



WHITE COLLAR

Work Connects Us All

Winter 2015 Issue

After 77 Years of Service to OPEIU, Charlie Ponti `Retires`



OPEIU Local 153 Retirees Association President Charles Ponti Sr., second from left, with Rutherford Councilmember Frank Nunziato, OPEIU International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan, Rutherford Mayor Joseph DeSalvo Jr. and OPEIU International President and Local 153 Business Manager Michael Goodwin (also a Rutherford resident).

At the age of 101 and after an exemplary career that spanned nearly eight decades, Local 153 Retirees Association President Charles A. Ponti Sr. officially retired on December 31, 2014.

"After more than 77 years of dedicated service to OPEIU, Charlie Ponti may be retiring, but he's not really `retiring,'" said International President Michael Goodwin, who also serves as Local 153 business manager. "He has had one of the longest – if not the longest – careers in the labor movement, and is such an important part of OPEIU that we can't say goodbye completely. I know that I'll continue to seek his advice and counsel, and I'll welcome him at the union office anytime he is available."

National labor leaders, including AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, joined the celebration of Ponti's life and service by sending letters of heartfelt appreciation to Ponti for his many years working for the members of Local 153 in New York, and for the role he played in building OPEIU and the labor movement.

"One of my favorite stories is about you and your brother cranking out and folding reams of leaflets on that old A.B. Dick mimeograph machine of yours back in the 1930s in New York City," said Trumka in his letter. "I've said this before, Charlie, but it can't be said enough: Those leaflets helped transform the Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants Union from a small organization of affiliate

staffers into the powerful, forward-thinking and active OPEIU we know today.

"Those leaflets were much more than slips of paper," Trumka continued. "They represented hope, organization and progress. They helped transform lives and build a movement."

In a similar letter, Vincent Alvarez, president of the New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, said, "Throughout your tenure with Local 153, and most recently in the 35 years you have served the union as president of the Retirees Association, you have played a key role in raising political awareness among members and retirees. Through your hard work and dedication, Local 153 has been able to raise more than \$500,000 in political action funds in support of candidates who have committed to improving conditions for working families."

This was evidenced by the number of New York and New Jersey political leaders who crafted resolutions and proclamations about Ponti, many hand-delivering them to him to show their appreciation. Joseph DeSalvo Jr., mayor of Rutherford, New Jersey, and Councilmember Frank Nunziato attended Local 153's annual holiday party on December 2, 2014, one of several events where Rutherford resident Ponti was honored. "Charlie celebrated his 101st birthday in June 2014, and during his long and productive lifetime, has earned the respect and affection of people from all walks of life because of his knowledge, experience, wisdom and leadership," said DeSalvo. "On behalf of the Borough of Rutherford, I wish to express sincere appreciation to this wonderful man who has done so much to help his co-workers and fellow citizens throughout his life."

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What Is the Union Doing About This?

By Michael Goodwin, International President

All of us witnessed the devastating results of the November 2014 midterm elections when the Democrats lost control of the Senate and the Republicans gained seats in the House of Representatives. These results came at a time when the U.S. economy had experienced monthly growth of 150,000-200,000 new jobs for 57 straight months – with a record-breaking 321,000 jobs added in November 2014. Unemployment rates were also down, and the cost of gasoline had rarely been lower. There are many other positive changes that I could also cite confirming that the administration in Washington, D.C., has finally defeated the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

During the last four years, Congress has blocked hundreds of pieces of proposed legislation and ended up with one of the worst records in history. Most legislation was blocked by Republicans both in the House and Senate. You may recall the news reports of a meeting in January 2009 by Republican leaders who took a symbolic blood oath with each other not to consider or approve anything that the new Obama administration proposed, whether the proposal was in the best interest of the American people or not. If not for the Democratic majorities in Congress in 2009 and 2010, nothing would have been accomplished, including the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and hundreds of other pieces of legislation beneficial to workers. In addition to not being for anything, the Republicans opposed everything as they were determined to make the Obama administration look bad at every turn.

So why is it that in the November 2014 elections the “do-nothing” Republican members of Congress were rewarded by the voters with an overwhelming

election victory? Are we to conclude that it’s politically beneficial to do nothing rather than do something for the American people? It’s easy to reach that conclusion based on the results, but there really is another answer.

“It’s about whether or not you are going to understand the consequences of not voting and do something about it in 2016 and future years.”

The answer relates to my column in the last issue of White Collar, “It’s the Senate, Stupid,” where I urged you and your family to go out and vote on November 4, pointing out that losing control of the Senate would have devastating consequences. It was noted that the House had already taken more than 50 votes to repeal Obamacare, refused to extend unemployment insurance benefits

and blocked any effort to increase the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. It was also pointed out that loss of control of Congress would set the stage in 2016 for the election of a Republican president who would sign all of the outrageous legislation passed by the new Congress into law.

Well, guess what? Nobody seemed to take this message seriously, and the Republicans ran away with the election. Now we are facing the possibility of a Republican president being elected in 2016, and if that happens, we will surely suffer the consequences. You see, voter turnout in 2014 was the lowest in 72 years. And when voters don’t turn out, our political leaders are elected by a small minority. It seems that Democrats voted en masse in 2008 and 2012 when President Obama was on the ballot, but were “no-shows” in the 2010 and 2014 elections, and many of these “no-shows” were union members.

