

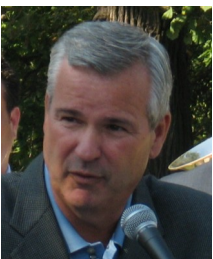


L to r: Larry Spivack, Dennis Gannon, Rep John D'Amico, Mike Carrigan, Perry Buckley. Alderman Margaret Laurino

President Gompers has a mighty nice place now in Gompers Park, but he can also be found on the River Walk in San Antonio and in a Washington, D.C. park where he sits among a group of mythical figures. However, he has a lot of old friends at Forest Home Cemetery resting in the section owned by the Cigar Makers Union, so he should be content in his own park in Chicago.

Chicago Welcomes Gompers To a New Home in his own Park

Sam Gompers, cigar maker and long-time president of the American Federation of Labor from its founding in 1886 until his death in 1924, has now assumed permanent residence in a Chicago public park. A life-sized statue in bronze now stands on a pedestal in a high visibility corner of Gompers Park at the intersection of Pulaski and Foster Avenues on the city's northwest side. It was dedicated in a public ceremony on Labor Day, September 3, 2007.



The festive event was attended by an estimated 300 labor union members and officials, and neighborhood residents. The event was chaired by 39th Ward Alderman Margaret Laurino, who had sponsored the statue project.

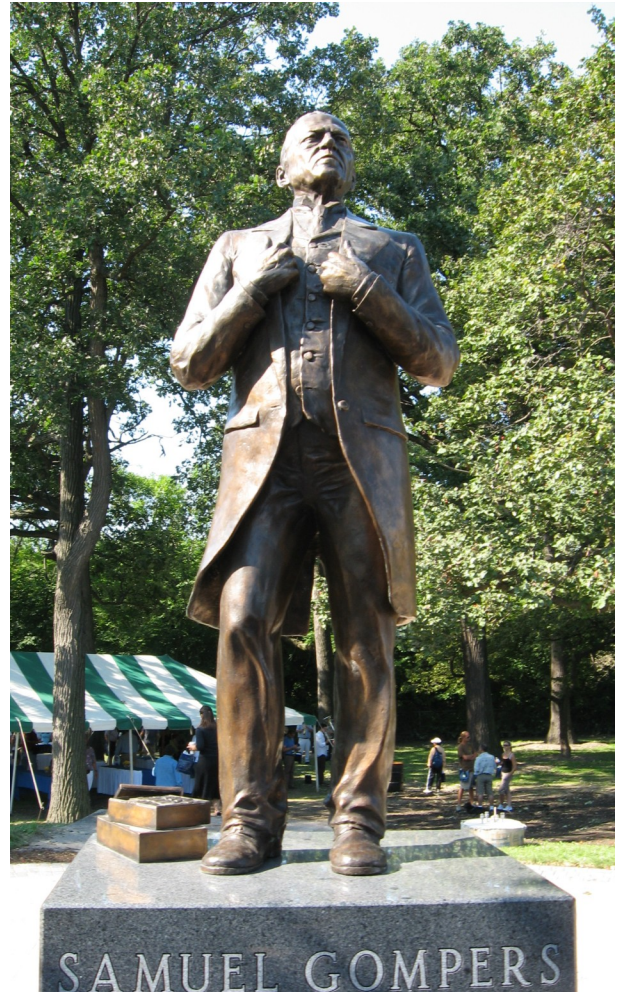
State Representative John D'Amico Speaks

The first speaker was her colleague, State Representative John D'Amico. A member of the Journeymen Plumbers Union, D'Amico had secured state funding for landscaping of the area.

Much of the funding for the sculpture was provided by 40 labor unions from the Chicago area. Labor speakers were CFL President Dennis Gannon, AFL-CIO State President Mike Carrigan and Perry Buckley, President of the Cook County College Teachers Union. ILHS President Larry Spivack presented a biographical summary of Sam Gompers' legacy as President of the American Federation of Labor.

