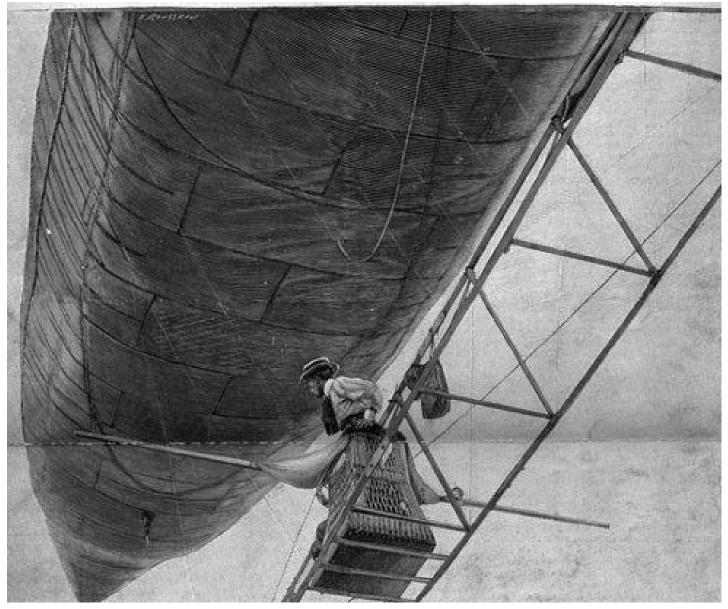


Autumn 2019



## **HONORING OBIE**

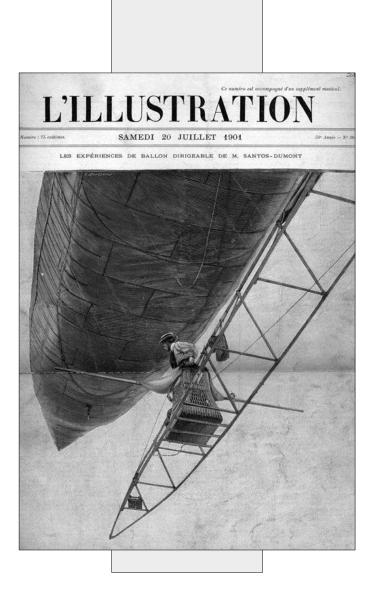
Philadelphia and New Jersey pay tribute to a Machinists and Aerospace Union Icon.

### WE GOT YOUR BACK (PAY)

\$22K in back pay here, \$10K there... it adds up. District 141 has returned nearly \$2.5 Million in recovered wages to airline workers.

## **MACHINISTS GET PAID MORE**

Machinists Union Members hold the highest-paid and most secure jobs of their kind at every airline and airport that employs them.



**On the Cover:** 118 years ago, L'Illustration Magazine amazed readers with tales of the early days of commercial aviation, when mighty dirigibles and Zeppelins ruled the skies.

The labor movement has a rich culture and history within Aerospace. The District 141 Education Department strives to preserve this history, making sure that Aerospace Workers know where they came from, and where they're going.

To find out about scheduling an on-site training at your Local, Contact Mac McGovern, Director of Education. Your Local Lodge will coordinate with Mac and your AGC or Committee Person, to determine who will attend specific training in your area





MIKE KLEMM EDITOR IN CHIEF

ALEXANDER GERULIS DIRECTING EDITOR

**ANN CLIFFORD** CREATIVE DIRECTOR

INES GARCIA-KEIM COPY EDITOR

BRADLEY QUARTUCCIO LAYOUT EDITOR

> **DAVE LEHIVE** SOCIAL MEDIA

ERIC PRICE COPY, PHOTOS, ARTWORK

AND LAYOUTS

# **A Message From Mike**

This month, thousands of Machinists Union members at United Airlines are getting a well-deserved pay raise. Congratulations.



This single raise will increase pay by about \$1,600 a year for our members at the top of the pay scale. Together, we have negotiated an additional \$28 million in wages for ramp workers, storekeepers, and passenger service reps.