When anti-worker legislation is signed into law in 2016, I anticipate members calling with the question “What is the union doing about this?” The question should be reversed, and the members should be asked, “Why did you let this happen in 2014 by not voting?” You see, I can only inform you of my views on the possibilities of what could happen, but I can’t make you vote if you don’t care enough about it. The horses are now out of the barn, and we will have to wait and see how bad the consequences will be.

It will take years to recover from the lack of participation in the elections of 2010 and 2014 – we can now only prepare for the worst and hope for the best. There is a lesson in all of this, and it’s not “What is the union doing about this?” It’s about whether or not you are going to understand the consequences of not voting and do something about it in 2016 and future years. Only by participating in the voting process do we have any chance of electing representatives who are sympathetic to the plight of working women and men.

Give it some thought.

Air Traffic Controllers Affiliate With OPEIU

The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, better known as PATCO, has affiliated with OPEIU, citing now as the right time to expand its representation of air traffic controllers throughout the country.

PATCO represents private sector employees at federal contract towers (FCTs) at regional airports throughout the country. There are currently 255 FCTs in the country, and employees "have to do more with less than the federal employees do, yet they are required to meet and comply with the same exacting standards as their federal counterparts. These highly skilled pros are underpaid, overworked and understaffed," said PATCO President Ron Taylor.

"An air traffic controller's job is one of the most demanding and stressful professions in the world," Taylor continued. "Split-second decision-making is required despite an overwhelming workload, and these trusted professionals' duty is to provide for the safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic. Lives are at stake, and no matter how tense

the situation may become, there is no margin for error."

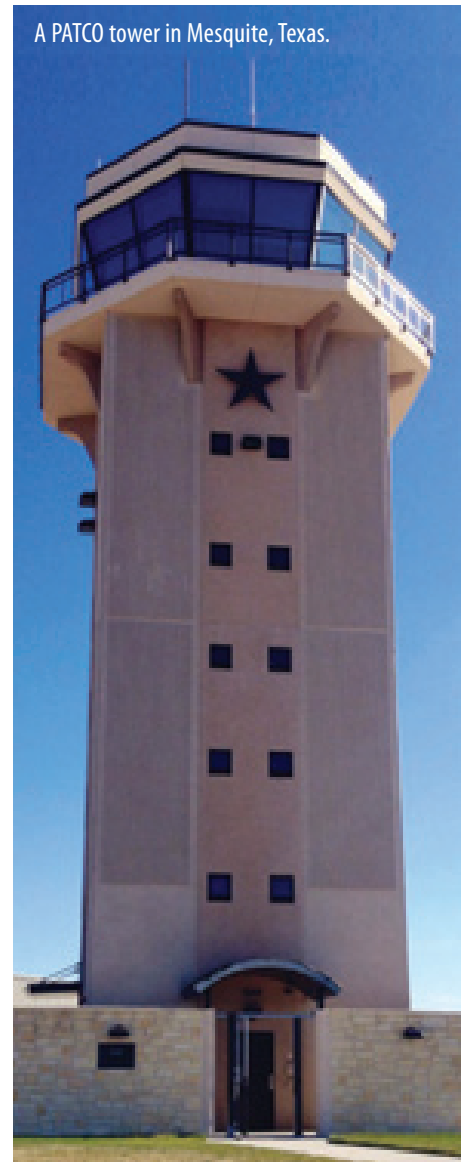
Taylor, who has been with PATCO since 1970 and has served as president since 2000, says that PATCO represents controllers at 20 FCTs, with approximately 150 members.

PATCO was founded in 1968, and became known worldwide in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan fired striking controllers.

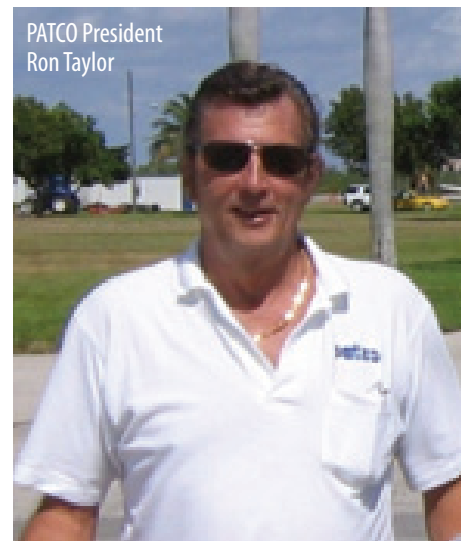
"During the strike, the federal government fired 13,000 striking air traffic controllers for taking action to improve working conditions," said International President Michael Goodwin. "Despite the hardships that the firings brought them, many have nevertheless continued to maintain solidarity with each other and with the labor movement in general."

PATCO has turned to OPEIU for support of its efforts to organize and represent air traffic controllers and other aviation-related employees, including many members of PATCO who were fired during the 1981 strike.

A PATCO tower in Mesquite, Texas.



At a tower in Stinson, Texas, PATCO represents all the air traffic controllers, left to right: Jason Lopez, Perry Hill, Union Representative Leonard Minor, Mark Sowers, Andy Rocha and Harry Osburn Jr.



PATCO President Ron Taylor

Appreciation for International Organizing Staff

Dear President Goodwin:

For the labor-to-labor campaign in North Carolina, I was managing the local office in Fayetteville and had the pleasure of working with [OPEIU International Organizers] David Flores and Cesar Mendia. I wanted to reach out to you to let you know that they were a critical piece of our efforts in Fayetteville. They completed whatever task was asked of them, from knocking on doors to making phone calls, recruiting volunteers and organizing our office, with enthusiasm and with maximum effort. This is now my third labor-to-labor program, and I know that managing release staff can be difficult with varying schedules. David and Cesar were both more than willing to go above and beyond what is expected of release staff, however, coming in on Saturdays and Sundays and staying late to help around the office as well.

