

TWU Express

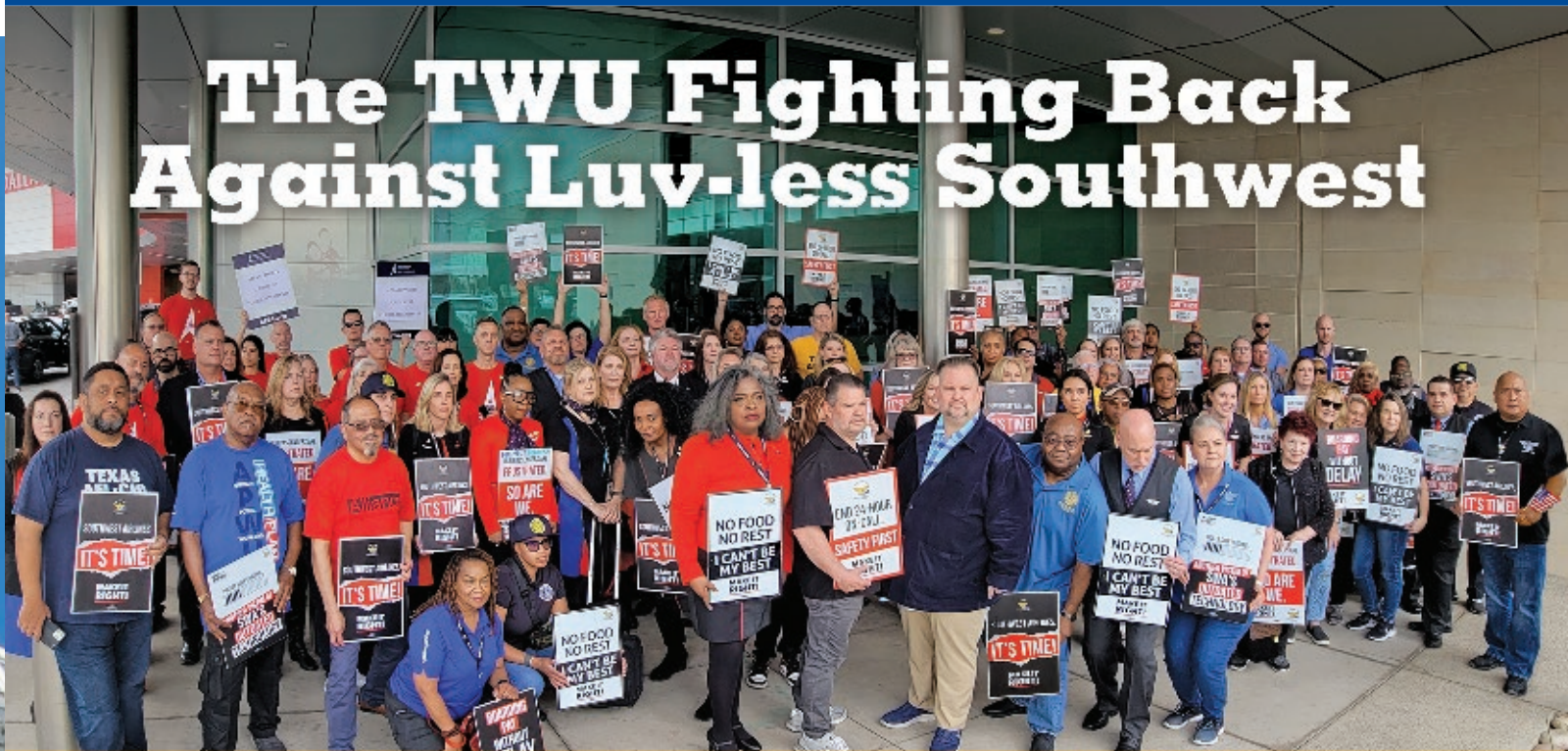
TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO

UNITED INVINCIBLE

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The TWU Fighting Back Against Luv-less Southwest



The Role of the International Union in Advancing our Agenda

By International President John Samuelson



This year, 2023, will be unprecedented for the TWU. Our largest transit contracts at operating agencies up and down the East Coast, including New York, Philadelphia, and Miami, are all set to expire. Our sisters and brothers at Metro North Railroad, the second largest commuter railroad in the country, are also in the midst of a major contract fight, which may lead to strike action. And our largest workgroups at Southwest Airlines, including TWU flight attendants and ramp workers, are continuing to fight and build pressure on the company as they advance their years-long efforts for fair agreements.

Taken together, these fights set the TWU up for one of the largest collective contract battle years in the history of our union.

As International President, I can already tell you that no matter what division our members are in or where in the country they are located, we will not settle for anything less than solid, respectable contracts that will advance our union, protect our jobs, and continue to demonstrate the power of the TWU.

These contract battles will all be difficult, but with a sophisticated strategy in place, and the heart to fight it out, they are all winnable.

The success of the TWU is predicated upon our union having the audacity and the know-how to secure strong contracts, build and maintain a robust political operation, and organize new workers. These three pillars are what give our union both strength and stability. But they are only effective when they work in tandem—a function that is the direct responsibility of the International Union.

Nowhere is this three-pronged approach more apparent than in our union-wide fight-back against job-killing automation. On the market today are driverless subway trains and buses, camera systems designed to monitor platforms and gates, and drones that supposedly inspect equipment. These high-tech gadgets, none of which have been proven safe, are backed by powerful Wall Street investors and Silicon Valley CEOs and pose an existential threat to the foundation of the TWU. There is no doubt in my mind that every boss at every property where we will have contract fights this year will attempt to force pro-robot, anti-worker language down our throats.

Leveraging our power to defeat the hawkers of unproven, unsafe technology will require the kind of bird's-eye view collaboration and union-wide support that only the International can offer. That support starts with a team of highly trained, fierce negotiators,

“We will not settle for anything less than solid, respectable contracts that will advance our union, protect our jobs, and continue to demonstrate the power of the TWU.”

backed by in-depth economic analysis and research, assisting locals as needed in securing air-tight contracts that protect our members. A formidable legislative and political program must be at the ready to educate and influence elected leaders at all levels of government on the risks associated with robots performing our jobs, ensuring our nation's laws and regulations reflect TWU priorities, and that elected leaders will come to our aid when we need them to. Finally, an aggressive organizing capacity is fundamental to growing our membership—thus strengthening our footprint and power on the ground, throughout the economy, and in the halls of Congress—by expanding into new markets and securing industry-leading, job-saving first contracts for new work groups.

Our founding President Michael J. Quill coined the phrase *United Invincible* to describe the power of TWU solidarity, and the pride members feel knowing they are part of this organization. Now, more than eight decades later, as we gear up for massive and potentially historic fights, solidarity, not only among members, but between locals, divisions, and our International, remains a hallmark of this union—and the key to its ongoing success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samuelson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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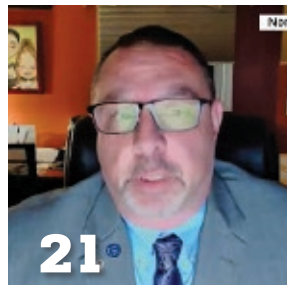
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Amid Historic Challenges the TWU Demonstrates Unsurpassed Leadership

By International Secretary-Treasurer
Jerome Lafragola



For the first time in over five decades, unions are experiencing a resurgence in popularity. From the headline-grabbing campaigns by Amazon and Starbucks workers to the ongoing need by working people to counter the undue economic hardships placed on them by the COVID-19 pandemic, people across our country are once again talking about the power and benefits of union membership.

