State of Massachusetts Judicial Employees Vote OPEIU Local 6 Over the Steelworkers

OPEIU's Local 6 in Boston has won, overwhelmingly a runoff election to represent approximately 2,600 clerical and staff judicial workers and 50 professionals of the Massachusetts court system in a contest against the United Steelworkers. Of the 1,519 Union members who voted, 875 supported Local 6. Of the 50 professionals, 285 for the Steelworkers. There were 99 ballots that were blank, void, or challenged. "This was a very important breakthrough for us," said John Kelly, OPEIU President. "We are confident that we can bring these employees the benefits of collective bargaining." In the first election, held April 22, OPEIU had almost 500 more votes than the nearest competitor but a runoff was necessary since the Local did not obtain a clear majority. In that election, OPEIU competed with the Teamsters, the Service Employees International, and AFSCME, as well as the Steelworkers.

Professional
The Massachusetts professional unit of approximately 50 includes lawyers, land surveyors, one doctor, sound monitors, librarians and engineers who voted as follows:

- OPEIU: 23
- No union: 9
- Challenge: 2

According to International Vice President and Business Manager of Local 6, James Mahoney, Jr., who spearheaded the campaign, "OPEIU was the overwhelming choice of the employees because of the Union's long history of representing office workers. After seeing the excellent contracts we have obtained for white collar employees, the court employees were very favorably impressed with OPEIU." (See employee comments on this page.)

The Issues
Reclassification System In 1977 the Massachusetts court system was converted from a municipal-county system to a state system. Under the old system, there had been a widely varying schedule of job classifications, pay, vacations, holidays, and personal leave days. The State failed abysmally in its attempt to standardize this system. The State, in fact, used hundreds of man-hours and paid $120,000 to the Arthur Young Company for a reclassification system that the legislators rejected. The result: chaos and anger among employees.

 Wage Increases The clerical employees have been without a pay raise for an extended period—some for two years, some for as long as five years. And, although the State had scheduled the employees for a 7 percent pay raise on July 1, the legislators cancelled that increase when they received the reclassification system. This occurred in spite of the fact that state employees were scheduled for a 9% pay raise, judges receiving a raise of $11,000, court clerks received $5,000 to $7,000, and probation officers got $1,000.

The judicial employees were again favorably impressed when OPEIU Local 6 spent many long hours lobbying legislators in an attempt to reestablish the 7% pay hike in advance of the negotiations, or even the election, since those monies were available in the State's deficiency budget.

Grievance Procedure Again, there is no unified grievance procedure for judicial employees. If any procedures exist, they vary from courthouse to courthouse, depending on the judge and/or court clerks.

Lock of Job Security Work Overload and a Freeze on the Hiring of Temporary Workers Overcrowded, Sometimes Unsanitary Conditions Poor Medical Health Plan

The Victory
It is no wonder that the judicial employees banded together collectively to seek decent wages and working conditions. It is also no wonder that they chose a union with which they have a strong community of interest—OPEIU.

Local 6 and the employees are now preparing for negotiations. The White Collar looks forward to reporting a successful conclusion to these negotiations and welcomes the almost 2,600 professional and judicial employees of the State of Massachusetts into OPEIU.

Court Employees Speak out for OPEIU Local 6

I am supporting Local 6, OPEIU, because they aren't too big to talk to even the lowest paid worker...OPEIU listens.

Mary Knight of Juvenile Court Dept., Springfield

Local 6, OPEIU seems to show genuine concern for the welfare of the clerical workers in the State's judicial system. Other unions have shown no real interest in making themselves known to the court...Susan Stratiropoulos, Christa Botto, Gladys Layte, and Virginia Musgrove of Worcester Juvenile Court, Probation Dept.

We will vote for Local 6, OPEIU, because we feel Local 6 offers us the best chance to play an important role in determining our future goals. When we have something to say, we want our voices heard. We do not want to be drowned out by the sheer weight of members. Local 6 gives us a feeling of "family".

Mary Clamens of Salem Superior Court

I will support and vote for Local 6, OPEIU, in our election. I will feel more comfortable associated with an organization whose experience has been solely involved with white collar clerical and professional employees.

Lottie Samson of Probation Dept., Plymouth

It's time to get behind a single union. We at Malden District Court are voting for Local 6, OPEIU, based on the record for white collar people...Bill Lofts of Malden District Court

Mass Port Seeks Local 6 Representation

Because of Local 6's track record and the interest generated in unionization by the judicial employees, the workers at the Massachusetts Port Authority have asked OPEIU Local 6 to represent them.