I wanted to thank you and OPEIU for providing all of the resources you provided for North Carolina. I certainly hope you will consider releasing David and Cesar for campaign work in the future; they were a thrill to work with!

Best,

Mike Rosenblatt
Lobbyist/Grassroots Mobilization Coordinator
American Federation of Government Employees
National VA Council, Washington, D.C.

Dear President Goodwin:

It has been some time since I've worked with a phenomenal pair of organizers who could keep up with me and set a high bar for other organizers around us. I wanted to express my gratitude on behalf of the beleaguered farm workers who have been touched by this summer's sign-up campaign for the generosity and support of you and OPEIU.

Having [OPEIU International Organizers] David Flores and Cesar Mendia for this summer's sign-up campaign [the Respect, Recognition, Raise! campaign to sign up tobacco workers in North Carolina] has been nothing short of a godsend! I want to describe their contribution through various measures that I observed that might appear unorthodox when doing a campaign, but our campaigns are unusual because there is no such thing as quitting or losing a campaign. When a campaign is started, it continues indefinitely until something happens!

Firstly is the maturity that they lent to the younger interns, showing by example that tasks would be pursued regardless of circumstances that interfered. This means knowing what to take seriously and not letting personal hang-ups get in the way of the work, not being too creative too soon, and knowing when to ask, because while we like to minimize errors, there is longevity in the fight and time to recover missteps and redeem them! In this they lent perspective and, while not making excuses for errors, they helped by taking shortcomings with the attitude of "dusting off the dirt of the fall and getting up and trying again!" Time and again they returned to labor camps where younger organizers were turned away by menacing farmers, crew leaders and labor contractors, and they overcame intimidation, threats and retaliation and still got workers to sign union cards! They showed the younger organizers how to confront bullies without being belligerent, obnoxious or arrogant but rather from the mindset of speaking truth to power!

Secondly is their faithfulness to the cause. The "cause" is great because the needs and conditions of the workers are so appalling that even the rocks cry out for justice. David, who is no stranger to living in labor camps, at times even shook his head, and Cesar continues to be

emotionally moved by the tragedies he encounters! Even to his last full day here, Cesar [helped a worker who had] a finger partially amputated on a tobacco harvester. The fellow had been left bleeding for two hours before someone took him to a doctor after the farmer refused to take him, telling him that the injury was his fault and he was not responsible!

These men understand the life issues involved here, knowing why workers leave their homeland to work in an alien territory and how, despite their arduous labor, they are looked upon and treated with condescension and as throw-away objects. Time and again I've watched [David and Cesar] go out of their way to do things that weren't necessary and give good witness to serving others without regard for themselves. Not only did these guys sign up many, many workers themselves, they also helped others with their duties and responsibilities, going out of their way to teach others how to do things right and not give up! This was so invaluable, as we had eight interns from the Organizing Institute and eight others that FLOC recruited along with three apprentices! I always knew I could count on them and that they would be a great support to our in-house coordinators and organizers. These men understood that they were not just doing a job in organizing a union but helping to achieve a cause of justice for the oppressed, which is the higher purpose of the union itself.

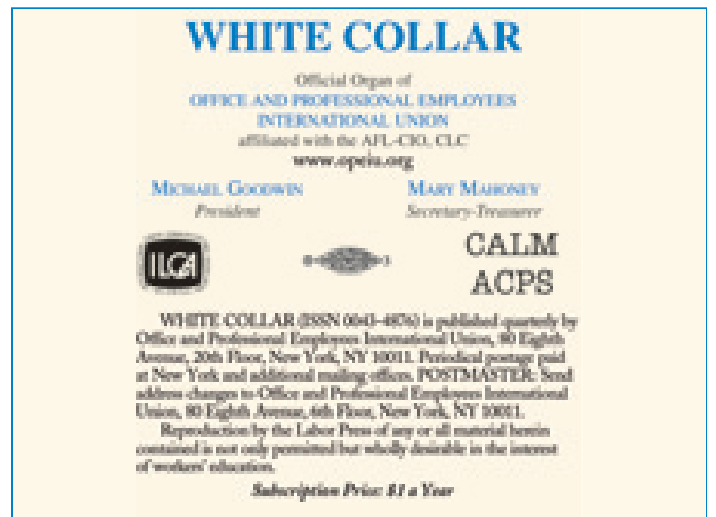
Thirdly, they gave me companionship and camaraderie as I shared living quarters with these two men. Dudley, North Carolina, is an immigrant barrio where we shared a house trailer, one in the cluster of trailers that families from Mexico call home. They shared quarters with me in an environment that most would reject with its blend of rural poverty, undeveloped infrastructure, and potholed dirt roadways in a double-wide trailer where the air-conditioning would occasionally go out! Yes, we lived in similar conditions as some of the immigrant workers lived, and while these were not even motel standards, I enjoyed the many evenings of organizers' talks, further debriefs that helped me carry on the work.

With all sincerity, I extend my personal gratitude to you for having made this enormous contribution from your union, as I hope someday to repay your generosity, kindness and real solidarity! I also want to thank you on behalf of FLOC, Vice President Justin Flores and Secretary-Treasurer Christiana Velasquez Wagner, and the rest of our executive board! We are indeed indebted to you.