As exciting as it is to be a part of American popular culture, a deeper dive into this phenomenon tells a different story. As our economy rebounds from the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the jobs that are being created in the market today are non-union. For all the attention unions and workers are attracting across our economy, union membership actually hit an all-time low in 2022.

Those facts make the story of the TWU that much more remarkable.

Since 2017, the TWU has been leading the charge in growing our membership. Six years and one global pandemic later, and nothing has changed. The TWU continues to grow our membership both organically through our legacy contracts and through organizing victories in new markets, like Bikeshare.

As we all know, 2020 was a year like no other — and hopefully something we will never again experience in our lifetime. Going into 2020, the TWU had substantial momentum, as we were successful in one of the most significant organizing victories in years: winning representation for the In-Flight Crew at JetBlue Airways.

Organizing that group was only the first step. Union membership means nothing until workers can secure that all-important first contract — a feat that we were told would be nearly impossible during a global public health and economic crisis. While many other unions put their contract negotiations on hold, the TWU forged ahead, and our efforts paid off. Even in the middle of a world-wide crisis that directly impacted our members across the airline, rail, transit, university, utility and service sectors, the TWU was able to deliver durable contracts that set new industry standards.

“Since 2017, the TWU has been leading the charge in growing our membership. Six years and one global pandemic later, and nothing has changed.”

In 2023, our Transit Division is going into negotiations in some of the largest cities in the nation, and our Rail Division is already preparing for battle at Metro North. These contract fights in New York, Miami, and Philadelphia, just to name a few, are going to be significant for our members, but as our union has demonstrated, the TWU does not back down from challenges. We will continue to fully support our locals in these fights and build upon the momentum we gained over the last six years.

Our members were there on the frontlines of the worst economic and public health crisis in a century, never wavering in their resolve to move America. It is now our time to make sure those efforts are not only recognized, but validated. 2023 is shaping up to be the year of labor. Unions may once again be in the national spotlight, but whether in the national spotlight or not the TWU is demonstrating that we will fight tirelessly, and win good contracts that our members will be proud of.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome Lafragola". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

International Rep Tony McCoy Retires after 33 years with the TWU

Tony McCoy, International Representative, TWU Local 513 member, and DFW American Airlines Facilities Maintenance Mechanic never set out to work at American Airlines. He certainly never dreamed of becoming a TWU member. But when a maintenance position opened up at American in 1990, McCoy took a chance and applied.

Within six months of hiring on at the airline, McCoy, who is a second-generation union electrician, was asked to serve as a shop steward. He agreed, and that assignment set McCoy on a path that would change the course of his life. Now, after 33 years of service to the TWU and its members, McCoy is retiring. Upon reflecting on the last three decades of his life, McCoy said he feels blessed.

“God put me in the right places at the right times. Becoming a TWU member—it was one of those things that was meant to be,” McCoy said.

Throughout his tenure with the TWU, McCoy has served in a variety of roles, including Local 513 Section Chairman, Local 513 Title II Executive Board Member, Local 513 Recording Secretary, and International Staff Specialist, before becoming an



International Representative. Through it all, he said having the ability to help others has been a highlight of his career.

“My group, the Title II Facilities and Automotive Mechanics, has always been a small percentage of the TWU membership, but we’ve never been forgotten about or left behind. To be involved in negotiations, and make sure these members have a voice at the table and a say in working conditions, has been incredibly rewarding,” McCoy said. “American Airlines is making billions of dollars, yet for the longest time their goal has been to outsource and get rid of facilities

and automotive work. The fact that we’re still here, still on the property, is a testament to the strength and power of this union.”

As successful as TWU’s organizing and negotiating arms are, McCoy said the heart of the union will always be its people. McCoy experienced firsthand the way both union officers and members show up for each other when his son, Christopher, died of complications from cerebral palsy shortly before his 30th birthday.

“The overwhelming support from people showing up at his memorial service, including senior officers of our union, is not something my family or I will soon forget. TWU people flew in from all over the country to pay their respects and support us when we needed them most,” McCoy said. “My whole family recognized how special that was, and it just shows you the quality of the people involved in this organization.”

Now that he is retired, McCoy said there is plenty to keep him busy. He plans to spend more time with his family and get more involved in his church. His parting advice for the next generation of union members is to take a vested interest in the TWU.

“The TWU is not the only union I’ve been a part of, but it’s clear that the TWU is the best union that’s out there,” McCoy said. “We’ve got a huge presence in Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida. Those are all right-to-work states, and workers there are clearly under attack. My challenge to young people is to get involved. Make time to learn about the TWU and commit to changing things in the workplace that you think are not going in the right direction.”



Fall Secretary-Treasurer Training

A fall Secretary-Treasurer Training session was held November 7-10 at International headquarters in Washington, DC. International President John Samuelsen and Executive Director to the Office of the International President Gary Peterson addressed attendees about the importance of fiscal due diligence. GSAP Representative Mitch Lieberman led the training for local officers.

The TWU Inspires British Trade Unionists

Donning a TWU Local 100 winter hat, Mick Lynch, Secretary-General of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), called the TWU “a strong and effective trade union” during a recent news interview.

The British-based RMT represents 83,000 transport workers and is currently waging an aggressive fightback campaign against crippling austerity measures and dangerous attacks on workers’ rights.

Watch Lynch’s full interview using this QR code.



Local 555 PHX Family Day

Members from Local 555 gathered in Phoenix for Family Day, which featured music, food, and beach volleyball. Pictured here are Andrew Rangolan, COPE director; Oscar Camara, Grievance Specialist; Abillio Villaverde, District 8 Representative; Tyler Cluff, District 6 Representative; Chris Porras, PHX Alternate Ramp Representative; Daja Ruiz, FLOC Committee and PHX Alternate Ops Representative; Mark Waddle, Education Committee and PHX Ramp Representative; and Corey Cross, PHX Alternate Ops Representative.



TWU Local 504 Members Stand with Airport Workers

The TWU Local 504 President and Local Officers, in concert with the International Organizing Department Assistant Director Sean Doyle, met in Minneapolis to attend a national day of action sponsored by the Service Employees International Union, and SEIU Local 26. This day of action was held at multiple airports across the nation seeking justice and fair working conditions for airport workers. In attendance: Assistant Director of Organizing Sean Doyle, 504 President Robert L. Payne, 504 Executive V.P. Oscar Gonzalez, 504 Secretary-Treasurer Monteith (Monty) Charles, 504 Executive Board Member Wilbert Lim.



Local 252 Tailors Shop Steward Training to Individual Contracts

This past January in preparation for Local 252's upcoming elections in May, President Debra Hagan held a shop steward training class for all members who currently serve as a shop steward, any member interested in running for the position of shop steward, as well as members interested in learning about the responsibilities of a shop steward.

The classes were held for each section of Local 252 and specific to the process of representation based on the individual contract to that section. It was well received with comments that it was very beneficial to have a class designed specific to their section and was much more informative than classes provided in the past that offered a more generic curriculum.



CARRYING THE DREAM FORWARD: TWU Members Honor Dr. King'

In January, TWU members from across the country gathered in Houston, Texas to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – the first celebration of its kind since the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. During the weekend-long observance, TWU leaders and members volunteered at the Houston Food Bank, attended a gala hosted by the Black Heritage Society of Houston, and marched in the longest-running MLK Day Parade in America.

The TWU Civil and Human Rights Committee also recognized the contributions of civil rights leader, labor activist, and humanitarian Mr. John Bland, who we are proud to call our brother, mentor, and friend.