Our families and communities will benefit from the higher wages and unprecedented job security that we have created as a union. We've come a long way to build our industry into a great place to work.

We should be proud of what we've done together. It's proof of the value that airline workers like us provide to our companies.

I want to recognize the superb work that our AGCs are doing, especially over the past few months. The grievance procedures that protect us on the job have returned tens of thousands of dollars in back pay to our members in this quarter, thanks to the hard work and professionalism of our Committees, Officers, and AGCs like Olu Ajetomobi. We owe these dedicated activists all the gratitude in the world.

If you have an issue with pay, please do not hesitate to get your Local Committee involved.

With warmest wishes for a safe and peaceful holiday season.





President and Directing General Chair, IAMAW District 14







8 Machinists Get Paid More Machinists Union Members in aviation are the best compensated workers, and the hardest to outsource, in every classification they hold.

**12** | Paying Tribute to Obie. PHL and EWR celebrate the Machinists & Aerospace Union Icon.

**14** Can You Hear Me Now? \$22K in back pay after Reno supervisors couldn't manage a hearing test.





## ASK AN **EXPERT**

**Cristina Odoardi Community Service** Director, IAMAW141

## How Can My Local Lodge Qualify for a Donation From The District?

I'm so happy to be asked about this!

Many local lodges are missing out on a once-ayear charitable donation from District 141.

This donation can help your local lodge with your community service drive or event while building and creating meaningful relationships with local charities.

Don't miss out!

To find out how much you qualify for, or if you have any questions about our Community Service Program, feel free to contact me. I'll be happy to walk you through the process.

Start by downloading the Charitable Event Fundraiser Donation form from our website - IAM141.org. You will find it under the "Community Services" tab. Fill out the form and send it in. It's a simple as that. Once we receive the form, the district will calculate how much money your local lodge will receive. I'll personally help you understand the process, and double check everything to make sure you're getting the biggest cash donation possible for your Local Lodge and the important charity work that it's doing.

I look forward to hearing from you!

## **Contact Me**

Office: (617) 593-2963 COdoardi@iam141.org IAM141.org/ **CommunityService** 

Local Lodge is doing in the community! Send Pics, stories and upcoming projects to Info@IAM141.org!

We Want to hear about the work that your

IAM District 141

Best. Christmas. Ever.

*fachinists* 

For Machinists & Herospace Union Members in the IAMAW

\$30 / Hour Industry Standard Pay Double-Time and a Half Holiday Pay Separate Paid Time Off and Sick Banks *HeroSpace* No-Outsourcing, Layoffs or Furloughs Legally-Protected, Contractual Work Rules No Management Favoritism on the Job Guaranteed, Scheduled Pay Raises Just Cause Discipline Agent - Directed Safety Programs Legally-Binding Grievance Procedures More than \$2 Million in Back Pay Returned More than 1100 Unjust Firings Overturned Secure Pensions and Retirement Seniority Based Bidding and Pay Scales Protected Profit Sharing Protected Day & Shift Trades Protected Flight Benefits More than \$1.4 Billion in Additional, Negotiated Pay for Unionized Airline Workers



union

# **MACHINISTS GET PAID MORE**

The contracts that Machinists Union Members have negotiated are the best in the history of commercial aviation. The best total compensation. The best job protections.



# Machinists Union members are the highest-paid workers, and the hardest to outsource, in every commercial aviation job they do, according to a recent study.

The research is part of an internal study conducted by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 141, who uses the data to prepare for contract negotiations. District 141 represents over 40,000 airline employees at five airlines, as well as several other aviation-related contractors in the United States.

The study found that members of the Machinists Union in the airline industry are consistently the best-compensated workers in every classification they work. In other words, the best-paid fleet service and ramp workers, storekeepers and reservations or customer service agents at any airline were Machinists.

According to the study, Machinists Union members have been successful at negotiating two critical things from the airlines that employ them: Higher wages, and tough as nails job protections. Even in the rare cases where Machinists have a slightly lower base wage, their non-union counterparts often lack pensions, health care coverage and wage add-ons. These are things that IAM Members rely on and which push their overall compensation rates to the very top in the industry.