Hasta la Victoria,

Baldemar Velasquez
President and Founder
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), AFL-CIO
Toledo, Ohio

Read more about the FLOC "Respect, Recognition, Raise!" sign-up campaign on page 5.



OPEIU Assists FLOC Organizing Campaign

International Organizers David Flores and Cesar Mendia joined organizers from all over the country to participate in the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) "Respect, Recognition, Raise!" campaign to organize workers at tobacco farms in North Carolina.

"There are nearly 30,000 tobacco farm workers in North Carolina, about 7,000 of them covered by FLOC contracts," said Flores. "This summer, 28 organizers worked to sign up more than 1,330 new union members, and the campaign continues until we reach our goal of 5,000 new members."

FLOC has a contract with the North Carolina Growers Association, which represents about 600 farmers. The sign-up campaign is part of a broader campaign to organize workers at Reynolds American, the largest tobacco manufacturer in North Carolina and second largest in the country, which "controls an enormously profitable supply chain built on the cheap labor of migrant farm workers, many of whom are undocumented. If Reynolds paid growers a higher price for their tobacco,

growers could pay workers a higher wage and improve living and working conditions for them," said Flores. He reports that farm workers are subject to a host of human rights violations, including subminimum wages, dangerous working conditions, child labor and inadequate housing.

"My life as a farm worker began when I was nine years old, working alongside my parents harvesting cucumbers, tomatoes, cherries and strawberries," recalled Flores. "Last summer, my heart led me back to FLOC to be part of the largest farm worker organizing drive since Cesar Chavez."

Flores said that with thousands of new

members, "we'll have more power to negotiate our terms of employment. That means more power to press Reynolds and other tobacco giants to take concrete steps to guarantee basic labor rights in their supply chains. We are a powerful example that, despite a politically challenging and anti-union climate, it's possible to organize in the South."



A group of tobacco workers organized by International Organizers David Flores and Cesar Mendia.

American Labor Museum Recognized for Outstanding Education Programs

The American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark (ALM) received the 2014 John Commerford Labor Education Award, recognizing the museum's outstanding labor education programs and its role in preserving and exhibiting labor history.

The award was presented by the New York Labor History Association and is named for John Commerford, a pioneering labor leader in New York City in the 1830s and an early proponent of free public education, which he believed would help to assure working people their rightful place in American society. The award honors organizations and individuals whose work embodies Commerford's dual legacy of activism and education.

The ALM is the only museum dedicated to the history of workers and the labor movement, with special attention to the ethnicity and immigrant experience of the American worker.



ALM Executive Director Angelica Santomauro, left, and OPEIU International President and ALM President Michael Goodwin accept the 2014 John Commerford Labor Education Award from New York Labor History Association Program Organizer Gail Malmgreen.

West/Northwest Area Educational Conference

Clockwise, from top left: Local 29 Business Representatives Nekisha Goodwin and Denice Washington listen intently at the West/Northwest Area Educational Conference, held October 30–November 2, 2014, in Portland, Oregon.

International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan, right, discusses his presentation, Understanding Past Practice, with Hawai'i Nurses Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50 Labor Specialist Clifton Dobson.

KC Wagner of The Worker Institute at Cornell leads a discussion about strategies to combat bullying in the workplace.

Michael Tedesco of the Tedesco Law Group leads several presentations about the pitfalls of social media and how to avoid impasse at the bargaining table.

International Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney gives a detailed secretary-treasurers training.

Local 30 Executive Board Member Jon Larson, Chair of Generation Next Youth Council Kay Lester and Executive Board Member Roger Lester.

Local 537 Business Manager Jacqueline White-Brown and Business Representative Lynette Howard.

Participants break into groups for exercises during a discussion about strategies for union leaders to use when conducting employer research, led by Art Wheaton of The Worker Institute at Cornell University.



Prepares Leaders to Face the Challenges Ahead



Clockwise, from top left: Representatives from each of the Local Unions in Regions V and VI share highlights of the past year, including Local 11 Executive Secretary-Treasurer Mike Richards, Local 8 President Kellie McGuire, Local 3 President Hang Le To, Florida Nurses Association (FNA)/OPEIU Local 713 Wuesthoff Medical Center Bargaining Unit President Marcia Stroud RN and Local 23 Business Manager Allan Jacobson.

International Vice President and Local 30 Executive Director/CFO Walter Allen Jr. discusses the need for membership support of the J.B. Moss VOTE Fund. At the three educational conferences held in 2014, a total of \$4,360 was contributed by participants to the VOTE Fund.

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After 77 Years of Service to OPEIU, Charlie Ponti 'Retires'

The New Jersey Senate and General Assembly as well as the New York State AFL-CIO also sent proclamations honoring Ponti, noting that "Charlie has set a standard of honor, excellence and integrity for his colleagues throughout the labor movement."

Born in June 1913, Ponti began his labor career in 1937 when he joined the Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants Union, which later became the Office Employees International Union (OEIU) in 1945 and later the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) in 1965. He served for many years as a Local 153 business representative and organizer – at one time servicing a whopping 198 shops – until his retirement in 1977, when he assumed the position of president of the Local 153 Retirees Association, a position he held until his most recent retirement in December.

At the December 2 event, International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan called Ponti "an incredible lifetime trade unionist and advocate of workers' rights."

"At first we were saddened by his announcement of retirement, but now realize that there is no reason to be, since there is much to celebrate about Charlie Ponti's career. We gather here tonight as officers, staff, members, family and friends to celebrate his career and thank him for his remarkable life's work."

