . . . nor speak of me with tears . . . but laugh and talk of me . . . as though I were beside you. I loved you so . . . 'twas Heaven here with you.

—Isla Richardson

(Continued from page 1)

He returned to the labor movement and became an organizer for OPEIU Local 153 in New York City in 1952. His charm and wit, as well as his genuine concern for people, helped him to successfully organize the employees at Fordham University, Sealand Service, American Export, Group Health Insurance, Diners Club, among many others.

He rose through the ranks of the local union, becoming secretary-treasurer in 1969 and business manager in 1977. In 1969 he also won the office of International Vice President.

International President

In 1979 he was elected International President. Under his direction the union membership climbed to 130,000. Organizing remained his great love. He continually stressed the need for bringing the benefits of collective bargaining to unorganized working people.

Under his leadership OPEIU involved itself widely in the trade union movement, political action and community services. He was always among the first to support the struggles of other labor unions, taking OPEIU members to join the picket lines of PATCO, the Daily News strikers, striking Eastern Airlines workers.

Kelly had a particular affection for and devotion to Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers Union. Reaching out to and protecting itinerate farmworkers from discrimination, abuse and exposure to pesticides epitomized for him what the labor movement is all about. OPEIU, therefore, contributed office space, financial and other assistance to help the Farmworkers achieve collective bargaining rights in the fields and legislative protections in the state-

houses. He also developed a strong, personal friendship with President Chavez, whose death only shortly preceded his own.

A Political Agenda

He established legislative conferences (held in Washington, DC), taking local union and International officers and staff to the U. S. Capitol. There they lobbied their Representatives and Senators for legislation to protect and benefit working Americans — particularly OPEIU members. Over the last few years they worked to enact health care reform, family medical leave, polygraph prohibitions, protections for workers in the event of bankruptcy, affordable quality child care, anti-NAFTA legislation, labor law reform, and much more. "Many times we were successful, but sometimes not. The important thing was being part of the process and working at all levels to protect our members," he would say. It was just one of many legacies left us by John Kelly. Kelly also encouraged local unions and members to contribute to Voice of the Electorate (VOTE), the union's political action fund. With those voluntary contributions the union has been able to assist candidates for office. "Invariably, when we have gone to lobby for a piece of legislation, the Representative or Senator knows if we were contributors or not. It certainly doesn't insure us their vote, but it frequently means they will at least listen to our side on the issue," Kelly told us repeatedly.



Education Programs

He was a firm believer in education and training. Under his leadership, the union developed more relevant and meaningful training for local union and International Union staff and officers. Education programs were continually reevaluated and revamped to make them more accessible, affordable and useful. Because of his influence, many OPEIU local unions began or expanded training programs for stewards, officers and members. He was a frequent speaker at many of these programs and conferences. He also led the development of the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund. Thanks to that fund and John Kelly, numerous members and their children were better able to afford college education. Many more will in



John Kelly and Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beaugard celebrate their election at the OPEIU Convention with Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus Romeo Corbeil.





A young John Kelly attends one of the first-of-many labor dinners.

the years to come.

OPEIU under John Kelly contributed to a myriad of causes, charities, community services. The union has led food drives, provided assistance during floods and hurricanes. Kelly was honored repeatedly for his work on behalf of civil rights, for example, by the NAACP and the Black Trade Unionists Leadership Committee of the New York City Central Labor Council. He was also honored for his work by the March of Dimes and the Irish American Labor Coalition.



Benefits Tripled

He was even more devoted to the members of OPEIU and was working for them right up to the end.

Benefits offered to OPEIU members during his Presidency more than tripled with the creation of the OPEIU MasterCard, the legal services program, the Union Privilege Mortgage lending program, and more.

One of the projects to which he was particularly dedicated was the creation of employee assistance programs within the local unions. His own local — Local 153 — established an EAP (now called a membership assistance program) years ago which has helped countless members and their family members to enter drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, as well as helped with other family crises. He preached the gospel that it was the responsibility of the union to assist members' in these many other areas, as well as on enforcement of the labor agreement. He firmly believed that the union should help the members and their families wherever it could.