Top photo, Local 811 President Leroy Taylor on the IAH ramp. Above, Local 914 activists and Safety Advocates promoting heat abatement measures in EWR.

peers. However, many Delta workers have a cap on the hours they are allowed to work each year, so their total salaries can never match their unionized counterparts. Delta does not offer them a pension, and most are denied health insurance coverage. And, as "at-will" employees, they can be fired or outsourced at any time, for any reason or no reason at all. The study found that Machinists who show up to work on time and do a good job have no reason to worry about being fired, outsourced, or laid off.



Local 2198 members Patricia Nacouzi and Terrence Lewis

Today's airline workers consistently list job security as one of their top concerns, ranking it higher in importance than wages or health care. This has led Machinists Union negotiators to insist on ironclad "No outsourcing" clauses in all new contracts. These job protections have reversed the destructive and painful practice of outsourcing that has hit every sector of the airline industry, particularly over the last decade. Major carriers like United Airlines have recently reversed the trend, bringing back furloughed workers and expanding unionized departments.

There's little doubt that turning the tide of outsourcing was a result of dogged union negotiations. Outside of the Machinists Union, outsourcing remains a grim fact of life for most airline workers. According to a 2019 study conducted by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), airlines were directly hiring seventy-five percent of their baggage handlers in 2002. In contrast, by 2018, ninety-six percent of non-union baggage handler and skycap jobs had been outsourced to contractors. The SEIU study also found that wages dropped dramatically along with the number of unionized direct-hire workers. According to the data, outsourced jobs in the airline industry paid a median wage of only \$11.39 in 2018, compared to a 2002 median hourly wage of \$27.18 for the direct-hire union members measured in the study. An important characteristic of aviation work is that the women and men that do it tend to have shorter careers and live with higher levels of personal risk.

Airline workers such as baggage handlers have an inherently unsafe job. Temperatures near the heavy equipment they work with can reach 170 degrees. A typical ramp agent might lift over 10,000 pounds of luggage a day, often in confined spaces that do not allow proper lifting techniques.

> Those working indoors, such as the gate and ticket counter agents, may be spared much of the physical dangers, but their jobs can be extremely stressful. Anyone familiar with modern air travel can empathize with those who must deal with airport passenger traffic daily. The number of assaults on airline staff by passengers has reached such high levels that new FAA regulations will mandate stricter oversight by law enforcement agencies. These new protections were also brought about by the successful lobbying of members of Congress by unionized airline workers.

With so much hard work in such a hostile environment, airline employees cannot always expect to work as many years as those in other professions. Back and shoulder injuries are common, which can lead to permanent disabilities, further limiting their ability to work.

As a result, many union contracts aim to fit career earnings into time frames that more closely match the years that airline workers can realistically expect to stay on the job. For Machinists, that means top wage scales of around \$30 an hour or more. It also means secure pensions, affordable health insurance, and negotiated wage add-ons that can push overall compensation to well over \$40 an hour.

Machinists hold the highest-paid and most secure jobs of their kind at every airline and airport where they work.



Since 2012, Machinists contracts at American and United have added more than \$1 Billion to the paychecks of union members. A typical union member working at gates, ticket lobbies, or on the ramp at any airport can expect to reach a top hourly wage of \$30. That's never happened before, and it wouldn't happen without a union.

Union wages are putting pressure on non-union airlines to bring up their own pay standards as well. Carriers like jetBlue and Delta are increasingly forced to match the \$30 per hour current standard set by the Machinists Union. However, none of them have been able to match the total compensation and job protections Machinists Union members have negotiated. Machinists members still hold the highest-paid and most secure jobs of their kind at every airline and airport.

These provisions have not come easily. As complex as the negotiations for these agreements have been, Machinists have also had to defend them against repeated company challenges and attempts to chip away at them.