Ponti has always given 100 percent, even before he joined OPEIU and was a young sergeant serving in World War II. In a letter dated December 6, 1945, his commanding officer Brigadier General Harry H. Baird described Ponti as a "man

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December 2, 2014

Mr. Charles Ponti, Sr.
306 Montrose Avenue
Rutherford, N. J. 07070

Dear Brother Charlie,

Congratulations, my friend and brother, on your well-deserved retirement. I want to tell you how pleased and proud I am to know you. It was an honor to spend time with you at your last convention, and I want you to know how much I appreciate your incredible energy and legacy of hard work.

One of my favorite stories is about you and your brother cranking out and folding reams of leaflets on that old A.B. Dick mimeograph machine of yours back in the 1930s in New York City. I've said this before, Charlie, but it can't be said enough: Those leaflets helped transform the Bookkeepers, Stenographers & Accountants Union from a small organization of affiliate staffers into the powerful, forward-thinking and active OPEIU we know today.

Those leaflets were much more than slips of paper. They represented hope, organization and progress. They helped transform lives and build a movement. They reflected the ethic of the happy warrior—a spirit that is growing in our labor movement today. I vow to do all I can to keep that spirit vital and keep it strong.

Now, I know you, and I know you're humble. You'll say you were just doing your job. Well, God bless you for doing your job with grit and creativity and ceaseless optimism. That's what it takes to build a movement strong enough to lift up a generation.

You have earned your retirement time and time again, and I pray it's a long, healthy and happy one. Working people everywhere are better off because of the work you've done. So once again, congratulations. And thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Trumka
President

RLT/TL/bph-OPEIU#2

of excellent character" whose work was characterized by "courtesy, efficiency, outstanding attention to duty and loyalty." Goodwin, who has worked with Ponti since 1967, said that "Charlie is part of the fabric of OPEIU. Because of Charlie and dedicated trade unionists like him, OPEIU is the organization it is today. We owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for all he did to build and strengthen OPEIU."



LEFT: Ponti with his granddaughter Nicole Ponti, daughter-in-law Vera Ponti, son Charles "Chuck" Ponti Jr., and daughters Rosemarie Hyland and Geraldine Ponti. RIGHT: Ponti gives advice to today's organizers at a December 2, 2014, event honoring his 77 years of service to OPEIU. At the 2013 OPEIU Convention in San Diego, California, Ponti had similar advice when he told delegates, "If you don't fight, you're no organizer. As one person, you can't do anything. But when you organize, you can do anything."



Four-Year Struggle for Representation Results in First Contract at Monsignor Farrell

The Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT), an affiliate of Local 153 in New York, has reached a first contract for faculty at Monsignor Farrell High School in Staten Island that includes wage increases totaling 9 percent – a victory for the 75 teachers who have been without a contract for six years.

The two-year contract was overwhelmingly ratified by the membership and also includes a hard-fought tenure provision that “provides job security and a grievance procedure that protects these teachers from being fired at will,” said International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan. “For teachers who lost their tenure at the school, they got it back.” The contract also ensures no increase in members’

health insurance contributions and the addition of a tax-deferred annuity account with employer matching contributions, as well as stipends for participation in extracurricular school activities such as coaching the school’s sports teams.

FCT President Julia Pignataro, Secretary-Treasurer Joanne Perrotta and former president Pat Gabriel worked diligently to bring about the settlement.

As previously reported in *White Collar*, Local 153 won an election at Monsignor Farrell in 2012 after a four-year odyssey to get the teachers an election. “This contract represents a long struggle by the union and, most important, for these dedicated and

hardworking teachers who continued to work without representation all these years,” said Lanigan.

“The teachers were very involved in the bargaining process. We held the bargaining sessions in the high school’s library with an average attendance of 35-40 teachers at each session.

“This ‘fishbowl bargaining’ is one of the main reasons we had such a positive outcome,” Lanigan continued. “I believe there is a direct correlation between the teachers’ activity in, involvement in, and awareness of the bargaining process and the final contract. Their role brought leverage to the bargaining process, and activated and motivated them to become strong supporters of the union.”

Miami-Dade Employees Reverse Salary Cuts



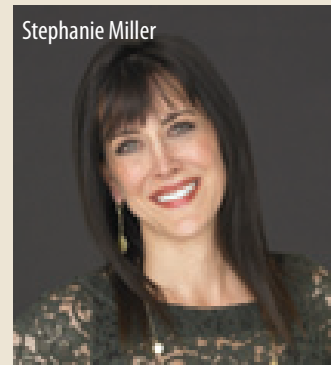
Members of the Local 100 Negotiating Committee are, left to right, Sergeant-at-Arms Paul Perrone, First Vice President Otto Castillo, Board Members Angela McCoy and Lazaro Cabrera, International Vice President and Local 100 President Greg Blackman, Chaplain Fredricka Wilson, Board Members Ralston Coombs, Luiz Morizot-Leite and Sandra Smith, Secretary Mike Cole, and Treasurer Walter Clarit. Also on the committee, but not pictured, are Second Vice President Mary-Ann Smith and Board Member Karen Valiquette.

The Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF)/OPEIU Local 100 has reached an agreement for its supervisors and professionals employed by Miami-Dade County, reports International Vice President and Local 100 President Greg Blackman.

The three-year agreement includes the restoration of benefits and 5 percent of base salaries that had been suspended during the previous contract. “It also provides for salary increases, which are tied to projected revenues to the county from increased property values, and rescinds the imposition of 11 furlough days that employees were forced to take last year,” said Blackman.