Mr. Bland served as TWU's Administrative Vice President until his retirement in 2017, and continued his role as the Director of the Civil and Human Rights Department until 2019. He brought to those positions decades of experience in the labor movement, fierce negotiating skills, and an undying love for his TWU sisters and brothers, along with the fighting grace of the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

During his career with our union, Mr. Bland also served as a Local Steward, Local Vice President, Local Secretary-Treasurer, Local 260 President and Deputy Director of the TUUS Division. Mr. Bland organized transportation workers in the Houston, El Paso, Aldine, North Forest, Dayton, Lufkin, Humble, Conroe, and Spring School Districts. He was a Vice President of the Texas State AFL-CIO, a Vice President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and President with the Houston Chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

He also held a place in history. On March 4, 1960, Mr. Bland helped lead Houston's first sit-in at the Weingarten's grocery store lunch counter. He was one of 13 students from Texas Southern University who marched from campus to stage a nonviolent protest to end segregation. He was also a founding member of the Progressive Youth Association, which was instrumental in integrating Houston.

Mr. Bland passed away on July 9, 2020. During the celebration in Houston, his loving wife of nearly 60 years, Betty, and two beloved daughters, Dr. Debbie Bland-Nicholson and Fayette, were honored guests. Betty accepted an award from Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner on her husband's behalf.



g's Legacy in Houston





Hawaii State Conference Members Support Picketing Nurses

(Left) Albert Barbosa, 2nd Vice President, Steve Riley, Co-Chair and TWU Local 555 Safety representative, and Abilio Villaverde, District 8 representative, which includes Hawaii, gather in Honolulu to support OPEIU Local 50, who were picketing due to stalled negotiations. (Right) Rose Agas OPEIU Local 50 Vice President; Abilio Villaverde, District 8 representative for Local 555; Morrison Luka, UNITE HERE Local 5; Albert Barbosa, 2nd Vice President, Local 555; Daniel Ross OPEIU Local 50 President; Steve Riley, co-chair TWU Local 555; and Yoko Liriano HNA Labor Relations Specialist Representative, stand together in solidarity with nurses in Hawaii as they fight for fair wages and working conditions.

Florida State Conference Meeting

Florida State Conference members met to prepare for the Florida legislative session. Pictured here are Tyesha Nicole Best, TWU Local 579; Drew Shy, TWU Local 556; Jesus Gomez Garcia, TWU Local 555; Osha Stegall, TWU Local 556; Karl Mager, TWU Local 555; Gisela Alvarez, TWU Local 556; Andrew Rangolan, COPE Director; and Darryl Wallington, TWU Local 555.



Illinois State Conference

Local 571 President Moisley Pawa meets with Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08) to discuss issues his local is facing at O'Hare.

Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles: Tamara Wilson, Local 525

From ticket agents who worked in the New York City Subway system in the 1930s to aircraft maintenance technicians, journeyman carmen, power cable maintainers, and more, the TWU has a long history of representing women who work in non-traditional workplace roles. In this issue of The Express, we are featuring Tamara Wilson, a Fire Inspector at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station Florida, and member of Local 525. Tamara has been a proud TWU member for 38 years and currently serves as Secretary-Treasurer of her local.

Q. What does the Transport Workers Union mean to you?

A. The TWU means to me not only protection in the workplace, but job and financial security. The Union will be there to fight for our rights and make sure we have a safe place to come to work each day. The union sisters and brothers I work with every day have become like my family and we always help each other out.

Q. Tell us about the job you perform and your roles and responsibilities.

A. I am a Fire Inspector. I inspect launch pads, fuel storage areas, port areas and office facilities that support the Space Program. I enforce NFPA and Air Force codes to make sure that the workplace is safe for employees.

Q. What made you decide to go into this craft?

A. I became a Firefighter/EMT in 1981 and worked in the Cocoa Beach Fire Department before going to the Cape. I initially trained to become an EMT to work on an ambulance, but I realized I didn't want to just ride an ambulance. So, I went to fire school. I loved it, and have been in the fire service ever since.

Q. What challenges have you faced as a working woman?

A. I faced many challenges when I started in the Fire Service in 1981. There were not many female professional fire fighters in the county where I lived at that time. The biggest challenge I faced was being accepted in a male-dominated career field. I had to work hard to prove myself. It



Tamara Wilson, Local 525

“The TWU means to me not only protection in the workplace, but job and financial security. The Union will be there to fight for our rights and make sure we have a safe place to come to work each day. ”

was physically demanding, but this was the career I chose, and now I'm glad I didn't give up.

Q. What advice would you give to other working women?

A. Take pride in what you do, and be proud of everything you can and will accomplish.

Are you signed up to receive our monthly Transportation Technology Newsletter? Get started and read more about the campaign by visiting www.twu.org/transportation-technology-campaign/.

Winning in Washington for Working People

The TWU Continues to Secure Legislative and Regulatory Victories that Empower Our Members

The past two years have been among the most successful years the TWU has ever had in Washington, DC. All told, we secured \$152.5 billion in new funding for TWU members (yes, that's BILLION with a "B") in addition to once-in-a-generation changes to the way our country oversees and implements infrastructure investments. As we ramp up work in the 118th Congress to build on these wins, here's a quick look at victories the TWU led the fight on in the 117th.

Air Division

- \$15 billion to extend the airline and airline contractor payroll support program. This program prohibited airlines from downsizing their workforce or lowering wages/benefits through September 2021.
- Finally implemented a 10-hour minimum rest period for flight attendants.
- Expanded access to state level sick leave and meal & rest breaks across the country for airline workers. We won these rights in both legislation and through court decisions and we've successfully defended them everywhere.
- Restored the right of workers to keep their jobs when a federal contract changes hands. This right is now included in law as both an Executive Order and a regulation, making it more difficult for anti-labor administrations to take these rights away in the future.

Rail Division

- Won the largest investment in commuter rail since the creation of Amtrak: \$66 billion of new rail funding – including \$46 billion for Amtrak.
- Prohibited Amtrak from outsourcing work covered under a collective bargaining agreement. This significant change will preserve TWU jobs across the Northeast Corridor.

- Eliminated the requirement for Amtrak to make money on food and beverage service. This change removes a significant hurdle to getting TWU members on the railroad a sustainable contract.

Transit Division

- Reformed transit safety planning to empower local unions. Agency may no longer access any federal funds until their local union approves the agency's safety.
- Set aside 5% of every federal grant for electric buses for workforce development. This money must be used to upskill the existing workforce to ensure that electric vehicles are not destroying TWU jobs.
- Convinced the Department of Transportation to issue a new set of Innovation Principles. These rules require all federal projects for new technology to put workers first and ensure that new investments create and improve jobs.
- Won \$30.5 billion for emergency transit operations funding, all of which was conditioned on transit agencies maintaining their existing workforce.
- Increased normal federal transit investment by \$39 billion. This is the largest increase in federal transit funding EVER.

The above is not a complete list of our work over the past two years, but we are not done fighting. In the next two years, the Government Affairs Department will be working with our locals to end offshoring of aircraft maintenance, stop assaults on transportation workers, preserve state-level labor rights for airline workers, and much more. We will win on all of these fronts thanks to the unity of our membership and our willingness to take up these fights. Together, we are improving workers' lives.



Local 570 Members Recognized for Performing CPR

When Aircraft Maintenance Technician and Local 570 member Michael Tolfa lost consciousness and stopped breathing after suffering a massive heart attack in the Ready Room at Miami airport on February 6, his union brothers wasted no time trying to save his life. Hector Bravo and Emmanuel Petrakis, also Aircraft Maintenance Technicians and Local 570 members, immediately worked together to perform CPR and keep Tolfa breathing until paramedics arrived.