Additional Responsibilities

He served on the National Executive Committee of the Irish American Labor Coalition/American Labor Committee for Human Rights in Northern Ireland

since its beginning — during the hunger strikes of 1981.

He served as vice president of the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, and a trustee of the Maritime Port Council of Greater New York and vicinity. Since 1970 he was a vice president of the New York City Hotel and Motel Trades Council.

Since 1980 he served on the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped and was a member of the National Labor Advisory Council of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation. In June 1984 he was specially honored by the March of Dimes for his years of service to the handicapped.

From 1980 to 1982, he served on the Services Policy Advisory Committee, The United States Trade Representative. During the same period he sat as a member of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare Secretary's Advisory Committee on the Rights and Responsibilities of Women.

He worked long and energetically for the union members at all levels.

The Family

John Kelly was a devoted family man.

Although he considered the union his extended family, he was particularly devoted to his wife of 41 years — Louise Kelly — as well as his children — Adam, Polly Zurlini and Julie.

The time spent with his grandchildren — Lindsey, Marcus, Amanda, Olivia and Claudia — were considered among his greatest joys.

He instilled in his children his same love for people and desire to help them better their lives. Polly Zurlini became a teacher, as well as a mother. Adam and Julie followed more directly in his footsteps by entering the labor movement.

Louise Kelly, like her husband, has always been a devotee of the legislative/political process. She worked over the years for innumerable political campaigns and causes. It was just one of many interests they shared.

The last evening of his life, in fact, she was treating him to a belated birthday celebration by taking him to the opera and dinner. As an avid classical musical fan, it was an evening he much looked forward to experiencing.

A Love of Life

He brought that same type of love for music to other areas of his life. He had a passion for living and for loving that few experience. He enriched the lives of so many that we will never forget him. He changed our lives.

Rest in peace.



John Kelly appears with the March of Dimes poster child.

Remembering Our Brother

One of my first memories of John was his hat. He was always an incredible showman; always had a great sense of humor. At the time John was my business representative. When he would come to the office to visit us, to file grievances or negotiate with the employer, the first thing we'd see would be the hat. He would throw his hat into the office before he entered to announce his arrival. He was always like that — unassuming, fun-loving. Those qualities always were communicated to members. And he never changed. He was always completely accessible to our members, always had time to listen to their problems, made sure they had a cup of coffee when they came to visit the office. Although he long before had stopped wearing a hat, he never lost touch with the members, with workers. He never forgot where he came from.

Michael Goodwin
OPEIU International President

I have had the privilege of knowing John Kelly for the past 32 years. The first time I met John was in 1962 while on my business representative training program in New York City. He was a dedicated union business representative and loved organizing. We then began a very close friendship. I saw him in action then and worked with him on the executive board for more than 14 years and in the last 8 years as secretary-treasurer of the international union. One of his greatest qualities was that he cared deeply for everyone — he cared for the disabled, the needy and the homeless. He had a great understanding of the realities and the challenges we are faced with. He had two passions — his family and his work. That was his life. He worked tirelessly for the organization he deeply believed in. Through his leadership, he left us a legacy we should all be proud of and build on for a better future. John was not only a brother but a great friend.

Gilles Beauregard
Secretary-Treasurer



John Kelly with then Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Michael Goodwin and Local 153 President Al Merchant.

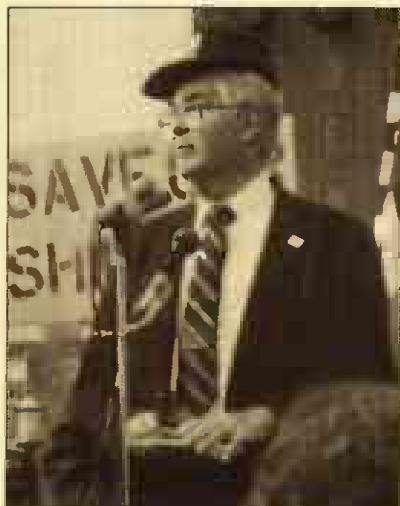


OPEIU International President John Kelly marches with United Farm Workers Union President Cesar Chavez in support of the grape boycott in 1991.