A Voice for Working People

Stephanie Miller



Listen to one of the few voices on the radio discussing the issues that are important to working families, The Stephanie Miller Show on Sirius XM Channel 127. Check out her website, stephaniemiller.com, for local listings.

Local 32 Focuses on Steward Training

Local 32 recognized the critical role that shop stewards play in OPEIU's representation of its members by hosting a three-day conference dedicated to the training of its local stewards.

Local 32's Stewards' Conference featured workshops covering a wide range of issues, including basic

grievance writing and processing and disciplinary case investigation and processing.

The event also featured a luncheon with guest speakers including New Jersey AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech and Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan, New Jersey Assemblyman Thomas Giblin, and International Vice President

and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan.

The luncheon honored International President Michael Goodwin, who expressed his appreciation to Local 32 President Mary Short and Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Eastwick, saying, "Both are outstanding leaders, serving the labor movement in New Jersey and throughout the United States and Canada."



ABOVE LEFT: At the Local 32 Stewards' Conference are, left to right, Local 32 Business Representative Jimmy Johnson, Executive Board Member William Campbell, Executive Board Member Rich Alter, Trustee Greg MacLaine, Recording Secretary Diane Spillane, Executive Board Member Robyn Banks, Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Eastwick, Executive Board Member Charlotte Gillis, International Vice President and Local 32 President Mary Short, OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin, Vice President Art Reece, Trustee Debbie Bastinelli, Executive Board Member Marilyn Dawson, Executive Board Member Dawn Rowley, OPEIU International Vice President and Guild 45 President Dr. John Mattiacci, Business Representative Juanita Ray, OPEIU International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan, and Business Representative Karevin "K.B." Barnes. **ABOVE RIGHT:** New Jersey AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech addresses the luncheon, and introduces honoree Goodwin.

Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association Annual Dinner



International President Michael Goodwin, newly elected PPMA President Joseph Gershey, Guild 45 President Dr. John Mattiacci and PPMA Executive Director Michael Davis.

International President Michael Goodwin joined with other leaders of OPEIU Guild 45 at the annual dinner of the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association (PPMA) on November 8, 2014.

International Vice President and Guild 45 President Dr. John Mattiacci was also in attendance. Dr. Mattiacci serves as secretary of the PPMA's board of trustees.

"PPMA was one of the founding associations of OPEIU Guild 45, and has been a strong supporter of OPEIU and the concept of nontraditional organizing," said PPMA Executive Director Michael Davis. "The members of PPMA are all OPEIU members and have been active in the development of methods by which medicine's alliance with organized labor can benefit both groups."

Dr. Joseph Gershey was installed as president of PPMA at the event and told those gathered of the many benefits OPEIU membership has brought to his association.



Hurley Medical Center Professionals Join Local 459

In an example of what can happen when an employer doesn't fight its employees' right to form a union, Local 459 has won an election at Hurley Medical Center (HMC) for 45 physicians assistants and nurse practitioners.

"Studies show that most employees would rather have a union at their workplace," said International Vice President and Local 459 President Sharon Taylor. "The difference



Midlevel practitioners at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan, include, left to right, Marcos Vargas Gomez, Courtney Johnson, Tim Keeler, Lisa Walter, Tanesha Franklin, Tiana Stinnett and Frank Cowden.

between what employees want and what they have is the result of employers in this country being allowed to run aggressive and hostile campaigns to stop their employees from forming a union.

"At HMC, however, the employer did not fight the employees and the result was the employees voted overwhelmingly to organize with Local 459."

Hurley Medical Center is a 443-bed public teaching hospital in Flint, Michigan. "Many of the employees at HMC have been unionized for years, but the physicians assistants and nurse practitioners have never felt the need to organize," said Taylor. "In recent years they have seen the unionized groups at HMC receive raises while their pay remained stagnant. Some PAs and NPs realized that they needed the clout that comes with collective bargaining, and they approached OPEIU about helping them form a union."

Local 459 worked with these employees to educate their co-workers and collect union cards. Because Hurley is a public employer in a high-density union town, it did not try to fight the effort, explained Taylor. A mail ballot election was conducted by the state, and more than 80 percent voted to join the union. "This mandate shows that, if allowed to express their own choice without interference from the employer, most employees want a union," said Taylor. Negotiations are currently underway for a first contract.

