

Workers' Memorial Day

Beginning in 1989, the AFL-CIO has set April 28 as Workers' Memorial Day, an annual commemoration to remember those who died from on-the-job accidents and occupational exposures. It is a day of remembrance and a day to commend ourselves for safety vigilance and mutual support on the job.

We remember

The 259 lives lost at the Cherry Mine, November 13, 1909
The Ottawa Radium Girls

Sheet Metal Local 1:
Gary Weber, February 8, 2008
Douglas Lane, February 2, 2016

Electricians 176:
Gordon Currie
Edward Oszepinski, August 20, 1962
Lloyd E. Butterfield, Sept. 10, 1973
Olvin Davis, July 5, 1974
Walter E. Ollom, June 22, 1976
Joseph E. Colmane, April 16, 1981
Delmar C. Schulte, July 13, 1982
Don Bilyeu, February 2, 1984
Donald "Sid" Hammen, April 16, 1990
Stokley Henderson, Nov. 11, 1991
Brad Dado, December 8, 1999
James F. Elliott, October 5, 2000
Greg Briddick, March 2, 2006
Lloyd Tinsman, January 9, 2007
Ronald P. Bebar, September 4, 2020

Laborers Local 393:
Terry Navarro
Craig Hockenberry
Garland Gwaltney
John Crozier



Workers' Memorial Day

April 28, 2022 5 p.m.

Honoring our fallen brothers and sisters.

Illinois State Historical Society
Illinois Labor History Society
Laborers International Union of North America Local 393
Great Plains Laborers District Council
Laborers International Union of North America Midwest Region
ULLICO, Inc.

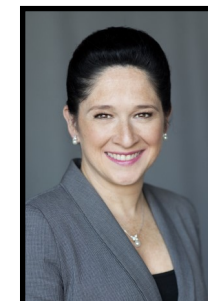
Our special guests:



Governor J. B. Pritzker



Illinois Treasurer Mike Frerichs



Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza



Tom Morello

Marker Inscription

The Death of “Big Steve” Sutton and the birth of
Laborers Local Union 393

In 1932 the national economic crisis of the Great Depression was still growing. Workers had no legal right to organize unions, and had little power individually to prevent lowering standards of living. But an unemployment movement had formed. Near this site, the Marseilles Dam on the Illinois River was being renovated with federal and state funds. Contractors brought in out-of-state workers, paying them below area wages. On July 18, 1932, 300 unemployed Illinois workers gathered to demand those jobs, but were turned away. They returned to picket the next day and found the company had set up a barricade and armed its workers with guns and dynamite. When union workers approached a company car, the non-union workers thought it was an attack and fired on the pro-union workers, who responded with rocks and clubs. During a brutal half-hour fight, dozens of union men were hit by buckshot or clubbed. One union man, “Big Steve” Sutton, 47, a Croatian immigrant ironworker from Joliet, was fatally shot in the head and abdomen with dozens of buckshot pellets from a sawed-off shotgun. None of the non-union men were injured. The company soon agreed to allow unionization and to stop undercutting local workers’ wages with out-of-state workers. The next year Laborers International Union of North America Local 393 was founded to represent area Laborers. This was once incident of many by workers to raise wages and reduce the arbitrary power of management. In 1935 Congress finally gave workers the right to organize.

Our Special Guests

Bucky Halker completed his PhD in History at the University of Minnesota. He is a music historian, labor activist and singer-songwriter.

Illinois AFL-CIO President **Tim Drea** began work as a union mineworker and previously served as UFCW 881’s legislative lobbyist.

State Representative **Lance Yednock** is an Operating Engineers Local 150 member who represents the Illinois Valley.

Illinois Treasurer **Mike Frerichs** is from Champaign and a former State Senator. His father was a Teamster and his mother an AFSCME member, Illinois Comptroller **Susana Mendoza**, the first statewide elected Hispanic, she previously served in the State House and as Chicago City Clerk.

J.B. Pritzker is Illinois 43rd Governor. He founded 1871, a non-profit small business incubator that was named in the top 10 new technology start-ups globally.

Tom Morello grew up in a union home and spent his summers with his mother’s family in Marseilles. Not only is he a talented musician, but is a fervent union supporter and worker advocate.

Program

Music by Bucky Halker

MC—Mike Matejka, Laborers Local 362

Presentation of the Colors

Invocation—Pastor Megan Thompson, Methodist Church

Welcome—Marseilles Mayor Jim Hollenbeck

Greetings—Chuck Stanley, Illinois State Historical Society

Larry Spivack, Illinois Labor History Society

Brandon Phelps, Government Relations Consultant, ULLICO, Inc.

Tim Drea-Illinois AFL-CIO President

State Representative Lance Yednock

Music by Tom Morello

Illinois Treasurer Mike Frerichs

Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker

Plaque unveiling by

Bucky Halker-*Solidarity Forever*

When the union’s inspiration through the workers' blood shall run

There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun

Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one

But the union make us strong

Solidarity Forever (3 times)

For the union makes us strong

It is we who plowed the prairies, but the cities where they trade

Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid

Now we stand outcast and starving midst the wonders we had made

But the union makes us strong

Solidarity Forever (3 times)

For the union makes us strong

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn

But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn

We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn

That the union makes us strong

Song by Ralph Chaplin, 1913