On April 29, 1990, I made these remarks to John on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the eastern Canada Council. They indicate my high esteem for him: . . . John, you are a good friend of mine and we go back many years. I remember in the early '70s when you were OPEIU Vice President and you invited me to the New York Caucus at the 1971 Convention where we talked until the early hours of the morning about our union, planning its future, talking organizing, servicing, training of representatives . . . Throughout the '70s we talked about changes needed to build a good Canadian structure and identity for our local unions and membership. Your understanding and support were very much appreciated . . . These 25 years of achievements would not have been possible without the full financial support of the OPEIU. I may say the same is true for our other Canadian Councils. This is more specifically true since 1979 when you became President of this Great Union. Your understanding of our Canadian structure and membership difficulties, your encouragement and financial support help us to do the job, to properly service, organize, defend and educate our members. You grasp what we are trying to do and help us do it. . . . Tonight, having you with us, amongst friends, I want to take this opportunity to say to you, Mr. President, thank you for your dedication, your devotion and determination to serve this union, making it one of the best.

Romeo Corbeil
Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus

While working closely with John Kelly for 15 years, the more I knew about him, the more I liked and admired him as a human being. It was such a pleasure to go into his office in New York where I would always receive an unusual greeting, happy or witty or perceptive. We talked on the phone almost every week for many years. His magnificent sense of humor was one of his great assets. He had down-to-earth wisdom, fully aware of all our human frailties. Yet he never let it obscure his goals of trying to make life and conditions of life better for everyone. I have never known anyone who had more care and concern for the rights of women and minorities than John Kelly . . . We had talked on the telephone just a few hours before his tragic attack where we laughed together over a comic strip that had particular application to one of our current legal problems. When



International President John Kelly addresses a rally in Washington, D.C., on the need for economic conversion and conservation of jobs.

he was gone, I knew I had lost a splendid brother indeed.

Joseph E. Finley
OPEIU General Counsel

When I first met John Kelly more than 45 years ago we were attempting to organize the workers in a mail-order house. John felt very strongly that even though the jobs of the workers were thought of as menial, there was a dignity to their work that needed to be recognized in a collective bargaining agreement. His emphasis then on the dignity of work and the dignity of the worker continued to be expressed throughout his lifetime. He won that first organizing campaign and achieved a contract that recognized, in writing, the dignity and worth of each worker . . . The good that John has done for so many workers will live on into the future and thousands who never met him will have gained from his efforts to have their dignity recognized.

John Fleming
*George Meany Center
for Labor Studies*
(John Kelly's brother-in-law
and best friend)

The OPEIU organization which exists today in TVA is largely attributable to the late President John Kelly. His dedication to the collective bargaining effort in the Tennessee Valley has greatly contributed to the general welfare and a better standard of living for all TVA employees. Our loss of President Kelly will be deeply felt for many years to come.

Thomas Babb
Vice President, Region III

My memories date back to the early 1960s when the full-time staff had meetings in Chicago at the Allerton Hotel. I would go to the hotel after work and join a group of reps which included John and Doug (Henderson Douglas) as they sat in the lobby talking about the union. John's interest in others and his enthusiasm was contagious. I guess it was during those informal gatherings that John became my mentor without me realizing it. He seemed to always be there for me from the early days to the day before his untimely death — a day he called me. He listened to me, whether I was talking to him about a situation in my local or a personal situation. I will miss John's wisdom and counsel greatly. But, believe it or not, I will miss the way he picked on me. He enjoyed teasing me about my traveling by train. Usually 2 or 3 days before anyone else had to leave for a meeting,



International President John Kelly with Executive Board members (left-to-right)—then Secretary-Treasurer Romeo Corbeil, Vice Presidents Billy Adams, Gary Kirkland, Gwen Newton, and Michael Goodwin—represent members at one of many AFL-CIO conventions.