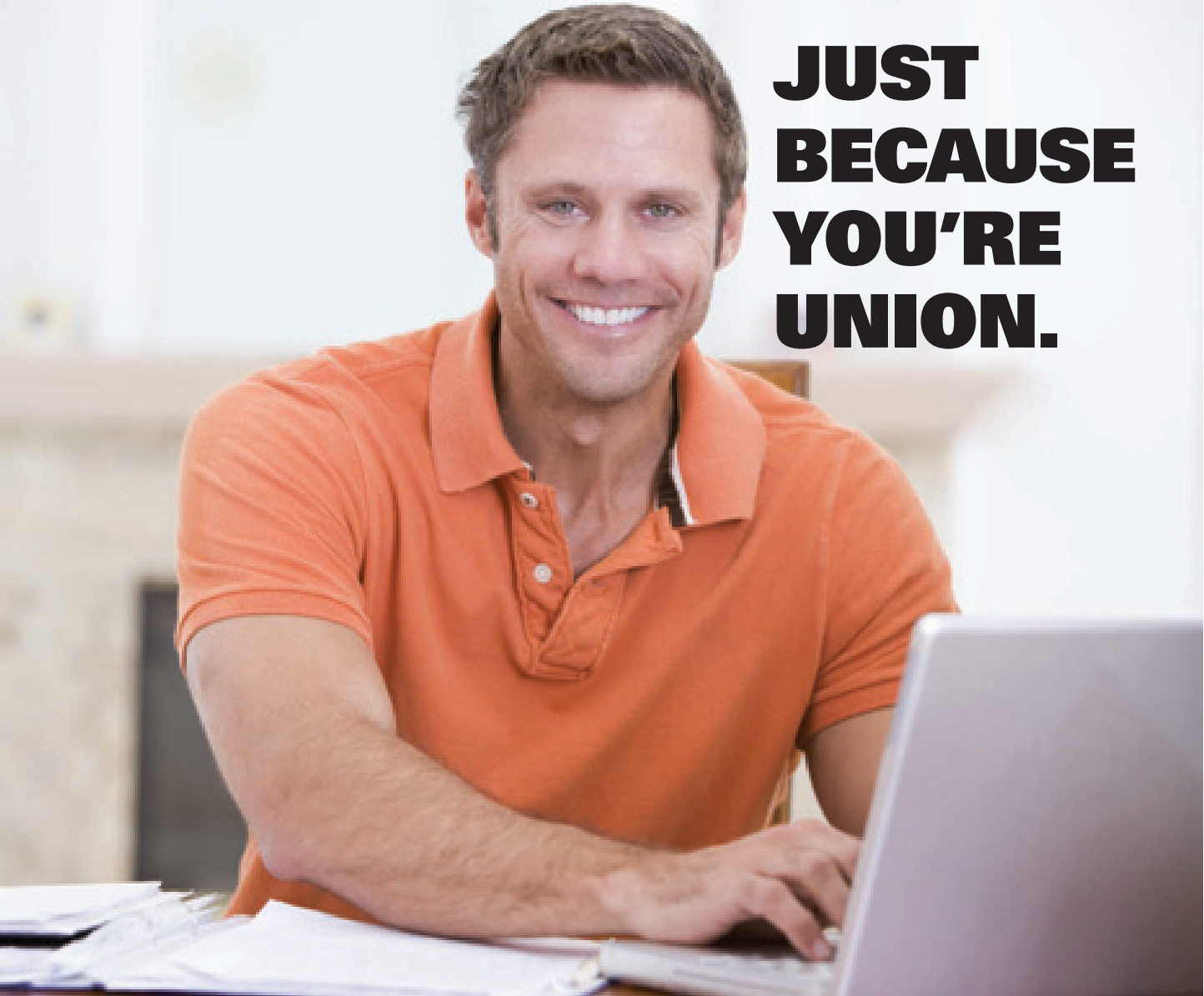
OPEIU Mourns Loss of Sooja Pak

It is with sadness that OPEIU announces the passing of Local 174 Secretary-Treasurer Sooja Pak, a member of the Local Union since January 1972.

Pak passed away after a brief illness in Honolulu, Hawaii, in November 2014. As a young girl, Pak escaped the war in Korea to eventually make her way to the United States with her family. She then began a 30-year career at Universal City Studios, working in production at the then-young record company within the studio that would eventually become one of the biggest recording entities in the world. She was a Local 174 Executive Board member for many years. Her husband of many decades, Charles, predeceased her in 2012. She leaves behind two sons and her adored grandchildren as well as many friends and relatives.



Sooja Pak



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Senior International Organizer Jeff Rusich Recognized for Organizing Excellence

Senior International Organizer Jeff Rusich has been awarded OPEIU's highest organizing award for 2013, the Henderson B. Douglas Memorial Award. Rusich's organizing successes included the 248 mechanics at Bristow LLC in New Iberia, Louisiana. After five elections over a 10-year period, the winning election was held in 2013.



2013 Henderson B. Douglas Memorial Award winner Jeff Rusich, center, with International President Michael Goodwin, Local 407 Treasurer Ted Drott, OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney, and Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler.

AFL-CIO Executive Council Calls for Higher Pay for Everyone, Not Just for Some

The AFL-CIO Executive Council passed a resolution at its last meeting calling for higher pay for all workers, not just a privileged few, and outlining steps that must be taken in order to achieve income equality in the United States.

"Our economic policies now must focus explicitly on higher pay for the vast majority of workers. A growing number of studies show that such policies would have no negative impact on growth, meaning they would raise living standards significantly for the vast majority of workers in America," read the statement.

"In fact, a growing body of evidence points to an even more profound

conclusion: Economic policies focusing explicitly on increasing pay for the vast majority of workers are actually necessary to generate robust economic growth."

The Executive Council statement went on to say that the first step is to recognize that wage stagnation over the past three decades was not an accident or inevitable but instead "resulted from the suppression of workers' pay over a period of decades through deliberate policy choices by people who benefited from those choices.

"In short, the wealthy rigged the rules of the game to benefit themselves. Now we have to change the rules of the game and correct their policy mistakes," read the statement.

Pursuing full employment and policies that increase hourly wages by strengthening collective bargaining power, as well as reforming labor laws that restore this bargaining power, "would have a significant impact on wage growth across the spectrum."

The statement concludes that "focusing on policies that explicitly aim to increase pay for the vast majority of workers and restore the link between productivity and wage growth means taking sides for working people."