Tragically, Tolfa, who is also a retired United States Marine Corps Sergeant, did not survive the incident. He was granted plane side honors by the Miami Honor Guard team.

For their heroic efforts, Brothers Bravo and Petrakis were honored by Local 570. Local 570 issued this statement:



“On behalf of the Transport Workers Union Local 570, we thank you, Mr. Hector Bravo and Mr. Emmanuel Petrakis, for your heroic effort to save the life of Michael Tolfa, an American Eagle Aircraft Mechanic and retired USMC Sergeant, by performing CPR. Your brave and selfless actions serve as a reminder of the importance of looking out for one another and coming together in times of need. Your courage and dedication to your fellow Union Brother is an example that will long be remembered.”



Crisis at Southwest: When Airline

For years TWU Members at Southwest Airlines have been Sounding Alarm About Outdated Systems and Technology that led to Historic Meltdown

It was a predictable, preventable crisis decades in the making — and one that put TWU members at Southwest Airlines squarely at the center of the storm.

Beginning on December 22, 2022, Southwest Airlines experienced one of the worst operational meltdowns in the history of the airline when the effects of a major winter weather event inundated the ability of ramp and operations agents to perform their jobs.

A series of weather-related cancelled flights at three of Southwest's hubs snowballed into a system-wide crisis as the carrier's outdated IT systems and operational infrastructure became overwhelmed. With flight crews waiting on hold for up to 14 hours for scheduling assignments, and ground crews and ramp workers unable to perform safety-sensitive duties in sub-zero temperatures, the carrier could not get flights off the ground. Literally overnight, Southwest Airlines, the nation's largest domestic air carrier, came to a virtual standstill.

Millions of people — including passengers, flight attendants, pilots, and others — were stranded for days on end, some at airports, others in hotels without heat or water. Meanwhile, TWU-represented fleet service workers and air dispatchers worked overtime to move luggage, try to locate lost crews, and attempt to get the system back up and functioning.

The cause of the crisis? Unchecked greed and corporate neglect.

Disastrous Business Plans

Although Southwest has seen exponential growth over the last few decades, the carrier has done nothing to address what Randy Barnes, President of TWU Local 555, calls the human capital piece of operating an airline, especially during major winter weather events.

“Imagine working outside, around the airplanes, in blizzard-like conditions—it increases the potential of a life-threatening accident,” said Barnes, whose members were subjected to sub-zero temperatures, driving winds, and the added elements of an ice storm. “Southwest was forcing people to work in those severe elements, under threat of termination, and our people just could not hold up.”

Southwest also continues to rely on antiquated phone systems, eccentric computer programs, and IT processing capabilities that date back to the 1990s.

Instead of heeding calls from workers to put emergency weather plans in place and upgrade outdated IT systems, executives chose to spend \$5.6 billion on corporate buybacks in the three years leading up to this crisis.

This is in spite of the fact that TWU-represented Southwest Airlines workers, including flight attendants at Local 556, fleet service workers at Local 555, and flight dispatchers and meteorologists at Local 550, have been sounding the alarm for years about the impacts of running a world-class airline with outdated, insufficient plans and technology.

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES MELTDOWN BY THE NUMBERS

16,700 The number of flights cancelled over seven days

7 The number of days Southwest was paralyzed by the meltdown

UNTOLD The number of passengers, flight crews, and others left stranded by the disaster



e Melts Down, TWU Steps Up

“The disastrous business plans of Southwest Airlines executives wrecked the holidays for millions of travelers, including thousands of our own members who found themselves sleeping on airport floors or working in blizzard-like conditions, facing the threat of frostbite,” said TWU International President John Samuelsen. “Southwest air executives have proven they will stop at nothing to squeeze every penny out of fliers and workers.”

Time for Southwest to Make It Right

According to Lyn Montgomery, President of TWU Local 556, the meltdown of 2022 is not the first time Southwest Airlines has experienced massive operational failures directly related to poor weather or outdated technology. In fact, for nearly a decade, operational crises have plagued the airline, including in January of 2014, February of 2015, December of 2015, July of 2016, October of 2021, and April of 2022.

Each time a meltdown occurs, frontline workers at Southwest are disproportionately impacted. Fixes to these failures have become a key component of the negotiations for new Collective Bargaining Agreements that Locals 556 and 555 are fighting for and have been for years.

“Never before in the history of Southwest Airlines have Flight Attendants’ working conditions deteriorated so rapidly, crippling our quality of life, devaluing our role, and creating a loss of spirit,” Montgomery said.

“If airline managers had planned better, the meltdown we’ve witnessed in recent days could have been lessened or averted,” Barnes said. “In severe weather, it’s unreasonable for workers to stay outside for extended periods. When major weather events like this occur, there needs to be plans and systems in place to protect the health and welfare of the fleet service and operations ramp agents.”

Media Blitz and Congressional Investigation

Both Barnes and Montgomery are fighting for new contracts for their members, and during the meltdown, they collaborated with the TWU International on a massive media blitz. The goal: ensure Southwest passengers, the flying public, lawmakers, and Southwest Airlines executives understood clearly and without question that Southwest Airlines employees were not to blame for the crisis.

Over the course of the disaster, President Samuelsen, Barnes, and Montgomery collectively spoke to reporters at major media outlets including ABC News, CNBC, MSNBC, CNN, Fox, the New York Times, and others, issued press statements, and took to social media where they engaged in real time with stranded, frustrated customers to call on Southwest to make it right. Barnes also fought aggressively behind the scenes to get hazard pay for his members.

The campaign was a success, reaching lawmakers at the highest levels of government, and publicly shaming Southwest Airlines executives for their greed and carelessness.

On February 9, 2023, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation held a hearing that put Southwest Airlines Chief Operating Officer Andrew Watterson in the hot seat. With the truth behind the meltdown already part of the public record, and strong testimony submitted from the TWU, Watterson had no room for any words other than a public apology.

While the media blitz surrounding the meltdown resulted in a public relations victory for TWU Southwest Airlines members, Montgomery and Barnes both know the heavy work is still ahead of them. Neither will rest until they have secured strong contracts for their members that address crucial health, safety, and quality-of-life issues, as well as fixes to outdated technology and human capital issues, that will prevent operational failures from happening in the future.



\$5.6 Billion

The amount spent on stock buybacks over the last 3 years

(money that could have been spent upgrading outdated scheduling technology)

10+ Hours

The amount of time some flight attendants waited on hold for scheduling assignments

Q and A with TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton

TWU Local 502 President Andre Sutton became the Air Division Director in the Fall of 2022.

Q. You serve as President of Local 502 and now serve as Air Division Director. Tell us about your career in the airline industry and your leadership experience within the Transport Workers Union.