John would call to see if I had left the city yet. I would be expecting the call and respond "appropriately." After he answered my quip, he usually had some business to discuss. I'll miss receiving those calls . . .

Carolyn Combs
Vice President, Region VII

John Kelly was a very special person with a wonderful sense of humor. It was always a pleasure to be in his company. He had a real sense of loyalty to friends, and my husband and I were privileged to have enjoyed this loyalty and friendship over a period spanning in excess of 20 years. . . . More recently, John surprised Louise [Kelly], Mike Goodwin, Melissa and Gilles Beauregard and me, while attending the AFL-CIO convention last year in San Francisco, by taking us to high tea. He had alerted all of us that we should make no plans for late afternoon that day because he was planning a surprise, and he kept his secret until we all arrived at the designated hotel for the occasion . . . John Kelly, although no longer with us physically, will always be with us in memory for his love of life, family and friends and his devotion to OPEIU.

Kathleen Kinnick
Vice President, Region V

John's dedication to organizing always impressed me most. I think back to one instance shortly after he became International President. Local 6 was attempting to organize a clerical unit at the Massachusetts Port Authority. A newly hired international staff organizer, recently assigned to our area, had arranged a general meeting of employees of MassPort at a hotel located at Logan Airport where most of the employees worked. I had a last minute schedule conflict and it appeared as though I would be unable to attend the meeting, or at best be late for it. The newly hired organizer, aware of my predicament, called New York in a panic that morning and talked to John. As you might guess, John rearranged his own schedule and took the air shuttle to Boston and arrived in time for the meeting. When I arrived late, I found our International President doing what I think he liked best — giving a great organizing talk. This was pretty much my first exposure to John, and as the years passed, I learned that this type of commitment was normal for him . . .

James Mahoney
Vice President, Region II

I remember John as a truly dedicated trade unionist who provided an inspiration to carry on the struggle for those less fortunate. John showed me the strength needed to endure the countless battles and fights



President John Kelly testifies for the House Banking Committee.

and President John Kelly . . .

which we all will encounter through our lives and yet we will survive and flourish. This is the OPEIU!!

Dave Miller
Vice President, Region IX

One of my most impressionable memories of President John Kelly was an event which occurred in 1979. After his election by the Executive Board to replace President Coughlin, I asked John what his program for the OPEIU would be. John's answer in part [was,] "I promise to make the OPEIU more politically active, revise and improve our educational conferences, more actively pursue equal and fair employment conditions for women and aggressively organize the unorganized."

All of the above goals and promises were kept by President Kelly during his administration.

J. B. Moss
Vice President, Region IV

John had that rare quality of being many things to many people. For me it was that special combination of business associate, confidant, and one with whom I could share my joys and sorrows . . . a true friend. He believed and lived both in words and sentiment: "We care" and "I'll be there." He will truly be missed!

Gwen Newton
Vice President, Region V

John Kelly was a very caring individual. He was always wishing to give of himself for the benefit of the union and its members.

Ron Tuckwood
Vice President, Region VIII

To know John was to understand the meaning of dedication and integrity

To know John was to know the meaning of loyalty and friendship

To know John was to realize the commitment to social justice and equality

To know John was to understand dedication to family and friends

To know John was to meet that one person in our lifetime who is special

John, "may the road rise to meet you, may the wind always be at your back and may God ever hold you in the hollow of his hand. . ."

Pat Tully
Vice President, Region II

He and I always had a way of dealing with my requesting funds for one of my [organizing] campaigns. I would always try (in my Midwest way) to explain in immense detail all of the reasons I needed the money. John would always let me just get enough out there so he could make a decision and then say, "Mike — bottom - how much is it going to cost me?" I would tell him, and usually I would get, "OK, kid, you got it." I would then try to continue my explanation, just to prove that he had done the right thing. One time I knew I was in trouble when John asked me if he had time to go to the bathroom and still make it back before I was done with my story. He would always say, "Mike, you made the sale, don't screw it up; stop talking." He would always know if something was wrong when I would call him. He had the innate ability to slide into my world, even though he had a 101 things going on in his. If there was a personal problem with me or my family, we came first; and he

helped in any way that he could until the problem was gone. . . . When I was only seven years old, my father died of a heart attack. My mother never remarried, so I lacked the relationship of a mentor father. With John I felt that relationship. But even better than that, he was a great friend.

