

2014 USW CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

RESOLUTION



Resolution No. 1 - Our Past Leaders

WHEREAS, we have again come together for this Constitutional Convention to set the future course of our union, and it is fitting that we look back and recognize the tremendous foresight, unyielding courage and absolute dedication, with which former international officers of our constituent unions met the challenges of the past; and

WHEREAS, Lynn R. Williams, who led the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) as its International President from 1983 to 1994, a time of crisis in the North American steel industry, died May 5 at age 89 in Toronto, Canada; and

WHEREAS, President Williams held the union together through the worst of times in the U.S. steel industry, which, confronted by unfairly traded imports, underwent unrelenting bankruptcies and consolidations; and

WHEREAS, he used concession negotiations during the steel crisis to bargain innovative employment agreements and secure for the union a seat in corporate boardrooms, management meetings and sale discussions; and

WHEREAS, President Williams accomplished the introduction of robust successorship clauses in our contracts, provisions which became vital to the restructuring of the steel industry in the 1980s and 1990s; and

WHEREAS, he was the first person to have served, although not simultaneously, on the executive boards of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC); and

WHEREAS, President Williams was a driving force behind the creation of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), which allows retirees to remain active in politics and other issues important to the union; and

WHEREAS, he helped to launch the Institute for Career Development, a unique workforce training program for eligible members created in 1989 as a result of contract negotiations between the USW and major steel companies; and

WHEREAS, in retirement, Mr. Williams returned to Canada, where in 2005 he was named an Officer of the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honor, in recognition of a lifetime of achievement in the labor movement; and

WHEREAS, Philip Murray (1942-1952), as the President of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, was instrumental in organizing and founding our union. As the first international president of the United Steelworkers of America and as president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, President Murray shaped the basic

philosophy of our union. He was a visionary force in the American labor movement who championed the principles of workplace justice, economic and social justice, and the equality of all workers; and

WHEREAS, David J. McDonald (1952-65) focused the USWA on the importance of a bargaining agenda which included significant improvements to pensions, healthcare, unemployment benefits, lay-off rights and other fringe benefits and played a key role in the AFL and CIO merger; and

WHEREAS, I. W. Abel (1965-77) ramped up the USWA's strength in wage policy and membership involvement in bargaining. "Abe" was influential in the enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and the Pension Reform Act of 1974; and

WHEREAS, Lloyd McBride (1977-83) guided our union during some of the darkest days of offshoring and plant closings during the first major steel collapse when our union lost hundreds of thousands of members, but still held to its principles of unity and fairness; and

WHEREAS, George Becker (1994-2001) established a reputation for strong fighting leadership during his presidency, revitalized our political and legislative operations and founded our innovative Rapid Response Program. He led our union through a period of growth that included the USWA's mergers with the United Rubber Workers and the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers; and

WHEREAS, Boyd D. Young led the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) (1996-1999) as President before serving as President of PACE (the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union), which was formed in 1999 by the merger of the UPIU with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW). President Young promoted progressive alliances and, with courage and foresight, led PACE to its historic merger with the USWA in 2005, before stepping down from active office to become president emeritus of the United Steelworkers (USW).

WHEREAS, Ken Coss, president of the United Rubberworkers; Ernie Labaff, president of the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers; and Dave Haggard, president of the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada also provided strong leadership to their unions, guiding them to merge with the USWA; and

WHEREAS, before the formation of PACE in 1999, both Wayne Glenn and Bob Wages provided top officer leadership with distinction, of the UPIU and OCAW, respectively; and

WHEREAS, throughout our history, our union and its predecessors have benefited from the dedication of many talented secretary-treasurers, vice presidents and national directors of Canada as well as district directors, assistants, department heads, technicians, staff representatives, organizers and local union leaders.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we honor our past leaders and dedicate ourselves to continuing the tradition of leadership and distinction that they have established for our great union.