A. I was introduced to the airline industry in the mid-eighties, while still serving in the United States Army. I was hired by American Airlines as a Fleet Service Clerk in San Jose, California where I worked the Ramp on the night shift. I first joined the TWU as a member of Local 505 in Burlingame, California under the leadership of an outstanding and long-serving President, Al Mayes. While being a member of Local 505, I was able to quickly recognize the power that organized labor afforded working women and men in the workplace. In the early nineties, I transferred out of San Jose and moved to Tucson, Arizona where I first became a Local 502 member. I then became a Fleet Service Crew Chief and began working in other airports around the country which enabled me the opportunity to witness how unionism worked in other states and stations. My travels would take me from Northern California to Southern Arizona, Southern California, Dallas/Ft Worth Texas, Southern Florida and back across the country working in some of the same stations that I had previously been based. While doing so, I was a member of TWU Local 502, 513 and 568, in some cases multiple times along the way. My union leadership began when I first cut my teeth as a Shop Steward in 1996, while working in Tucson Arizona and being a member of Local 502. After transferring around the system for a second time and returning to Arizona, I was elected to Steward again in 2006. When that term was completed, I became Vice Chairman and shortly afterward became the Station Chairman. I would hold that position until American closed the station in 2012, where I was also appointed to Executive Board Member at Large in Local 502 in Los Angeles. In 2013, I was elected President of Local 502 and would hold that position to the present day. In 2017, I was elected to an International Vice President position for the Transport Workers Union of America. My responsibilities included



overseeing and servicing the Fleet Service Workgroup Locals at both American Airlines and Southwest Airlines, and now transitioning to the Air Division Director.

Q. Tell us about your military service. How do you think those experiences will help you as you enter your new role as Air Division Director?

A. I entered the United States Army in September of 1983, after deciding that I wanted to experience the world instead of pursuing college football. I was sent from my childhood home in North Carolina to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, Fort Lee in Virginia to Central California, where I was before stationed at Fort Ord outside of Monterey, California. I served in the 7th Infantry Combat Readiness Brigade that could be deployed around the world in 24 hours to any conflict. In 1987, I was attached to a Training Brigade of Drill Instructors that would conduct Basic Training of new recruits into the US Army at the training base in Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

The military life is a structured life that equips you with stability, structure, and balance in some of the most challenging situations. As you move up the ranks, there is intense training involved to ensure your preparedness for the next level, and this training is the building blocks and foundation for a successful leader. I was honorably discharged from the US Army and subsequently ended my contractual obligation officially in 1996. The lessons and training that I received in the military were lifelong tools that can be applied in everyday life and are a true advantage for problem solving. I apply my military mind today to everything that I do and with everything that I encounter, which allows me to understand and recognize challenges to reach resolutions. It's my belief that these skills sets that I've applied within my 35 years as a union member or as a Crew Chief, nearly 20 years as a union representative or the 10 years as a union President would help me better assist others around me to achieve their goals. My belief is that in the TWU we could all assist each other to achieve success.

Companies and corporations need to remain competitive, but this cannot happen at the expense of our membership. With that thought in mind, when the TWU negotiates contracts, we should focus on incorporating protections around the work that utilizes new technology. In other words, we should not be replaced by technology, but rather our members should be trained to use the technology to perform the work.

Q. As this interview goes to print, the airline industry is still trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; Southwest Airlines experienced the worst operational meltdown in its history; an FAA computer glitch grounded thousands of flights; and Congress will soon begin debating the next FAA reauthorization. Tell us about the state of the airline industry at this time and the challenges the TWU needs to be prepared for.

A. The Covid-19 pandemic appears to be trending downward – so much so that, on May 11, the Federal Government will move to end protocols and services that aid the American people in fighting the virus. The aviation industry as a whole needs to redefine itself to meet the new demands that are knocking at its door. It's been my experience that those who don't prepare for the future are left in the past. The industry must remain relevant and dedicate proper resources to the operations and airports, along with establishing legislation that recognizes the modern-day essential needs of service and safety.

With regards to the challenges TWU members face specifically, we must understand where we fit into a world that is being shaped and changed by significant technological advancements. As the shift from old processes and equipment fades out, we need to know what comes next. How many jobs performed today by our members will be removed or replaced by modern technologies?

Companies and corporations need to remain competitive, but this cannot happen at the expense of our membership. With that thought in mind, when the TWU negotiates contracts, we should focus on incorporating protections around the work that utilizes new technology. In other words, we should not be replaced by technology, but rather our members should be trained to use the technology to perform the work.

Regardless of the carrier you work for, there are a lot of similarities in the airline industry. But the greatest commonality in this industry is the massive TWU presence. We represent a large portion of organized labor in the industry and have partnerships with other prominent unions as well. We must use this to our advantage. I want to create open lines of communications between the unions so that information, strategies and tactics can be shared, and so that no one feels they are on an island by themselves. I want to remove all barriers so that local unions know one another, and feel empowered to speak to, visit with, and collaborate with each other to successfully navigate positive outcomes to situations and concerns.

Q. Acting FAA Administrator Billy Nolen said he expects air taxis to be operational in time for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. How do you anticipate the airline industry will change over the next decade and what must the TWU do to prepare for those changes?

A. This is yet another example of modern technology and innovation in the industry that will have a direct impact on TWU Air Division members. The million-dollar question is when and what do air taxis look like as they get closer to certification?

As it applies to the TWU, we must understand the application of

this new technology and where we can apply it within the Air Division. Several major carriers, including Delta, United and American Airlines are investing millions of dollars into this technology, signaling a strong interest to change this industry in a fundamental way. The union must be able to evaluate what is required to operate these eVTOLs, the maintenance involved, and the overall performance of these aircraft to identify what work could be encompassed into protected and covered work or could be considered SCOPE of work.

Q. Like much of the rest of our union, the TWU Air Division has a long and storied history that began prior to WWII, saw significant growth after the war, and many changes since. As Air Division Director, what are your goals for this division, and what do you want members to know about the TWU that they may not already know?

A. The TWU has a long and storied history that begins with our founder Michael Quill in 1934. In understanding this history and our union's foundational fighting spirit, you feel a sense of pride and can see Michael Quill's presence in this modern day. Our country is currently experiencing a renewed interest in unionism, and workers around the country are reaching out to the TWU for organizing and representational support because they know we are a strong union that secures solid contracts for working people.

Our union's current leadership displays the same characteristics of strength and perseverance that made the TWU into what it is today. The TWU's current President, John Samuelsen, is recognized as a strong voice in the labor movement and his actions speak even louder than his words. He carries himself as a true champion of the membership and for all organized labor, unafraid to address or tackle any company or issue that we may face. The membership appreciates examples of leadership that they can see and feel a part of. President Samuelsen is also surrounded by accomplished former presidents on the Administrative Council who are battletested, and extremely successful within their locals.

My vision is to expand on this platform and ensure all locals within the division have the tools and resources necessary to combat the challenges in their workgroups. I would also like to establish a real collaboration between the workgroups and locals where everyone can communicate and share ideas around similar issues to better prepare for representing our membership. Lastly, I hope to build true unity within the Air Division and make the TWU a stronger organization for the future and its members.

Q. Is there anything else you want TWU Air Division members to know about you?

A. I'd like people to know that I'm a fair person. I listen to the issues; I speak to people and not at them. I'm a person of my word and when I commit to something, I follow through. Above everything else, I'd like to be known for honesty and integrity, while treating folks with respect and dignity, the same as I would want to be treated myself.

Coalition of TWU Flight Attendants

The TWU held its very first Coalition of Transport Workers Union Flight Attendants meeting at the TWU International Headquarters in Washington, DC at the beginning of the year. TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton and International Vice President Thom McDaniel met with the Presidents, Treasurers, and Health, Safety, and Security representatives from Local 556, Local 577, and Local 579 January 3-5, 2022. The parties collaborated and discussed how to work together for the benefit of all flight attendants.

During the three-day meeting participants received updates on other locals, ongoing negotiations, legislative and regulatory matters, and TWU Toxic Cabin Air and Assault Won't Fly campaigns. Our Flight Attendant Leaders engaged in open conversation about ways to collaborate on issues to support and advance the quality of work and quality of life for all flight attendants and our profession.