Graciela Sills, OPEIU Daughter, Loves Grapes... But Not as Much as Workers' Rights



Graciela Sills

When Graciela Sills, daughter of Edward Sills of Local 298 in Austin, Texas, won a \$1,000 Union Plus scholarship this year, she was quick to explain why it and the labor movement mean so much to her and her family.

"My earliest awareness of the labor presence in my life occurred when my parents explained why they wouldn't buy me grapes," said Graciela.

"Of course, I struggled to relate jobs at distant farmlands to the fruit I craved. I was three or four at the most, but my observations suggested that other children's parents didn't follow the same restrictions. Fueled by the powerful indignation of a disappointed preschooler, I tried confronting my mother, saying, 'Rosemary's mom gives me grapes. Why won't you?'"

"That's when I learned a boycott was not a universally enforced code, but rather a challenging exercise in solidarity and justice... Having finally made the connection between my father's union job and the plights of other workers, I marched in the local CWA's picket against SBC... [and] began participating in rallies for better school funding and health care expansion."

As a high school journalist and online activist, Graciela knows the power of the written word and will be pursuing a degree

in writing or English. She understands that words also have the power to make us laugh and that laughter is precious. Her dream job would be to work as a writer for a show like Saturday Night Live.

Visit UnionPlus.org/Education for applications and benefit eligibility.

Apply Now for OPEIU Scholarships

Now's the time to apply for an OPEIU scholarship, a great benefit for all OPEIU members and their families.

OPEIU has established a number of scholarship funds to help members and their children further their education. The deadline for the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund, which provides 18 scholarships each year to members and their dependents, and the John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship, which provides 10 scholarships to OPEIU members studying labor relations, is March 31, 2015.

Children of OPEIU members can also apply for the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Scholarship Fund's summer camp, an excellent

opportunity to learn how a union works and the benefits of membership. Campers learn about issues that affect all working people, but also get to enjoy fun outdoor activities such as canoeing, softball, swimming, volleyball, basketball, and arts and crafts.

The camp is offered to children between the ages of 13 and 16. There are only 20 spaces available, and the deadline is May 15, 2015, so apply today!

The deadlines are fast approaching. For further information and applications, visit opeiu.org and click on the OPEIU Member Resources/OPEIU Membership Benefits link.

Dealing With Bullying in the Workplace

Respect and civility among co-workers, supervisors, managers, customers and clients should be the accepted norms in every workplace. While a certain amount of disagreement or conflict among co-workers is normal and healthy, bullying and disrespectful conflicts can lead to hostile work environments that may cause illness and disruptions in the workplace.

Bullying is repeated, health-harming mistreatment through either verbal abuse, threatening, humiliating or offensive behavior/actions, or work interference (sabotage) that prevents work from getting done, according to the Workplace Bullying Institute.

Frequently workers who are bullied don't fight back for fear of retaliation by the bully or employer. If you are being bullied, here are some actions you can take:

- Don't suffer in silence.
- If possible, tell the perpetrator to stop.
- Get help from a union representative, supervisor, manager or trusted colleague.
- Bring in a third party for conflict resolution.
- Document all incidents.
- Document all efforts to remedy the problem.
- Identify witnesses, with written statements ideally.

There are things your union steward can do to help, including:

- Listen, support and build rapport.
- Investigate.
- Pursue separation from the other party.
- Get involved early in trying to help the parties resolve the conflict: Offer to talk to the alleged perpetrator and/or supervisor, either with or separately from the target.
- Look for underlying causes and address these with management.
- Address hostile work environments.
- Place bullying and related issues on the local labor/management or health and safety agendas.
- Initiate development of organizational systems and procedures to prevent and respond to co-worker violence and bullying.
- Schedule training.

No one should face the harassment of being bullied at work. Employers should develop written policies and programs to promote civility and respect in the workplace and should train all personnel to work together to prevent conflicts before they get out of hand.



Jessica Akers

Youngest State Federation Secretary-Treasurer Is an OPEIU Member

OPEIU members throughout the country are proving that age is only a number and are accomplishing great things in the process. Case in point is Local 105 member Jessica Akers, who was elected to serve as secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas AFL-CIO in May 2013, becoming the youngest elected full-time secretary-treasurer of a state federation in the country.

Akers began her work with the labor movement as a canvasser and office manager with Working America, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, and then joined the Arkansas AFL-CIO as the state political and mobilization coordinator in 2011. She's a graduate of the University of Memphis with a degree in International Economic Development and of the AFL-CIO's Leadership Institute.

At just 34, Akers also now serves on the State Federation/CLC National Advisory Committee and the AFL-CIO's Young Workers Advisory Committee. OPEIU looks forward to seeing all the great things Akers and other young members like her are going to accomplish in the future.



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OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
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WHITE COLLAR

UIET Receives Charter

Leaders of the Unión Independiente de Empleados Telefónicos (UIET)/OPEIU Local 1971 joined the OPEIU Executive Board at its biannual meeting held in Puerto Rico to receive its official charter. UIET represents more than 1,800 workers at Claro Puerto Rico, a telecommunications company.



Pictured are, front row, Senior International Representative and Organizer Iram Ramirez, International President Michael Goodwin, International Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney, UIET Treasurer Esther Rosario, UIET Recording Secretary Nyvia Rivera, UIET Vice President José Acosta, OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler, UIET Sergeant-at-Arms Gloria Casanova, UIET President Edward Sanchez; back row, UIET West Area Representative Josué Nadal, UIET South Area Representative Alexis Rodriguez, UIET Metro Area Representative José García, UIET General Representative Victor Santiago and Bargaining Committee Member Ernesto Santana.