In 2015, United Airlines CEO Jeff Smisek proposed the development of a "wholly-owned subsidiary" called United Ground Express, or UGE. Smisek's plan created a division of United that was legally considered a separate company, with the goal of outsourcing core union work to that new entity. Machinists responded with an avalanche of legal filings and grievances to federal labor regulators and proved that the move violated the terms of the agreement that Smisek had signed with United workers. The authorities ruled on behalf of the Machinists, fortifying the job security of union members. Following that victory, the Machinists Union organized UGE employees. Today, UGE workers are negotiating improvements to their wages and benefits as union members in their own right. Smisek's failed effort to play games with outsourcing cost the company millions of dollars. He was forced to leave United soon after his UGE scheme fell apart, because of an unrelated corruption scandal.

Other airlines have hatched similar schemes with outsourcing and pay cuts. American Airlines, for example, is currently embroiled in a brutal effort to outsource union-owned work during contract negotiations. The outrage inspired by these efforts has become the defining feature of this period of American's history as an airline.

While these wage rates and job protections have not come easily, there are no signs that Machinists Union members are giving up fighting for them. As the union prepares to negotiate changes to contracts at Hawaiian and United Airlines, this willingness to fight...and the ability to win those fights... are good news for the 40,000+ Machinists in the airline industry.





#### FORTY-TWO THOUSAND OF US ARE HARD TO BEAT.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS &

RKERS

N O

There are 42,000 active and retired members of District 141 that have made careers in the airline industry, and a home in the largest aerospace and transportation union in the world.

Together, we've added more than \$1.5 Billion in additional, negotiated wages to our industry.

That's the power of solidarity.

DEMOR

9

## HONORING OBIE: Beloved Philly Activist Recognized For Lifetime of Service

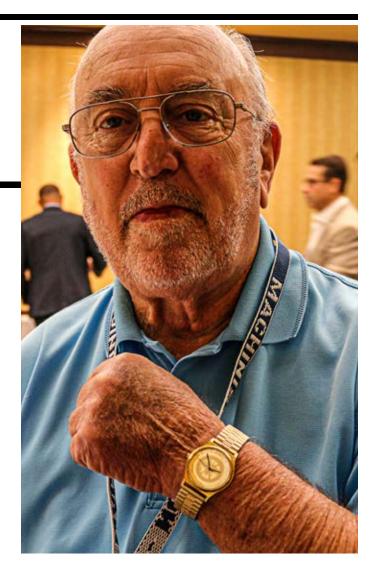
In the 60-plus years that he has been active in the Machinists Union, Obie has touched hundreds of lives and has dramatically expanded the role of the union in his community.

This summer, the New Jersey State Council of Machinists recognized Obie O'Brien for his service on behalf of working people in New Jersey and Pennsylvania over half a century.

The New Jersey State Council presented Obie with the Frank Darcy Leadership Award in an inspiring ceremony at its annual conference in Atlantic City.

Cornelius "Obie" O'Brien is one of the most visible and respected union activists in the Philadelphia area. Although he formally retired in 1991, Obie has remained an active member of his beloved Local 1776. Over the years, he became so respected by his fellow union activists that they renamed the local in his honor, formally changing the name to "The Obie O'Brien Liberty Bell Lodge Local 1776."

Speaking at the event, Machinists District 141 President Mike Klemm praised Obie for his years of service, and for the wide range of roles he has performed. "I've been deeply honored and humbled to have seen firsthand the work that Obie has done on behalf of this membership," Klemm said to the audience in a packed room. "We should all strive to learn from his example, and live up to the legacy that he's building in this union."



Cornelius "Obie" O'Brien, whose union activism spans more than six decades, proudly shows off his Machinists Union watch before being recognized for his lifetime of service at a ceremony at the New Jersey State Council Conference in Atlantic City. Obie himself helped establish the Frank Darcy Leadership Award, created in honor of the legendary New Jersey Machinist, and Obie's personal mentor and friend, Frank Darcy.



