

December Newsletter

AFSCME LOCAL 448

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December, 2020

President: Kathy Lane, 1-815-677-3699
Vice President: Alice Sutherland, 395-6661
Secretary:
Treasurer: Gail Greenblatt-987-7721

Chapter Chairs

Dave Beccue-DNR, 885-3311
 Laurie Scudder-Revenue, 987-7509
 Diane Ritter-Lottery, 987-7018
 Melissa Dix-DHS-987-7308
 Tanya Burns-DCFS-987-7640

Members at Large

Aaron Sockwell-DHS, 232-6121
 Kassandra Lumsden-DCFS-987-3266
 Tom Soresie-DCFS-625-7594

Trustees

Tina Green-DCFS-625-7594
 Jeff Bergstrom-DHS-987-7308
 Robin Aebly-DCFS, 235-7878

People Chair

Laurie Scudder-Revenue, 987-7509

Chris Hooser-Staff Representative, 815-968-0447

NOMINATION MEETING

Kathy Lane, President of our local, reached out to AFSCME Council 31 regarding nominations of officers, trustees, members at large and chapter chair positions. Kathy was provided direction on how to conduct nominations. Due to COVID 19, our local will due nominations via Zoom on December 3, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. The nominations will be for President, Vice, President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chapter Chair of agencies, 3 members at large and 3 trustees. If you are interested in being nominated for any of the above positions, please email Kathy Lane at my3boys448@yahoo.com. If you interested in participating in the membership meeting where nominations will be held, please email Alice Sutherland at mikenalice86@aol.com. She will send you a link for Zoom for you to participate. If you have sent an email and did not receive a Zoom link, please call Alice Sutherland at 815-520-4576 and she will provide the needed information to participate in the meeting.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

As you all know, Kathy Lane, Local 448 president is set to retire at the end of this year. How do you capture a 30-year history in a short newsletter? You look at history, hit the highlights, you note the important parts, you acknowledge there is so much to a person that cannot be adequately covered.

So, let's start there.

History: Kathy started with the state on 1-26-1990 for DCFS. This was just the beginning of not only her career in child welfare but the tip of the iceberg of her journey with the union. This trail was not without angst and consternation. Kathy started down her path simply as a paid member, but she wanted more. She wanted to have a voice in what happened to her and others. She became a steward and from that a union advocate was born. Kathy's profession may have been child welfare, but her passion was advocacy. Kathy has weathered 6 governors, negotiated 7 contracts (with these taking 30-60 days of unpaid work time to complete each contract), participated in local and state activities to include organizing and attending rallies, walking in pickets, attending state and international conventions, speaking with the press about the importance of workers' rights, partnering with other unions fighting for a common cause, chairing the people committee for political action, serving as Vice president of our local and serving as president on 2 occasions; first from 1993 to 1996 and 2nd from 1998 to present.

Meeting Dates

<i>To be determined</i>	

All Membership meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

She has been actively engaged in negotiating job titles with the state, serves on the light duty committee and meets regularly with her own agency's director and management to address 3rd level grievances, working conditions and job protections. Kathy works directly with stewards and the local's e-board. She does all this while being responsible for our membership that started with 400 members and has grown to 600 over the years. This involves 50 work sites, which span 26 agencies and 9 counties. And on any given day, Kathy can tell you many of the members' names and where they work. Kathy does not shy away from being involved. She does not ask anyone to do anything she would not do. She has filed grievances, represented staff in disciplinary hearings. She has participated in the Labor Day parade and visited with members at their works sites and on occasion at their homes. Just to name a few.

Whew, that made me tired just writing that.

And with all those hats, good or bad, well received or criticized the underlying message for Kathy is it's all in the name of membership and protecting people's rights.

Highlights: When asking Kathy about her experiences in the local and with AFSCME she says it overall has been exciting, fun, difficult and frustrating. She has gained so many friends and cherishes the comradery she has had.

Kathy notes a shining moment in her 30 years of being involved in the union, aside from winning benefits and settling contracts for members, was the power of the members she felt when AFSCME had the daunting task of taking a strike vote against Governor Rauner. Kathy's benchmark is the need to stand together and be involved. The local stood together in the face of adversity and she never felt it more than she did at that moment.

The Important Parts:

Kathy fights for what is right. She does not take no for an answer. Her drive is relentless. She knows strength is in numbers. She knows the backbone of this union is its members.

No article sums up adequately all that Kathy has done and accomplished during her tenure with the union. But it can reflect the sheer dedication Kathy brought to the table.