With the recent "Southwest Meltdown" it was clear that all TWU Flight Attendants have shared experiences at some level with Southwest being the most severe. "The TWU Flight Attendant Coalition solidifies our unity and power under the TWU," said TWU Local 556 President Lyn Montgomery representing Southwest Airlines Flight Attendants. "Collectively, we will fight for our specific needs with the full support of our TWU brothers and sisters of all class and crafts, giving TWU Flight Attendants unprecedented strength."

The Coalition also developed a strategic plan with priorities including supporting negotiation efforts, Assault Won't Fly, Toxic Cabin Air, and a Flight Attendant Bill of Rights.

Following the meeting, new TWU Local 579 President Tyesha Best,



representing JetBlue Inflight Crewmembers, said, "Our TWU Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions exposed a strong level of solidarity, which birthed a historic action plan that will influence our membership. It is an honor to assist and empower not only my own local, but also my fellow sister presidents, and our collective thousands of members. Together we are a force to be reckoned with."

The Coalition of TWU Flight Attendants agreed to continue meeting on at least a quarterly basis.

"We are excited to collaborate with our Southwest and JetBlue sisters and brothers to drive change to legislation and improve the safety of our members," said TWU Local 577 President Christa Gifford, representing Allegiant Flight Attendants. "As a TWU Flight Attendant Coalition, we can accomplish so much more as a united front. We are stronger together."



Envoy Air Presidents Meet

Envoy Air Presidents from Locals 570, 571, 572, 575, and 576 resumed council meetings at the TWU International Offices with International Rep. Jose Galarza, where they collaborated and built strategies for advancing the fight.



Local 513 Executive Board Sworn In

New Executive Board members for Local 513 – American airlines fleet service and facilities maintenance – were sworn in by Air Division Director Andre Sutton in January.

Pictured from left to right: Air Division Director Andre Sutton, Jay Sleeman (Eboard), Jeff Case (Eboard), John Borges (Recording Secretary), Greg Cosey (President), Brian Oyer (1st VP), Shae Christakis (Eboard), Jeff Scott (Eboard), Brian Parker (2nd VP), Darrel Kizer (Treasurer). Not pictured: Bill Clark (Eboard), Bob Cheek (Eboard).

Contract Victory at TWU Local 550

On February 4, 2023, more than 480 Flight Dispatchers, Dispatcher Assistants, ATC Specialists, Flight Superintendents, and Dispatch Specialists who are members of Local 550 ratified a new, industry-leading contract with Southwest Airlines. The contract includes competitive wages and quality of life improvements for members and comes after nearly four years in negotiations with the company.

“This contract levels the playing field between us and our peers at other major carriers for the years to come. In this contract, we have managed to condense our top out to an 11-year scale with wages and work rules comparable to industry standards,” said TWU Local 550 President Brian Brown.



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RAIL UPDATES



Railroad Division Director John Feltz, Railroad Division Staff Representative Brian DeLucia and Amtrak Mechanical Department Assistant Vice President Chris Barnes (who is also a TWU Local 2015 member) attended a Town Hall meeting with Local 2001, Amtrak Sunny Side members.

Brightline Commuter Rail

Brightline Commuter is a commuter rail line that is established in Florida. Brightline currently has plans to run a high-speed train between Las Vegas and Los Angeles, to be completed by 2028 to coincide with the Olympics that are scheduled to be held in Los Angeles. Brightline is in the process of applying to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for a \$1 billion grant to add to the \$2 billion that they accumulated from private investors. They have asked the rail unions to support them in their bid for the grant funding. Brightline's workforce, other than their clerical and on-board service employees, consists of outside contractors.

Rail unions have agreed to give their support based on a memorandum of understanding that states Brightline, as well as all outside contractors that submit a bid to supply the workforce, must agree to have those employees covered under the Railway Labor Act and Railroad Retirement pension, unemployment and sick benefits, and allow the unions to organize workers without interference. Brightline has calculated their cost to run the operation based on Amtrak's labor costs. They believe they will need a minimum of 400 on-board service employees.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS Amtrak

We last met on February 18, 2023, for ASWC members, and February 19, 2023, for mechanical members. To date we have received their wage proposal and healthcare package which were not acceptable. We are currently awaiting costing on certain healthcare changes the carrier wants to make. Amtrak is also proposing that we convert our vacation and personal days which is based on years of service under our National Vacation Agreement to Paid Time Off (PTO) which management now has. Our next Shopcraft Coalition negotiations are scheduled for February 21 and 22, 2023. Our next ASWC negotiations are scheduled for March 7 and 8 2023.

New Officers

Congratulations to Nick (Big Nick) Cinquepalmi on becoming the new President of Local 1919. Nick has been a TWU member for 18 years serving as the NS Chairman for three years and as Executive Vice President for the last four years.

RAIL UPDATES



Congratulations to (from left to right) Adriana King, Stephanie Falcon and Jacqueline McLaughlin who were promoted from Coach Cleaners to Car Repair Mechanics.

Amtrak Apprentice Program

Now in its tenth month, the Amtrak Apprentice program in the Beech Grove Indiana Back Shop is working well. It will take another twenty-six months to complete this program. The apprentices are now working on the shop floor with a mentor. When the program is completed, we will have nine fully qualified Car Inspectors and Mechanics. This program was started by us in conjunction with Amtrak and has now developed into apprenticeship programs for every other shop craft union.



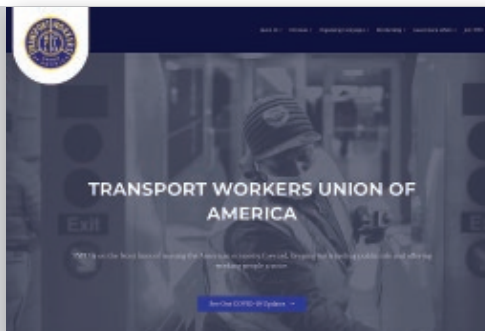
Rail Safety on CNN

On Wednesday, February 22 TWU Rail Division Representative Brian DeLucia went on CNN to discuss the dangers of corporations putting profits over people. His interview was in response to the devastating derailment that occurred on February 3 in East Palestine, Ohio. During the live, on-air segment, DeLucia directly challenged Norfolk Southern Corporation CEO Alan Shaw on the carrier's safety record, and called into question the dangerous, for-profit business model taking over the freight rail industry called Precision Scheduled Railroading.

TWU Rail Division Meets with Secretary Buttigieg

On Wednesday, March 1, John Feltz, Rail Division Director, joined other rail labor chiefs for a meeting with Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg at the U.S. Department of Transportation Headquarters in Washington, DC. There they discussed issues related to the dangerous business model Precision Scheduled Railroading and the derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

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International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate Named to Federal Transit Advisory Committee for Safety

Curtis Tate, International Administrative Vice President for the Transport Workers Union, and a longtime safety and workers' rights advocate, has been named to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS).

Tate's appointment to the federal safety committee comes at a critical time for TWU members in the public transit sector. Even as our country emerges from the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, transit workers continue to face unprecedented safety challenges related to the degradation and contracting out of service, the introduction of unproven technologies, and verbal and physical assaults at the hands of passengers they serve.

As a member of the committee, Tate will provide information, advice, and recommendations to the U.S. Transportation Secretary and FTA Administrator on how to ensure public transit remains one of America's safest modes of transportation, for both passengers and frontline workers.