"Obie has been my friend and mentor for over 20 years," said Local 1776 President Rich Howell. "No one deserves recognition for his service, commitment, and dedication to working families more than he does. He has inspired me to remain active and continue to serve when I retire."

Accepting the award, Obie was characteristically humble. From the podium, he gave much of the credit for his success to his family and fellow union members. "I have to thank my brothers and sisters in this union," he told the assembly. "Since 1959, when I joined this union, I've fought every day for other members. And, as you can see," he said, gesturing to the members of his local that had lined up behind him on stage, "the members of Local 1776 have been behind me, too. We're the same people, fighting for the same causes, every day of the week."

"I support these guys 100%."

Choking back tears, he thanked his family for standing by him, a sentiment that earned loud cheers from the audience of union members. "I won't take up much of your time," a visibly moved Obie said. "I want to thank my wife, my daughters, and every member of this Machinists Union for their help. Without them, I would not have been able to stand up here today and do the things I've done."

Left to right, Local 1776 President Rich Howell, Obie O'Brien, NJ State Council of Machinists President Ines Garcia-Keim and NJSCM Secretary-Treasurer Cristino Vilorio with members of Local 1776 behind them. IAM District 141

## 

When I leave here, I'll know that I helped a lot of people. And, that's the whole thing. Did I make any personal gains out of it? Yes. I met a lot of friends.

"When I leave here, I'll know that I helped a lot of people. And, that's the whole thing. Did I make any personal gains out of it? Yes. I met a lot of friends."

Obie O'Brien began his career at Eastern Airlines in 1959. He has served his union brothers and sisters in a wide range of roles, including as President of the Pennsylvania State Council, Central Labor Council, and as Political Director of Local 1776. Obie is perhaps best known as the Recording Secretary of his local, a position he held for 45 years. Obie was a ramp serviceman for US Air until his retirement.

The Frank Darcy Leadership Award recognizes one union member each year who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in advancing the cause of the Machinists Union and working people. The award celebrates the work of legendary New Jersey unionist, Frank Darcy. Obie was instrumental in establishing the original Frank Darcy award before becoming the latest recipient of the honor.





# UNITED RAMP WORKER GETS \$22K IN BACK PAY AFTER MISSING A RADIO CALL

Supervisors wanted him to take a hearing test after a missed radio call. It took five months for the company to get him back on the schedule.



#### A Ramp Services Employee at United received \$21,993 in back pay after managers refused to accept repeated notes from doctors allowing him to return to work.

Working with his union, Rich Elliott was able to get back to work, and collected back pay, something that lawyers did not think would be possible in Nevada, a "Right-to-Work" state.

Elliott, a United Airlines employee and IAM Local 1781 Shop Steward, was working a flight in mid-March when he missed a radio call from his supervisor. The combination of loud jet engines and heavy equipment, and the requirement to always wear hearing protection, makes it difficult to hear well while working on an airport ramp. Missing a radio call is not uncommon. However, in this case, a missed radio call cost United thousands of dollars and sent Rich Elliot home for nearly half a year. Elliott explained to his supervisor that he did not hear the radio call because his radio was not at top volume and he was wearing earplugs and earmuffs for hearing protection. Rather than accept that explanation, the supervisor met with United Station Managers and, as a group, they demanded that he go to an on-site medical clinic to have his hearing checked.

Elliott had his hearing checked the next day. The clinic found no serious injury or impairment, and authorized him to return to work immediately.

For reasons not entirely clear, United managers in Reno refused to accept the clinic's recommendation and removed him from his work schedule until more medical tests could be performed.

United managers turned in paperwork for workers' compensation that was filled out incorrectly or was incomplete, delaying the process further.

For the next five months, managers at United refused to allow Elliott to go back to his job on the RNO ramp, despite one doctor after another certifying his return to work. Repeatedly, medical professionals declared that he was fine to return to his job, and each time United management either over-ruled the doctors and demanded more tests or claimed to have lost his paperwork. Elliot spent weeks waiting for someone from the airline to return his phone calls to tell him how he could return to active duty.