If any of you have met Kathy, you know she says what she means and means what she says. She does not shy away from a fight. She is fearless with it comes to challenging others whether it be management, the Council or even members it is to ensure the contract is followed and rights are preserved and protected. Her passion for the Union is driven by her desire to see members treated with dignity and respect by their employer. She firmly believes this is grounded in knowing and speaking up around issues in the contract. Kathy's tenure has not been absent conflict and stress when trying to represent 600+ opinions and needs. This has never deterred Kathy. She never stepped down from trying to make decisions and enter into agreements that protected people's rights. Rights to fair pay, over time, time off, safe working environment, reasonable and respectful treatment by management to name a few.

Here is what several of her cohorts have said asking for a word or scenario to describe Kathy.

She is tenacious.

She has heart

She is passionate

She shows determination and dedication to the local and AFSCME

She is driven and outspoken

She is supportive!

“Kathy Lane is a thinker; she is a problem solver and has been an invaluable asset when dealing with management. She thinks out of the box and can often offer viable solutions that allow management to save face while protecting workers. She is a master negotiator” Gail Greenblatt Treasurer

One retiree noted that Kathy always took conventions and union functions seriously. ***Her approach was work hard and party later...*** Jay Ferraro former staff Rep.

Another Retiree and long-standing union member notes ***“Kathy Lane is a warrior for the worker in Local 448 as well as AFSCME as a whole. One of her favorite words is: WHATEVER.”*** Enus Higgins former Vice President.

Kathy received the Fitzgerald award from AFSCME for her lifelong dedication to the cause and to her members. The nomination in part stated:

“We could not think of a better person to be nominated for this award. When you think of a union leader and union activist Kathy Lane is the person who comes to mind. Peter Vogel defines leadership as “developing people and helping others reach their full potential. It is about equipping others with the right tools and strategies not only to maximize the success of an organization, but also the live of individuals”. She is a visionary... She can often be heard speaking at Rally’s, conventions, and community meetings about the importance of unions. She models to other union members how to communicate with management and demonstrates how hold them accountable to the contract. She authors the monthly newsletter and has been instrumental in setting up her local’s website to keep members in the know. Even when vacationing ... When our local was faced with the tragedy of losing two union members Kathy was the first person there providing support to the offices letting them know the union is there for them”. Authored by Tamara Shorter, former Vice President)

The Exit

Kathy’s take away as new leadership takes over moving forward is not just gaining/maintaining membership but the need for members to get involved and be active. She lives the phrase a harm to one is a harm to all. Kathy’s passion and dedication has helped us have a voice not only with management but with the council as well. She has challenged rules, behaviors and decision making on all sides of the fence. We are better off having been under Kathy’s watch over the last 30 years. Kathy says she is excited to take on new challenges but leaves with a heavy heart of having to turn over the gauntlet. She knows the new leadership will find their own path but hopes she has forged the trail as so many before have done to help the local continue to move forward. One prior member sums it up the best.

“Dear 448 Membership:

Kathy and I have been comrades and friends for about thirty years. We’ve marched, fought, swam, traveled, represented and tanned together. My biggest memory of her is on 9/11. We planned on visiting DeKalb IDES together. Kathy picked up lunch and we went together to learn that the office was closing because of the organized and devastating terrorism on American soil. We took the chicken to my patio and pondered our future as the news unfolded and it seemed as if the entire world stopped. In the sudden course of a few hours, our lives were forever changed. I will never forget that day.

Kathy leaves a huge hole that must be filled. Your future, now more than ever, depends on each and every one of you. Kathy is a strong and tireless leader for all of us. With every ounce of her being, she protects our livelihood, rights, income, pensions, benefits, voice and so much more. She understands the rights of collective bargaining and the unique positions of all public employees. She truly cares. It is time for every one to step up and continue her fight -- YOUR fight. She taught us well.

Let's all thank and honor Kathy for all that she has done and all that she has taught us. Let us all wish Kathy the best in her retirement. Let us wish her safe and happy travels and enjoyment. May her activism continue in her and all of us.

***In solidarity,
Melissa Garman
DCFS Child Protection
1985-2016”***

Kathy on behalf of the E-board and membership we ***thank you*** for your fight, drive, and determination over the last 30 years. You will be missed. We wish you well in your new adventures as you close this chapter.

In Solidarity

ANOTHER Shout out....

Also retiring at the end of the year is **Barb Fane**. She has been behind the scenes for the last 20 years as 448's secretary. She has assisted us in maintaining expense reports, facilitated the mailing of the monthly newsletter, organizes expenditures including helping with our audits and reports for our taxes and manages our roster of our 600+ members... **A BIG THANKS to Barb for working with us all these years and supporting our local.**