The main issue of concern to the approximately 150 Port Authority employees is very similar to that faced by the judicial employees—being treated fairly and with respect. They specifically desire and deserve elimination of favoritism in promotions, elimination of salary inequities, a workable grievance procedure, job security, and a fair day's pay. All are areas in which OPEIU has negotiated excellent contract language.

Unfortunately these employees are already being harassed and intimidated by the employer in an effort to dissuade them from organizing. Although the employer has blatantly lied to employees, telling them how to "bargain from scratch" and that the employer will know how they voted, these employees are remaining firm in their desire to unionize.

OPEIU looks forward to the upcoming election and to welcoming the employees of the Massachusetts Port Authority into the Union.
Conservatives Again Attack Workers’ Safety and Health

As the 96th Congress nears the November election, anti-OSHA forces have made a mad scramble to tag on crippling OSHA “riders” to unrelated bills. For example, during consideration of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) amendments, Senator Richard Boren (D-OK), was successful in attaching his anti-OSHA amendment to the bill. But organized labor was victorious in persuading the House Rules Committee to delete this and all other non-germane amendments from the proposed legislation.

We were not, however, successful elsewhere. Reverly Byron (D-MD) was able to attach the same amendment to the appropriations bill for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. This amendment has passed the House by a vote of 225-178.

Workers’ Safety Jeopardized

The Boren-Byron amendment would exempt so-called “non-hazardous” work sites with 10 or fewer employees from OSHA protection. Needless to say, this will greatly affect many of OPEIU’s units and will leave our members in small shops totally unprotected.

The amendment is similar to one added last year by Senator Richard Schweiker (R-PA) to the FY-80 Department of Labor Appropriations Bill. As a result of this damaging action, 37% of all busineses and over 5.2 million workers were unprotected by OSHA this year. Based on 1978 data, the Schweiker amendment is estimated to exclude from OSHA coverage job sites where 120 deaths and 190,000 injuries occurred.

The Boren-Byron amendment, however, is even more damaging than the original Schweiker legislation. It would exempt 7.7 million workers from OSHA protection. Based on 1978 data, the net effect of the amendment would be to exempt job sites where 239 deaths and 409,000 injuries occurred.

What OPEIU Can Do

The appropriations bill with the anti-OSHA amendment must now be approved by the Senate. Although the timetable is at present unclear, we do know that it must first be approved by the Labor Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, then by the full Committee before a vote on the Senate floor.

It is imperative that this bill be defeated as long as it contains this anti-OSHA amendment. All OPEIU members are urged to write their Senators, particularly those Senators on the Appropriations Committee, to persuade them to vote “NO” to the Boren-Byron amendment.

Write the following Appropriations Committee members, who should be targeted, at Room 223, Dirksen Office Building, Washington, D.C.

Levering G. Magnuson (WA)
John C. Stennis (MS)
Robert C. Byrd (WV)
William Proxmire (WI)

Daniel K. Inouye (HI)
Ernest F. Hollings (SC)
Brock Adams (IN)

Thomas F. Eagleton (MO)
Lance Chiles (FL)
J. Bennett Johnston (LA)
D. H. Huddleston (KY)
Quayle (ND)
Patrick J. Leahy (VT)
J. Saxter (TN)

Douglas C. Coleman (AZ)
Dale Bumpers (AR)
John A. Durkin (NH)
Miller R. Young (ND)
Mark D. Hatfield (OR)
Ted Stevens (AK)

WRITE NOW! Your lives could depend on it.
The new contract provides for a 9.5 percent across-the-board wage increase, plus a range progression plan for employees now below mid-point of their salary range. The "range progression" concept has been installed in lieu of the merit program, which has been used in the past. Range progression is seen as a more efficient and equitable means of enabling the employee to move through his or her salary range.

**Ladish Tri-Clover Ratifies New Agreement**

Members of Local 336 in Kenosha, Wisconsin overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year contract.

In the new contract employees received an average of $36 per hour effective the first week in May. In addition, the cost-of-living formula was changed to provide quarterly adjustments on the basis of 1/4 for each .04 rise in the Consumer Price Index.

Improvements in pension in the third year of the contract provide for full retirement after 30 years of service at age 60. In addition, retirees under the 30-year-out plan will receive a $300/week per month supplement until age 62 when they become eligible for Social Security. Pension benefits were increased by $2.00 per year of benefit service for both current employees and retirees in the first year of the contract.