As the weeks dragged on, Elliott lost his companyoffered health insurance, which made it much more

*Rich Elliott (RSE - RNO) is a Shop Steward and member of Local 1781.* 

difficult to meet the increasingly elaborate hurdles the company was imposing on him before he could get back to his job. Busy medical specialists scheduled expensive MRIs and other tests for dates weeks into the future, long after paychecks stopped coming in. Rich was denied a home loan because he didn't have a consistent income.

When payments began stacking up, he asked about back pay. A lawyer told him that Nevada's Right to Work laws would make it nearly impossible to win much of anything in court.

Elliott, a longtime union activist with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, filed a grievance against United as soon as he missed his first paycheck. His case was picked up by his IAM Committeeman, Yusuf Wyatt, who very quickly advanced it to Olu Ajetomobi, a District 141 Representative.

"This was a very stressful time. I was getting no contact from the company. I never knew where I stood," Elliot said.

Making matters worse, managers stripped him of the security badges he needed to access the secure areas of the airport where he worked. The badges need to be updated regularly and are automatically deactivated if they are not used. Elliott's badges had gone unused for so long that they were due to be both updated and deactivated. The badging issue presented another complication that could extend his outage by six more weeks.

"I was so fortunate to have my union behind me," Elliott said. "Yusuf helped me fill out the legal forms and the union grievances. I was calling Olu just about every day. I would go weeks without any news from Human Resources, but Olu and Yusuf would always call me back, talk me through the process, and they just helped. I really appreciated that."

Rich Elliott is no pushover when it comes to facing managers. He served as a union Grievance Committeeman for six years, plus a few more as Shop Steward. He has gone toe-to-toe with managers on many occasions, and won many grievances of his own over the years. But, in this case, he followed the maxim "A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client." The company was stonewalling him, and he needed reinforcements. "I can't thank these people enough," Elliott said of his co-workers and union reps that stood up for him. "Chris Lusk, our Local Committee Chairman, Yusuf Wyatt our Committeeman, and Olu... it was just too much for one person to try to do alone."

In early August, the company began taking steps to resolve the

**13** | IAM District 141

#### IAM Committeeman, Yusuf Wyatt

situation. "I don't know what Olu and my Union Reps were saying to them, but the company all of a sudden started being real nice to me. Human Resources was telling me that they would advocate for me, and things like that. I got back to work, but I never thought that I would get paid for all



that time I was out," Elliott said. "Luckily, Olu was working on that, too."

Olu Ajetomobi, a Machinists Union District 141 Assistant General Chairman, explained that there are good reasons for ramp workers to find a civil solution instead of rushing into a courtroom.

"In a case like this, we work with trial attorneys and legal experts, but Nevada law is not always worker friendly. We weren't finding legal guidance telling us we were going to be able to get back pay in a reasonable amount of time, if we were ever able to get any back pay at all," Olu said. "Fortunately, the Human Resources Department at United agreed to grant us back pay without going to court. I think that can be considered a win for everyone involved."

On October 17, two months after he returned to work, Elliott got a check for almost \$22,000 in back pay. "I had written it off," Elliot says. "Nevada is a Right to Work state, and even my lawyer was telling me I had no chance in court. This was a decision that had been made after going through the union grievance process. I probably never would have been paid for that five months if I had gone after it in court. As a union, we won."

"I get a lot of work as a shop steward now," Rich said.





Assistant General Chairman for IAMAW District 141, Olu Ajetomobi (SFO RAMP, PDX-UA, SJC-UA, SJC-AA, AUS-UA)

# We Got Your BACK (PAY)

#### Working together in Union, Airline Workers in IAM District 141 have recovered nearly \$2.5 Million in back pay and lost wages.

Contact a Shop Steward right away if you've been unfairly denied your rightful income for any reason.

IAM141 Members can read their specific contracts at IAM141.0RG > Contracts.

