**RETIREE NOTES**

**Retirees ready to fight after Janus decision**

**On June 27, the U.S. Supreme Court sided against working people and ruled that fair share fees are unconstitutional. Public sector unions can no longer collect reduced fees from bargaining unit employees who don’t wish to pay them, but must continue to represent them as full members.**

“The Janus case is an attempt to take away the power of the union and the voice of the people,” said Don Todd, Sub-Chapter 86 President (Springfield). “But I was around before fair share. I know if we stand together what amazing things we can get done.”

AFSCME members are standing strong, more determined than ever to protect workers’ rights and improve the futures of their families and communities. They will need the help of retirees who have been through similar challenges.

“Retirees set the path for everything current working members have,” said Jay Ferraro, Sub-chapter 69 President (Rockford). “None of our contracts were simply given to us. We had to fight for everything. We didn’t have rights before collective bargaining but we are still here. Now more than ever we need to stand together.”

You can get involved in the fight for our union by contacting your sub-chapter president to help with member education and outreach.

“There is a lot at stake,” said Todd, “and our best defense is standing in solidarity.”

**Retiree honored at Mother Jones Dinner**

AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31 Executive Board Member Melissa Garman wins award.

Garman was born and raised in Chicago, a proud product of Chicago public schools, and attended Northern Illinois University to study political science. After graduation, she eventually settled in DeKalb and began her 52-year career as a child abuse investigator with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Early in her state career, Garman became active in AFSCME Local 448, and after retiring, she stayed involved as a member of the Chapter 31 executive board.

Garman said the labor movement is in her veins: She carried her grandfather Sam’s eulogy in her pocket when she received the award.

“Sam embodied all of the qualities of a strong union member,” Garman said. “He was the president of the Chicago Fur Workers Union in the 1950s and devoted his life to the labor movement and the common man. He fought against discrimination of all minorities. I am a part of a strong lineage of activists. Winning this award is an honor.”

**Solidarity for my daughter**

On May 10, more than 1,000 AFSCME members marched to the Capitol to call on legislators to finally pay one of the state’s oldest debts. Chapter 31 retirees were there to march with them.

In July 2011, the state failed to pay negotiated wage increases to more than 20,000 employees. The Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the funds must be paid, but required a special appropriation passed by the General Assembly. Gov. Rauner vetoed a bill with the required appropriation in 2016.

But finally in this 2018 legislative session, not only was a back pay bill passed by both houses, but an appropriation for all the wages owed was included in the 2019 budget.

Retirees attending the May Lobby Day either had back pay owed to them or were standing in solidarity with others owed money. Sub-chapter 90 member Todd Vincent and his daughter, Local 3280 member Natalie Stanley, were among them.

“I believe that I should stand in solidarity with my daughter,” Vincent said. “She wants to strengthen our union and make sure that everyone gets paid fair wages. That is something that I fought for before we had a contract. We know the importance of standing together. We are a union family through and through.”

“It means a lot to me that my dad was by my side,” Natalie Stanley said. “He really knows what it means to be in the union and how hard we fight for our workplace rights. In the future, when I retire, I will sign up to be an AFSCME retiree so I can continue to fight for everything that the union does and continues to do for working members and retirees.”

“The union is its members and we have to take care of each other, regardless if we are retired or working,” Vincent said. “We all have to be union strong, no matter the issue.”