In addition, the company will continue to offer full insurance coverage, including Dentacare and vision care to retirees and their families. At the time the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare, the company will pay the full cost for Medicare B and Blue Cross Blue Shield—Medicare Extended.

One additional holiday in the first two years of the contract will bring the total number of holidays to 14 in the first year and 15 in the second year.

Additional fringe benefit improvements will provide Dentacare and a new vision care plan in the first year. Sickness and Accident benefits were also increased from $110 to $150 weekly. Life insurance benefits and health and welfare benefits were improved as well.

**Local 221 Members Ratify OMC Contract**

The 77 members of Local 221 in Galesburg, Illinois have voted to accept a new three-year agreement with OMC Galesburg, an Outboard Marine Corporation facility, according to Unit Chairperson Al Stephenson.

Highlights of the agreement include: maintenance of an open-ended COLA of one-cent increase for each $1 increase in the CPI; a cumulative 14.5 percent increase in the pension benefit; and an additional holiday.

Additionally, weekly disability benefits will increase each year of the agreement and will reach $125/week for the first 13 weeks of disability and $145/week for the second 13 weeks of disability by the third year.

In addition to numerous gains in group insurance, major medical insurance will rise to $755,000 in the first year and to $1,000,000 by the third.

The unit also gained language to prohibit the transfer of union work to supervisory employees, additional recall rights, and expanded job bidding opportunities.

Serving on the negotiating committee were Yvonne Anderson, Ann Pautz, Ron Starl, Larry Smith, and Al Stephenson. International Vice President Bill Adams assisted.

**Local 39 Makes Additional Gains**

Employees of the CUNA MUTUAL Group (CMIG) and members of Local 39 ratified by a comfortable vote margin a new one-year agreement. The contract covers 962 employees of CMIG's office in Pomona and several of the Group's district offices.

Highlights of the agreement include improved fringe benefits, especially lower deductibles on dental ($100 from $200) and medical ($75 from $100) for employees and their dependents and increased vision care benefits for the employee only.

The flex-time concept has been retained, including flexible summer hours, but starting times have been made uniform throughout the year (7:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.).

Vacation time may now be taken in half-day segments, up to ten half-days (except Fridays). The CMIG offices will close an additional half-day on Christmas Eve and, for 1980 only, the offices will be closed the day after Christmas.

**Local 9 Members Win Back Pay**

Approximately 200 employees at Milwaukee Blue Shield will receive back pay for increases that were delayed as a result of a company error in the administration of their contract. The contract provides employees with automatic increases every six months, effective the first two-week pay period following their anniversary date.

In administering this provision the company erroneously changed the employees' anniversary date to the date of the pay period. Future increases were then calculated six months from the date the raise was placed into effect rather than the employees' anniversary date.

The Union grieved stating that employee increases were delayed for up to a month at times by the company changing of effective dates. In the fourth step of the grievance procedure Chief Stewart Gal Kuells, Business Representative, Gene Holt and International Representative Judy Burnick were successful in resolving the grievance and achieving back pay for the employees affected.

**Louisiana Local Wins $193,551 in Back Pay**

As a result of negotiations with OPEIU Local 428, the Baton Rouge Water Works (BRWW) and Parish Water Company returned to its employees $193,551 contributed by them to the pension plan. That plan, according to International Representative Jack Langford, is now completely employee-financed.

Some employees received up to $3,743; all received at least $3,000. An amount in addition to the $193,551 was returned to non-bargaining unit employees as a result of OPEIU negotiations.

Pictured left to right below are: International Representatives Jack Langford, BRWW Senior Vice President; Doyle Suarez; Commissioner Wilson Smith; BRWW Assistant Vice President of Customer Service Woodie Brand; Vice President Dorothy Guillot; Clarence Jackson, Etta Clark, and Arthur Johnson; and Local Secretary-Treasurer Willie Williams.

**Local 13 Defeats RTW Suit**

The conservative, anti-union forces in Missouri recently petitioned to have a state right-to-work (for less) amendment placed on the ballot. That amendment was soundly defeated by the voters.

However, a lawsuit was brought against 60 individuals, including three OPEIU Local 13 members—Sue Haiston, Marie Betsy, and Sandy Kramer—by supporters of the amendment. The suit alleged that the workers for the Missouri Freedom to Work Committee were harassed and intimidated as they attempted to collect signatures on petitions to place Amendment 23 on the ballot in 1978.