The sculptor, Susan Clinard, took a well deserved round of applause, as did Local 63 of the Iron Workers, whose members did the installation of the statue. Also thanked were the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 who performed appropriate music including Solidarity Forever.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, chocolate cigars were served in honor of Gompers the Cigar Maker. Visitors will find free parking one block south on Pulaski.



Saga of Sam's Statue

The park was created in 1927 from farmland along the north branch of the Chicago River. In 1929 it was renamed for Samuel Gompers at the urging of Henry A. Schwartz, an official of the shoemakers' union and a member of the park board.

For the next 80 years the park displayed a handsome sign proclaiming its name, but there had never been even a reference to the identity of its namesake. In 1995 ILHS urged the Chicago Park District to undertake some sort of interpretive effort, but nothing came of it at that time.

In 2003 ILHS member James Macdonald, a retired member of the University Professionals of Illinois, AFT, and a volunteer steward over the wetlands program developed at Gompers, called the ILHS office to report that Alderman Margaret Laurino had taken interest in putting a proper memorial to Sam Gompers in the park. We wrote a letter to the Park District offering our cooperation.

(continued)

ILHS Receives Gifts for the Collection

In recent weeks ILHS has received some interesting gifts for our archival collections. From the estate of the late Todd Tate Jr., for many years the Chief Steward of UPWA Local 347 at the big Armour plant in Chicago, has come his large collection of documents mostly from the post 1968 merger with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters. As Chief Steward, he edited the local's newsletter, *The Cleaver*. The gift comes from his daughter Qamar Mateen-Dansby of Oak Park.

We have also acquired a copy of a large photo exhibition produced for the 2007 summer institute of the Iron Workers International. This visual history of the union is the work of Richard Rowe, Business Manager of Local 63 in Chicago.

The latest arrival is a book of minutes from Chicago Local 4 of the International Journeyman Horseshoers. The minutes, kept by Secretary John Moran, cover the period January 1931 through December 1935. The book is a gift of Leah Thornton, whose late husband John had inherited them through the Moran family. They are written in beautiful handwriting and every word is easily legible. This is the home local of the great John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, 1895-1946.

Organizational Membership Hits New High

The ILHS added 43 organizational membership names to the rolls in 2007, the most in any year for the past 30 years, or so. This welcome development can be attributed to a telephone solicitation undertaken by Board members early this year through the cooperation of Mike Carrigan, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO, who offered the use of its telephone network.

ILHS needs to grow and develop additional revenue. We cannot long continue to survive on a payroll consisting of one part-time employee, our founder and perennial volunteer office manager Les Orear points out.

Saga of the Statue (continued)

Meetings took place, a local foundation made a significant contribution; CFL President Dennis Gannon came on board, as did State AFL President Mike Carrigan; 40 labor unions contributed funds; a sculptor was commissioned; State Representative D'Amico secured an appropriation from the Legislature.

With all the pieces falling in place, Labor Day 2007 was selected for the dedication, and the rest is now history.



Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 provided the combo. L to r: Leo Murphy, Rich Armandi, Bill Overton, Keith Bauman. Pres. Gary Matts was also on hand.

Heard & Seen At the



And they all sang!



NEA President Reg Weaver delivering a speech.

Reg Weaver Cheered by 300

"A thrilling event!" a guest declared with enthusiasm as the last sounds of *Solidarity Forever* died away and the Union Hall of Honor Awards Dinner for 2007 came to an end. That was clearly the feeling in the air as the 300 guests gathered up their program books and headed home.

Time and time again the Ballroom of the DoubleTree Hotel in Oak Brook, Ill., a western suburb of Chicago, had rocked with applause as the program of the evening unfolded with moments both festive and profoundly serious. In fact, the festive moments held serious implications, as well. The induction of NEA President Reg Weaver into the Union Hall of Honor was due in large part to his leading role in the 1983 passage by the Illinois Legislature of a law requiring public schools to engage in collective bargaining with labor organizations.