Michael Walker
Vice President, Region VII

The first time I met John, he was interviewing me for the position of Research Assistant for the International Union. I was tense. This was the first time I ever experienced John's sense of humor. He made a humorous quip that relieved my anxiety. Then when the interview was over he said to me "listen kid there isn't an opening in the position you are looking for. Have you thought about organizing?" That was in 1980 and since then, thanks to John, the OPEIU became a way of life for me. Over the years we developed a very special relationship. He played several roles in my life. Brother, mentor, father figure and boss — but more than any of these — he was my friend. John was a person you could easily talk to. He listened and thought about the opinions people expressed. I am happy that I had the good fortune of working and exchanging ideas with him nearly everyday for the past several years.

Richard Lanigan
Former Associate General Counsel

John Kelly was my boss, my mentor, my friend. I don't think I realized how close a friend until his death. Mornings are hard, since most mornings we were the first two in. Often we went over the upcoming day, read the paper, had coffee. It was a time for bouncing ideas off him, getting his advice. One of things I respected most about John was his ability to listen. I always felt free to share positions or ideas with him, even when I knew they were completely the opposite of his. Sometimes he accepted my advice, sometimes revised his own opinions, frequently pointed out where I was wrong or he disagreed. He enjoyed debate, and quite frankly sometimes mischievously fomented dissent and confrontation. He liked the drama, the repartee. Yes, I remember him as a leader, an intellectual, a lover of life and people, a passionate and sensitive person, a generous and charming man, a trade unionist extraordinaire. But it's those quiet mornings I think back on most — the tranquil moments before our days began, the phones started ringing.

Gwen Wells
Education & Research Director

Friend of Canadian Labour

It is hard to write about a friend whose death is recent. I feel ill-at-ease at the idea that a stature like his could be adequately captured in words. I feel that silence, a gaze or gesture would better translate this feeling of helplessness and sorrow that we feel in these circumstances.

John is dead and with him a great friend of the Canadian labour movement. I have had the chance of paying tribute to this good and inspiring man on many occasions in the past. His remarkable understanding of the Canadian realities and his deep awareness of the aspirations of the Quebec society always assured us of his unfailing support.

Our friend has left us. He was our leader, a committed activist and untiring worker who had an extraordinary capacity for understanding others, always available, and whose enlightened decisions were guided by his clear and sound judgment.

Our friend John was generous and unselfishly open to the world and to others. Just a few of us at the last OPEIU convention know that John was in constant physical pain, up to the point that his close friends drove him twice to the hospital — between meetings. He never let his pain show, not on the podium from where he presided over our convention, nor in meetings with activists where he gave his full attention to our problems and requests. That was the sort of man he was.

In my eyes he will always remain a generous friend. It is hard to write about a friend whose death is recent; I, therefore, beg your pardon as I call up the words of Michel Van Schandel, a great poet and union activist from Quebec, who wrote this when his father died:

*"Father friend of boughs here are some roses
Sandalwood daylight joys a white handkerchief
On your forehead I lay a spike
I pull mimosas of fever to me
Hand clinging to the foresails of the bed
Do not die, die you must not
I accompany the trembling of fingers to the flowers."*

(a free translation)

Good-bye, John.

Michel Lajeunesse
OPEIU Canadian Director



OPEIU delegates at convention after convention demonstrated their love, respect and devotion to John Kelly by unanimously electing him International President.



President Kelly leads 1989 OPEIU convention goers to picket Eastern Airlines at Miami International Airport. Its unions were striking Eastern at the time.



John Kelly and International Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard make a special presentation to Canadian Director Michel Lajeunesse at an OPEIU convention.