"Curtis' appointment to this committee is critically important for the continued safety of our members and the communities they serve," said TWU International President John Samuelsen. "Highly trained, highly skilled human operators are the greatest safety feature on any public transit vehicle, yet too many Wall Street investors would rather see robots, not humans, driving our trains and buses. Having TWU's voice on this committee will go a long way in counteracting the forces who seek profit above all else."

"As a leader of this great union, the safety of our members will always be a primary focus. I am honored to bring the voice and



perspective of my TWU sisters and brothers to highest levels of government," Tate said.

Tate brings more than 36 years of frontline transit and safety experience to TRACS. An active TWU Member since joining the New York City Transit Authority in 1986, Tate began his career as a Car Cleaner in the Car Maintenance Department. In 1988, he was promoted to Train Operator in the Rapid Transit Division, and has since served the union in a variety of roles, ranging from shop steward to Transit, Universities, Utilities and Services Director.



All in a Day's Work: Local 234 Bus Operator Saves Woman from Carjacking, Attends State of the Union

Local 234 member Chris Deshields has seen a lot in his 18 years as a bus operator for SEPTA in Philadelphia. But what he saw – and experienced – on January 25, 2022, will stay with him for a very long time.

The day started out just like any other. Deshields got his bus from the depot and began his route, picking up passengers.

It had been raining that morning, which kept pedestrians off the street. So, when Deshields saw three young men run aggressively toward a woman who was alone, he immediately knew something wasn't right.

"She looked startled. It was scary," Deshields said. "Once I saw her give up her keys, I knew it was a bad situation."

Deshields had witnessed an attempted carjacking and wasted no time to springing into action. He began honking the horn,

screaming and yelling, and flashing the bus's high beams. He then maneuvered the bus to the side of the road, pinning in the would-be carjackers.

"At that point, I knew they would have to make a decision – either ram me or get out and run. You're not going to move a bus. They got out and ran," Deshields said, adding that he ducked down behind the radiator of the bus, worried that the carjackers might have a gun and try to shoot.

Once the coast was clear, Deshields got off the bus to check on the victim and make sure she was alright. Not wanting to leave her on the street alone, he went into a local bar and asked patrons to please wait with the woman until the police arrived. Once he felt certain the woman was safe, he got back onto his bus and continued along his route.

A national honor for a local hero

Desields assumed the excitement was over once he drove away. And it was – until local news outlets got wind of his heroism. Almost overnight Desields became a local celebrity.

“This hero thing is real funny,” Desields said. “I would help anyone if they’re in trouble to the best of my ability.”

But the real surprise came when Desields received a call from Washington, DC. Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA) heard about Desields’ heroic actions and invited the Local 234 bus operator as his special guest to President Biden’s State of the Union Address.

“I am proud to have my constituent Chris Desields join me for this year’s State of the Union Address,” Boyle said in a statement. “Chris’s brave

actions on that night should be recognized. He is a true example of an ordinary person who did an extraordinary thing.”

For Desields, who had never before been to Washington, DC, it was the experience of a lifetime. He was treated to a tour of the city, the U.S. Capitol, and the Supreme Court. During the speech, Desields sat with other distinguished guests in a balcony, where he had a direct view of President Biden. Hearing the President give glowing remarks about union members was the highlight of his night.

“The President, he’s got so much going on, and it was nice that he does recognize the union members,” Desields said. “We’re the people who keep this country moving, and a lot of us really do care. We’re not just sitting around minding our own business. We get the job done, and it’s nice to be recognized for that.”



Richard Davis Sworn in as New Local 100 President



The Executive Board at Local 100 unanimously voted to elevate Secretary-Treasurer Richard Davis to president after former TWU Local 100 president, Tony Utano, announced he was stepping down from the position. Davis was sworn in as president on December 14, 2022 by International President John Samuelsen.

The Executive Board also voted to promote MOW Vice President John Chiarello to Secretary-Treasurer. Structures Chair Richard Rocco was named MOW Vice President.

In a statement to the membership, Davis thanked the Executive Board for putting their faith and trust in him to lead the union forward.

“My mission is to build a better, stronger, more unified, and more effective TWU Local 100 that has an administration that is focused on you, the membership,” Davis said. “I promise to work tirelessly on your behalf

and put your needs first. I will never stop working to make improvements on multiple key fronts, including safety, job security, your quality of life and your ability to take care of your families.”

Davis, 53, joined NYC Transit as a Bus Operator at the age of 26. His first union position was chief line steward. He was elected MaBSTOA Division 1 Chair in 2004, then Vice President of the Department in 2014. Davis became Secretary-Treasurer in May following the retirement of Earl Phillips.

Utano, 60, joined NYC Transit in 1980 as an Electrical Helper at the age of 18. He was elected to his first union position the following year. He never lost an election, serving as Section Vice Chair, Section Chair, Division Chair and Vice President before becoming President in September 2017. Utano will continue to serve as Executive Director.

Q & A with Veterans Committee Member **BRIAN GALARZA**

In this issue of The Express, we are honoring and recognizing some of our members who have military experience by profiling two TWU members who also serve on the TWU Veterans Committee. Brian Galarza has been a proud member of TWU Local 501 for seven years, and is an American Airlines Fleet Service Clerk based in New York City. He also works for the Department of Defense as an Armed Service Aptitude Test Administrator for Fort Hamilton Military Base.

Q. Tell us about your military experience.

My father and two siblings served in the Armed Forces and their example of patriotism is what led me to join.

Q. What branch of the armed services did you serve in?

The United States Army

Q. How long were you in the military?

I served 22 years as an Airborne Infantryman.

Q. What skills did you learn there?

The skills that I learned were leadership, communication, loyalty, integrity and discipline.

Q. What are you most proud of related to your military experience?

Graduating from Drill Sergeant School and serving three years as a drill instructor converting young men into soldiers.

Q. How are you able to use the skills you learned in the military in your role today?

Being able to take charge, make decisive decisions, being able to communicate effectively and lead from the front.

Q. How long have you been an active member of the TWU Veteran's Committee?

Seven years

Q. Why is the TWU Veteran's Committee important to you?

As the Veterans Coordinator for TWU Local 501 at JFK/LGA, I have the privilege of meeting other veterans from other TWU locals every three months in different cities. I'm able to collaborate with them and share our ideas to make our Committee stronger. With help from my local president Victor Gonzalez, I help take care of our veteran members and that's very fulfilling.

Q. Tell us about some of the activities you have participated in as part of the TWU Veteran's Committee.

I have organized and delegated the honoring of Military Human Remains, known as Angel Flights, for Airline employees and their family members and I attend our deceased Union Veterans/members funerals in which I display service flags and the playing of



TAPS. I also meet with new employees who are veterans in order to introduce them to the Veterans Committee and direct them to our web page.

Q. Talk about some of the unique challenges veterans today face and how has the TWU Veteran's Committee helped you and your union sisters and brothers meet and overcome those challenges.