Yes, it took almost 50 years after the Wagner Act to bring collective bargaining to school employees of Illinois. And, nowadays, collective bargaining for everybody is under assault from the corporate world. How ironic that in 1915 our other inductee, Ella Flagg Young, was driven from her job as Superintendent of Schools by the business controlled Chicago Board of Education when she publicly opposed the Board's new policy requiring all teachers to resign from the Chicago Teachers Federation, composed largely of NEA members. Sixty-five elementary teachers who refused to resign were terminated.

President Reg Weaver is in his second term as President of the National Education Association. He is a native son of Danville in northeastern Illinois, where the mayor proclaimed November 2, 2007 to be Reg Weaver Day.

He attended Illinois State University in Normal, and holds a Masters Degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago. He is a teacher on leave from the Harvey School District. Many of his fellow teachers and the School Board attended the Dinner.

He was elected President of the Illinois Education Association in 1981.

The event was videotaped by Chicago's Cable Access Channel, CAN-TV, and cablecast on Channel 21, December 9, 2007.

Union Hall of Honor



...ers two-fisted speech.



Helen Ramirez-Odell, Chair of Chicago Teachers' Union Womens Rights Committee accepts Ella Flagg Young citation.

Labor Honors Illinois Teachers

Hosted by ILHS President Larry Spivack, the program of the Union Hall of Honor Awards Dinner offered an impressive array of top leaders from all sectors of the labor movement in Illinois. They came to break bread together in tribute to the teachers of the state and their various union organizations, and to emphasize the primacy of free public education to the proper functioning of the institutions of democracy. Fundamental to the strength of both, of course, is the existence of the institutions of labor as the defender and advocate of public education.

At the speakers table were Mike Carrigan, President of the Illinois AFL-CIO, and Ken Swanson, President of the Illinois Education Association. Also at the speakers table were Jorge Ramirez, Secretary-Treasurer of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and President Reg Weaver of the 3.2 million member strong National Education Association. And what a sight it was when all the 300 guests rose to sing Solidarity Forever!

The evening was educational right from the start with a video presentation on the biographies of the two inductees, Reg Weaver and Ella Flagg Young. It was prepared by staff of the IEA under the direction of Bob Ray. Folksinger Bucky Halker entertained dinner guests with a song. ILHS Board Member Alma Washington read from an open letter written by Carl Sandburg to Jacob Loeb, President of the Chicago Board of Education, condemning him for his union-busting Loeb Rule.

At the age of 17, Ella Flagg Young became a Chicago school teacher in 1865. She soon became a principal, then Assistant Superintendent over a district stretching from the Stock Yards east to the University of Chicago.

After getting a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago under John Dewey, she became Principal at Cook County Normal School, the teacher training institute, in 1905. In 1909 she was appointed Superintendent of Schools in Chicago, the first woman to head such a large metropolitan district in the nation.

Always an advocate of education for informed citizenship, she was also dedicated to the empowerment of the teacher. In 1915 when the Board of Education adopted the notorious Loeb Rule, forbidding teachers to become union members, she went public in opposition and was forced to resign. Today the Ella Flagg Young Elementary School bears her name.

March 2008 Marks 75th Anniversary of FDR's First Inauguration

Next year will bring an opportunity for the American public to be reminded of the Roosevelt New Deal, and the new chapter in labor history which followed. Franklin D. Roosevelt has all but been erased from the knowledge of the current generation, and with it has come the subversion of almost all of the valuable social legislation achieved through those painful years. Hopefully, the Labor Movement will seize this chance to restore a popular understanding of the realities of the Great Depression and the policies which reversed that economic and social catastrophe.

Like Bush, Hoover "stayed the course" as joblessness soared and banks closed. There are parallels to be pointed out as factories close and markets crash.