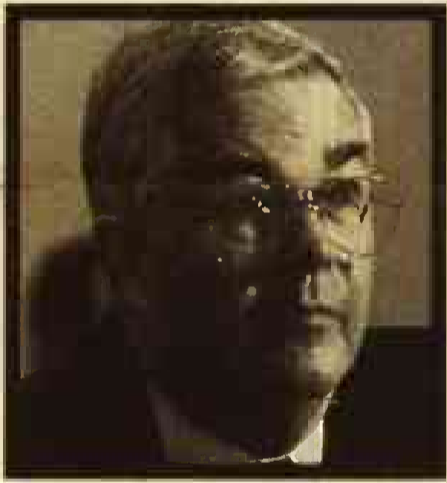
Eulogy for John Kelly

The following eulogy was delivered at the funeral for our departed President John Kelly on Tuesday, March 15, 1994, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church in Tenafly, New Jersey. Several hundred family members, OPEIU members, trade unionists and civic/political leaders paid their last respects to John Kelly at those services.

On behalf of Louise Kelly and the entire Kelly family, I want to share some thoughts with you about John. We mourn him today in this church and throughout the union. John had two great loves in his life — his family and the people in the union. His devotion to his wife Louise, his son Adam, his daughters Polly Zurlini and Julie, his sister Pat, and his five grandchildren, Lindsey, Marcus, Amanda, Olivia Hyland and Claudia Rose, was unsurpassed. To his grandchildren he was known as "Poppy", an affectionate name for the one they loved so much.

"He knew he could affect change. He stood for an ideal."

Love is not an easy feeling to put into words. Nor is loyalty, trust or joy. But John was all of these. He loved life so dearly, enjoying his family and helping people in need. He possessed a strong social conscience. There were wrongs that needed attention. There were people who needed help. He knew that all of us live as brothers and sisters. We share the same short moment of life with all of us wanting nothing more but the chance to live out our lives in purpose and happiness, winning whatever satisfaction and fulfillment we can.



Some believe there is nothing one man or woman can do to correct the enormous array of injustice. John was not one of those people. He knew he could affect change. He stood for an ideal. He lived and acted to improve the quality of life of others and spoke out against injustice. He sent waves of help and hope to those in need. What better way could he have spent his life? He was an advocate of those in need.

He demanded and fought for civil rights, workers' rights, human rights and help for the handicapped. Every night he went to bed he had the satisfaction of knowing that during that day he worked on behalf of someone rather than against. That he won a worker's job back. Or he won health care for a family. Or that he helped pass legislation in support of these goals. I am sure that when God speaks to him, he will say, "You did good, John. You did good."

"Not only was his door always open, but so was his heart."

While he was with us many groups gave him recognition. Awards he so justly deserved. And he cherished them all. But in his heart, he took special pride in the awards given to him by the Black Trade Unionists Committee of the New York City Central Labor Council and the March of Dimes. These awards embodied all of the ideals he held so dear.

To all those who knew John, he was a true friend. And all his friends knew that the more he loved you, the more you would be subjected to his wit, charm and verbal sparring.

We will remember John as a good guy. A guy whose company you wanted to keep. He was never alone. Wherever he was, there was a group, always friends. And no one was ever turned down for help. Not only was his door always open, but so was his heart. He loved us all, and we loved him. We are all enriched by knowing John and benefitted from his life. He was a friend to all and a devoted loving husband, father, brother and grandparent.

While our friend and beloved one is gone, his spirit and ideals live on. Good-bye, dear friend. We will miss you terribly.

Michael Goodwin



With OPEIU members John Kelly rallies to save the jobs of members in the defense industry.

Dear Friends:

We want to express our appreciation to all of John's friends and colleagues.

Your hundreds and hundreds of cards, notes, wires, visits, prayers and gifts in John's memory have been very comforting.

We know that you will continue the work he loved so well.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Louise Kelly and family

John Kelly doing what he loved best—organizing unorganized working people.