By the time the suit reached district court charges had either been dropped or dismissed against all (including our members) but four individuals. Those four were variously accused of stirring a volunteer, posing as a police officer, unlawfully preventing the petitioners from exercising their constitutional right to collect signatures by asking them to disperse, and discriminatorily ejecting the petitioners from a restaurant.

Because all charges were proved to be false, the jury exonerated them on May 13, 1980.

The jury verdict brought unanimous praise from the Missouri labor leaders, many of whom felt the suit was simply an effort to discredit the labor movement.
White Collar Labor Day

Two Reasons for Celebration

Labor Day 1980 was cause for celebration of two important anniversaries in the labor movement—what is sometimes called the AFL-CIO and the 35th anniversary of OPEIU. OPEIU offers hearty congratulations both to our members and the AFL-CIO for past progress. And, we look forward to continued success in the years ahead.

OPEIU’s 35 Years

It was on January 8, 1945, in Cincinnati that AFL President William Green officially chartered a new union called the Office Employees International Union (the word “Professional” was not added for another 20 years). At that time the union consisted of approximately 25,000 members. Since 1945 under the leadership of our present President Emeritus Howard Coughlin, OPEIU membership swelled to almost 120,000 members—larger than it was two decades earlier—while the number of OPEIU locals in the U.S. and Canada grew to 300. OPEIU has one of the most active locals in the country. OPEIU membership now stands at nearly 125,000.

In 1945, when OPEIU was chartered, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Canadian paper companies, numerous utility companies, universities, hospitals, credit unions, banks, and general offices were noted as prominent members to join the union.

The AFL-CIO’s 25 Years

The AFL-CIO was organized in 1955. In his report to the AFL-CIO Convention held in Philadelphia on September 13, 1979, John L. Lewis, President, referred to the union under the leadership of Sister Mitchell that the “health, welfare and pension fund administrators’ offices were organized in San Francisco.” She was also instrumental in organizing the other OPEIU locals. She was the first woman to be a member of the Executive Committee of the San Francisco Labor Council.

Mitchell’s philosophy and dedication to OPEIU were expressed best by herself in the 1965 OPEIU Convention: “It is a trade unionist and a servant, and I wish to continue to represent all of the OPEIU members. That is why I am a member of the OPEIU local. I am a trade unionist, a servant, and I wish to continue to represent all of the OPEIU members, whether it is my own local or any of the other locals. Those wishing to express their regrets are asked by the family to make contributions to c/o Mr. R.J. Bartlett, Hospital, 3773 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California.”

Lockheed’s White Collars Ask OPEIU to Organize

An outbreak of the white-collar blues at Lockheed-Georgia Co. has prompted an organization committee inside the Marine-based aircraft company to seek OPEIU representation.

The committee, which decided to affiliate with OPEIU, is currently in the process of securing about 3,100 Lockheed-Georgia workers who qualify as “salaried, non-supervisory employees.” According to Jim Bloodworth, Southeastern representative for OPEIU, the election will be held if more than 30 percent of those workers express interest in that organization. Lockheed-Georgia workers have been organizing for years to join the Theory, a significant achievement for the Theory.

The voting is set for a later, the merger of the Theory and Lockheed-Georgia’s hourly workers union will make Lockheed-Georgia’s white-collar staff the largest in the country.

A majority of votes cast in favor of union representation would make Lockheed-Georgia’s white-collar staff the largest in the country.

The AFL-CIO’s purpose was expressed best by George Meany in his report to the 13th Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO in 1979, when he wrote: “The AFL-CIO has participated in all aspects of the nation’s affairs, shared the joys and heartbreaks of our fellow citizens, known the satisfaction of victories and the disappointments of defeats. But we have never stopped fighting on behalf of the workers of America.”

In Memoriam

OPEIU mourns the passing of long-time member and business manager of Local 3, OPEIU, who died on June 29, 1980. Services were held July 2 at Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco.

It was under the leadership of Sitter Mitchell that the health, welfare and pension fund administrators’ offices were organized in San Francisco. She was also instrumental in organizing the other OPEIU locals. She was the first woman to be a member of the Executive Committee of the San Francisco Labor Council.

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VP Adams, Get Well Soon!

In August Vice President Bill Adams suffered a heart attack. He is fortunately recuperating nicely.

Anyone who would like to send cards to speed Brother Adams’ recovery may do so c/o OPEIU Local 28, 1001 West Roosevelt Road, Westchester, Illinois 60153.

OPEIU International would like to take this opportunity to extend to Brother Adams our sincerest wishes that he get well soon.

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William A. Loom, Sec./Treas.
115 14th Street, N.W., Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20005

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