Fireworks at 1916 NEA Convention

Chicago Board President John Loeb was invited to defend his rule at the 1916 convention of the National Education Association. Following his remarks, the "retired" Ella Flagg Young responded with a firm, though lady-like, denunciation of his position, citing the "stony faces" of the Board members to whom the teachers had brought their issues. Young defended the teachers and their union as instruments of democracy, of the freedom and power necessary to teach children to be citizens.

Following the convention, New York teachers held a huge rally in support of Young and the 68 Chicago teachers who were terminated when they refused to resign from their union.

The Loeb Rule

Adopted by the Chicago Board of Education, September 1, 1915

Membership by teachers in labor unions or in organizations of teachers affiliated with a trade union or federation or association of trade unions, as well as teachers' organizations which have officers, business agents, or other representatives who are not members of the teaching force, is inimical to proper discipline, prejudicial to the efficiency of the teaching force, and detrimental to the welfare of the public school system. Therefore, such membership, affiliation, or representation is hereby prohibited.



Ella Flagg Young

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Roosevelt University History Class Visits Illinois Labor History Society

Professor Erik Gellman's upper division history class, *Black Chicago*, visited the ILHS in October. This small history class of nine came with questions about the role of labor in the civil rights movement of Chicago starting as early as the 30's and 40's. At the ILHS, Les Orear discussed with the class the interracial membership and leadership of the United Packinghouse Workers in Chicago, and also in the Jim Crow South. Orear recalled that the 1941 Master agreement signed by Armour & Co. covering 17 plants in both north and south contained a clause forbidding discrimination against any employee. Agreements including the same clause followed with all other companies. Later the phrase was expanded to include applicants. In subsequent years, the clause was interpreted to apply to facilities such as drinking fountains.

Broader Movement

Orear also discussed the union's active role in the civil rights movement. Of particular interest to the students was UPWA's creation of the Russell Bull Scholarship awarded annually to a student leader in the civil rights movement as chosen by SCLC.

The groundbreaking role played by the labor movement, not only in Chicago, but around the country, in the struggle for African-American equality is little noted in studies of the civil rights movement, but made an important contribution. Orear's insight into and experience with the interracial, civil rights oriented United Packinghouse Workers gave this history class an important lesson in the role and responsibility of the labor movement to civil rights struggle in the United States, especially in Chicago!

Docia Buffington
History Major
Roosevelt University

Note: Docia and fellow students, Josh Noehrenberg and Felipe Ulloa, volunteered at ILHS three hours per week during Fall semester .

Readers Invited to Help Build List of Illinois Labor Sites for Web Posting

Illinois' rich labor history isn't limited to Haymarket Square in Chicago – every city and small town has a story, whether connected to a coal mine, railroad or industrial site.

Seeking to document those various sites, the Illinois Labor History Society's downstate committee has launched a Wikipedia site, dedicated to identifying significant labor sites and memorials throughout Illinois. It can be found on the Web at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_sites_related_to_the_Illinois_labor_movement.

The People's Encyclopedia

For those not familiar with the Internet, "Wikipedia" is a people's encyclopedia, where participants can launch their own headings and topics and fill in their expertise. Items are written in a straightforward, non-opinionated fashion and anyone can add additional information.

Since Illinois is so varied and geographically vast, it is hoped that this website at a very public setting will encourage local communities to include their sites of significance. Those might include a factory, coal mine, monument or plaque, cemetery, church or ethnic hall established by workers.

Hopefully, as enough communities, unions and others include their sites, every region in Illinois will find itself mentioned. This might create enough sites to allow publication of a downstate Illinois labor map.

Next time you are on the World Wide Web, visit Wikipedia and look up this site. You might have a few places of your own to nominate. The site is linked to the Illinois Labor History Society.

Mike Matejka
Vice President
Illinois Labor History Society

Note: Matejka's Committee meets from time to time in various parts of the state in order to involve all ILHS members. If interested, email Mike at matejka53@aol.com.