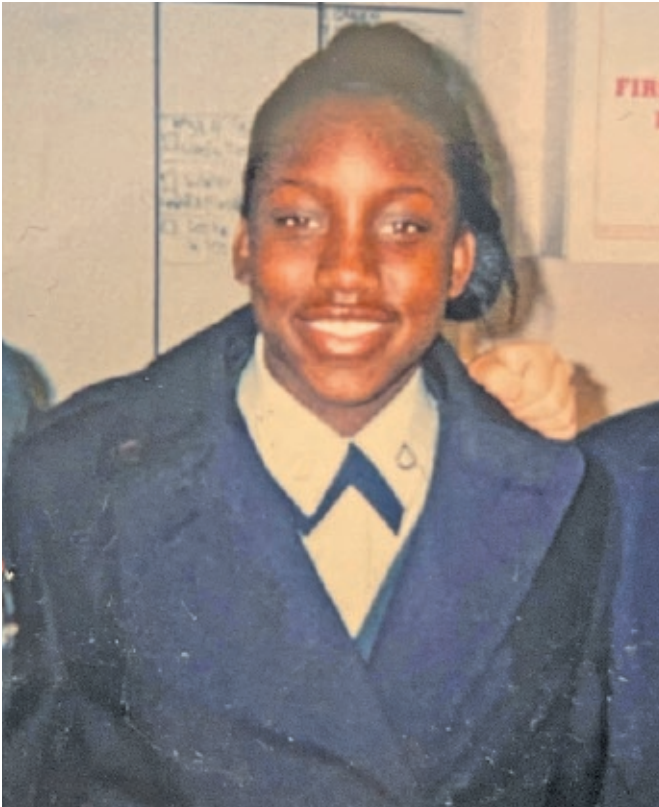
Veterans face the challenge of fitting back into the civilian social norm. Also, PTSD is a common challenge that veterans face today; however, when veterans help veterans in the workplace, it allows them to feel part of a community.

Q. Where do you think you would be today without the TWU?

I would be having a totally difference experience without the support of the union. Because of the union I'm able to maintain a secure job and feel camaraderie with my coworkers.

Q. What advice do you have for young veterans exiting the military today?

I would encourage any young veterans to request a copy of their entire medical record prior to being discharged for your medical discharge evaluation. Get involved with at least one Veteran organization in your community. Take advantage of counseling services if needed.



Q & A with Veterans Committee Member **SHEENA BELTON**

In this issue of The Express, we are honoring and recognizing some of our members who have military experience by profiling two TWU members who are veterans. Sheena Belton has been a proud member of TWU Local 555 for 11 years and is based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where she works as an operations agent for Southwest Airlines.

Q. Tell us about your military experience.

As an underprivileged teen, I joined the military in hopes of advancing socioeconomically. I joined the military at the age of 17 and I learned valuable life lessons such as discipline, structure, resilience, and perseverance. The rigorous training and demanding lifestyle taught me to push through challenges and bounce back from setbacks. Additionally, serving in the military provided me with opportunities to develop leadership skills, work collaboratively with others, and cultivate a strong sense of responsibility to my country and community.

Furthermore, military service exposed me to different cultures and backgrounds, promoting cross-cultural understanding and greater tolerance. I also learned to be adaptable and flexible in the face of uncertainty, as the ever-changing nature of military life demanded it. Finally, serving in the military required acts of courage

and sacrifice, teaching me to put the needs of others before my own and to stand up for what I believed in. Overall, my experience in the military taught me important life skills and shaped me into the person I am today.

I proudly served as a Patriot Crew Member with C Company 5-52 ADA 11th Brigade located in Fort Bliss, Texas where I deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). I aspired to retire from the military, but those plans were cut short post deployment. Upon leaving the military, I joined various veteran organizations to gain knowledge about benefits and resources available to me and how to use that knowledge to educate other veterans.

Q. What are you most proud of related to your military experience?

I am most proud of the opportunity to serve my country and to acknowledge the sacrifices made by fellow servicemembers. My service instilled in me a profound sense of pride in being a veteran, and it was during my time in the Army that I acquired an appreciation for the concepts of unity and the essential importance of a supportive bonds among peers. The challenges that I faced in the course of my military service allowed me to cultivate valuable life skills and equipped me to navigate the obstacles that I encounter

COMMITTEE UPDATES

in the civilian world. Therefore, I consider my military experiences as integral to shaping the woman I am today.

Q. How are you able to use the skills you learned in the military in your role today?

In my current roles as the Operations/Cargo Union Representative, Safety Representative, and Co-Chair on the communications subcommittee for the TWU International Veteran's Committee, I utilize the leadership, communication, discipline, and perseverance skills that I learned in the military to benefit my union colleagues and overcome challenges.

Q. How long have you been an active member of the TWU Veteran's Committee?

I have been an active member of the TWU Veteran's Committee since April 2022. I would have liked to join earlier, but was pursuing full-time studies and waited to ensure that I would have the availability required to make a meaningful contribution to the committee.

Q. Why is the TWU Veteran's Committee important to you?

I am elated to work with other veterans who aspire to address issues that uniquely impact this population. I can tell you that the bond of military veterans is an incredibly powerful and unique connection. It's something that's hard to describe to those who haven't served in the military, but it's very real and very important to us. As veterans, we understand and respect each other on a level that's hard to replicate elsewhere. We all went through the same challenges and shared the same experiences. We faced adversity together, and we overcame it together.

Q. Tell us about some of the activities you have participated in as part of the TWU Veteran's Committee.

As a recently inducted member of the TWU Veteran's Committee, my direct involvement in front line activities has not yet materialized. However, my membership in the subcommittee for communications has presented an opportunity for me to apply the knowledge and skills I acquired while leveraging my VR&E benefits. Specifically, I recently completed a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management Information Systems at Florida Atlantic University in December 2022. This academic qualification has equipped me to contribute to the TWU Veteran's Committee in the capacity of webmaster for the website.

Q. Talk about some of the unique challenges veterans today face and how has the TWU Veteran's Committee helped you and your union sisters and brothers meet and overcome those challenges.

Some of the unique challenges that veterans face today include transitioning to civilian life, mental health issues, physical health issues, homelessness, access to healthcare, and financial instability. The TWU Veteran's Committee helps our union sisters and brothers by connecting with our veterans, communicating new or existing entitlements/benefits through community outreach projects and events. The TWU Veteran's Committee has four subcommittees which are Legislative, Events, Benefits, and



Communication. The subcommittees meet quarterly to discuss pertinent veterans' topics and those updates are communicated to the membership via social media and website announcements (veterans.twu.org).

Q. Where do you think you would be today without the TWU?

Without the TWU, I most likely would not have remained with my company. Joining the TWU rekindled my sense of unity and community responsibility. My union sisters and brothers are not just coworkers, they are my battle buddies. I feel compelled to protect our job functions, lead and represent the membership, and assist members throughout the grievance process.

Q. What advice do you have for young veterans exiting the military today?

1. Utilize your VA benefits: Make sure you understand and take advantage of the benefits you have earned through your service, such as education and training opportunities, healthcare, and financial assistance.
2. Network: Connect with other veterans and organizations, such as veterans service organizations, that can help you navigate the transition to civilian life.
3. Plan for your next career: Consider what you want to do next and take steps to acquire the necessary skills and credentials to pursue your desired career.
4. Take care of your mental and physical health: Transitioning to civilian life can be stressful, so make sure to prioritize your mental and physical well-being.
5. Reach out for help if you need it: There are resources available to help veterans with the transition to civilian life, so don't hesitate to seek help if you need it.
6. Understand that civilian life can be different from military life, be patient and be ready to adapt to new situations.

SAVE THE DATE

JULY 9-12, 2023

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Hyatt Regency on the Hill,
Washington, DC

The TWU International invites all local representatives to promote, advance, and defend our union's goals before decision makers in Washington, DC at the Legislative and COPE Conference July 9-July 12, 2023. TWU leaders from around the country will come together to share best practices, empower one another, and make policy change in our nation's capital. The conference will be based at The Hyatt Regency (400 New Jersey Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001) in Washington, DC and include several trips to the House of Representatives and the Senate. Details to follow, including a link to book your hotel and register for the conference. (The Government Affairs office will be able to schedule Hill appointments for those attending)

For now, please mark your calendars and make plans to come to DC in July.

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