#### BACK PAY

Year	Total Amount
2008 to Date	\$2,493,578.02
Q3 2019	\$68,473.60
Q2 2019	\$68,091.32
Q1 2019	\$12,135.00
Q4 2018	\$15,147.95

Back Pay is calculated by combining owed back pay, overtime bypass, shift pay, premium pay, and settlements won by IAM141 officers. Total includes all carriers covered by District 141 of the IAM.



**14** IAM District 141

## **Cristina Odoardi Named New Community Service Director for District 141**



A lifelong community activist and Machinists Union veteran will lead District 141's Community Services Department.

District President and Directing General Chair Mike Klemm announced the appointment of Cristina Odoardi, District 141 Trustee and an active member of Local 1726 in Boston, Mass., as the new District 141 Director of Community Services. Cristina has served as a Shop Steward, and District 141 Trustee for the past three years. Cristina also served for four years as Grievance Committee Chairperson, in charge of Boston Stores, Ramp and Customer Service.

The work of Local 1726's Community Service Committee was recently profiled in the IAM Journal for the remarkable work the members do on behalf of communities in the East Boston area.

"Cristina has helped expand unionism far beyond the workplace," said President Mike Klemm. "Her work has helped to uphold the guiding principles of our union, which can be summed up as 'Justice on the Job,' and 'Service to the Community.' Her work is improving the neighborhoods and communities that we call home."

As Director, Cristina is responsible for helping showcase the important community work that Local Lodges are doing. She will also oversee District charitable assistance donations to Local Lodges, and help facilitate greater levels of community and neighborhood activism.



#### JOHN STATON, JR. NAMED DISTRICT 141 VICE PRESIDENT AT-LARGE

John Staton, Jr. was appointed to the position of District 141 Vice President At-Large, effective immediately.

District 141 President and Directing General Chair Mike Klemm announced the decision at the annual IAM141 Committee Conference.

Staton joined the Machinists Union as a United Airlines Ramp Agent in 1989. A veteran of the US Marine Corps and Army National Guard, he entered the commercial aviation industry with a strong commitment to service. This commitment drove him to become a Shop Steward while he was still a probationary employee.

"I got active in this union because I've worked hard my whole life. I've seen that working hard by itself isn't going to get it done. We're going to need to work hard, and work smart," said Staton.

Staton got married while still in the Marine Corps, and moved to Alabama where he worked at a series of blue-collar, non-union factory jobs before entering the aviation industry. "I worked hard every day. I saw how they did people. And, I said, 'I'm done.""

Since then, Staton has never stopped fighting for his union sisters and brothers in his three decades of service with the IAM. In 2016 he became a District 141 Trustee, responsible for safeguarding assets and enforcing high standards to ensure the financial health of the Machinists Union.

"John is deeply motivated by a lifelong call to service and a commitment to integrity," said District 141 President Mike Klemm. "He is unquestionably tough; John has never ducked a fight in his life. But, he is also fair and thoughtful. John Staton embodies the finest qualities of our great Machinists Union."



#### BARB MARTIN APPOINTED TO DISTRICT 141 TRUSTEE POSITION

IAMAW District 141 President Mike Klemm has announced the appointment of Barb Martin to the position of District Trustee, effective October 1, 2019.

"Barb has always been a great asset to the IAM, and a great defender of airline workers," said District 141 President and Directing General

Chairman Mike Klemm. "She brings professionalism and competence to the airline industry and to our great union, and we are thankful to have her on our team."

Martin began her career in commercial aviation as a CSR with United Airlines in 1991, becoming a Service Director/Lead Agent based in Washington, DC. She worked in IAD Reservations for two years before transferring to Airport Customer Services at IAD in 1993. Martin was elected Shop Steward in 1999 and immediately began finding ways to create a more unified and cooperative workplace. Her dedicated and effective approach to union activism lead her to become Recording Secretary of Local 1759 in 2007. She was elected CS Committee Representative at IAD in 2009.

Today, Martin serves as the Grievance Committee Chair for both IAD and DCA.

As District Trustee, Barb Martin will be responsible for the administration, safeguarding and oversight of the financial assets of District 141.

