WHY UNION?

MY STORY — RICHARD ESPOSITO

I was born in 1947 in a small coal mining town in West Virginia. My father was a coal miner, and my four siblings and I lived in a four-room house that we rented from the coal company. My father was paid in scrip to be used at the coal company store for our overpriced groceries and other needs. The rest of our needs were provided by our garden in our backyard. In 1948, I was diagnosed with a serious illness and my only medical provider was the drunken company doctor. Luckily, my aunt and uncle, who worked for the Washington Post and were in the printers’ union, brought me to D.C., adopted me and, with all the union benefits, put me in Georgetown Univ. Hospital for treatment. At the age of seven, I was pronounced cured. Going forward, I had a very comfortable and fulfilling life as the owner of a small home improvement company. In 2012, at age of 65, I hung up my hammer and came to work at DLC as a temp, eventually becoming a 32-hour clerk and a union member. I soon after met Gino Renne. He handed me a cup of Kool-Aid with UNION printed on it. I came to understand that it was my time to give back. In my time with DLC and Local 1994, I have had nine surgeries. I have not missed a paycheck nor seen a bill thanks to my benefits fought for by Local 1994. People ask me why I am so passionate and spend so much of my spare time doing union activities. It is quite evident that I would be dead or penniless without unions in my life. I am the most blessed man alive. I have a beautiful loving wife, four children, four grandchildren, and I have the honor to work and hopefully improve the lives of my fellow union members and be associated with such a dedicated and professional union staff.

PEACE, Rich Esposito,
Department of Liquor Control, Montgomery County

“I WOULD BE DEAD OR PENNILESS WITHOUT UNIONS IN MY LIFE.”
Congratulations on your new job! It gives you a great opportunity to work union and live better.

UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO is the union that negotiates your wages, benefits and working conditions. We are a strong union of approximately 8,000 men and women from around the region.

Our local union is like a family. When you need help, you have the strength of our union family to support you.

Your decision to join us shows that you understand both the direct value of membership and the importance of being part of a team that works on behalf of the entire workforce.

Once you receive your card, our union becomes your union, too—to be shared with your brothers and sisters who stand beside you, those who came before you, and those who will come later.

With the help of people like you, Local 1994 has been fighting for hard working men and women in Maryland and their families for more than 25 years. Over that time, we’ve significantly improved wages and working conditions, rights and benefits for a diverse range of occupations—bus operators, corrections officers, librarians, deputy sheriffs, health care professionals, administrative workers and craft and trade workers—throughout this region.

We encourage you to accept the responsibility of ownership, not just by carrying your card, but also by playing an active role in the many activities that help keep our union strong and healthy. We are a democratic organization and, as such, you share ownership in all the assets of the union. You can help protect and expand those assets by staying in touch on the job and in the community. Your steward will keep you informed of rallies, membership meetings, and special events. He or she may call on you to help us lobby at the local or state level, to donate time or funds for political action efforts, or to help other union members like yourself in times of need. You’ve joined a family, not a club. We are active, energetic and committed to protecting your interests.

Please read this Owners Manual and make sure you understand your union and its operation so that you can get the full value of your membership.

In Solidarity,

Gino Renne, President
Yvette Cuffie, Secretary-Treasurer
Nelvin Ransome, Recorder
INTRODUCTION

OUR MISSION

UFCW Local 1994 is committed to advancing the economic interests of our members, their families and the community through the collective bargaining process; adding value to the work experience and building a stronger, more vibrant community. We will pursue policies and objectives to sustain and protect an effective infrastructure of public services—education, recreation, transportation, commerce and public safety—which improve and enrich the quality of life for all.

Local 1994 recognizes the importance of stable, meaningful jobs which offer family sustaining wages and benefits under safe working conditions. We will engage in legislative and political action and cooperate with other labor organizations, environmental and civic organizations, civil rights groups and like-minded organizations to advance the overall welfare of our members, their families, our neighborhoods, our region and our state.

“PROTECTION IS THE KEY REASON FOR HAVING A UNION (WAGES, BENEFITS, PENSION). SURVIVE WITH LOCAL 1994.”

— BERNADETTE HOPE, BUS OPERATOR/ DPWT
OFFICERS

GINO RENNE
PRESIDENT

YVETTE CUFFIE
SECRETARY-TREASURER

NELVIN RANSOME
RECORDER

FRANK BECKHAM
VICE PRESIDENT

BEVERLEY BIERMAN
VICE PRESIDENT

MARJORIE BROWN-NELSON
VICE PRESIDENT

CASSANDRA HARPER
VICE PRESIDENT

AARON CRAWFORD
VICE PRESIDENT

JOE DICKSON
VICE PRESIDENT

MELBA CHAVARRIA
VICE PRESIDENT

AARON CRAWFORD
VICE PRESIDENT

JA ROWE
VICE PRESIDENT

JOHN SMOAK
VICE PRESIDENT

MIKE TRIGIANI
VICE PRESIDENT

DR. GILBERTO ZELAYA
VICE PRESIDENT

YVETTE CUFFIE
SECRETARY-TREASURER

NELVIN RANSOME
RECORDER

FRANK BECKHAM
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JA ROWE
VICE PRESIDENT

JOHN SMOAK
VICE PRESIDENT

MIKE TRIGIANI
VICE PRESIDENT

DR. GILBERTO ZELAYA
VICE PRESIDENT
STAFF

AMY MILLAR
SPECIAL ASST. TO THE PRESIDENT

LISA BLACKWELL-BROWN
FIELD SERVICES COORDINATOR

RAYMUN LEE
ORGANIZING COORDINATOR

GABRIEL ACEVERO
FIELD REP./ORGANIZER

JOHN BARRY
FIELD REP./ORGANIZER

DAVE BLACKWELL
FIELD REP./ORGANIZER

FRANK SANTOS-FRITZ
FIELD REP./ORGANIZER

RAVEN WILKERSON
FIELD REP./ORGANIZER

LISA BLACKWELL-BROWN
FIELD SERVICES COORDINATOR

RACHEL KAHN
FIELD SERVICES COORDINATOR

MARY KAY CANARTE
DISPUTE RESOLUTION SPECIALIST

SHACONDA MONK
EXECUTIVE ASST. TO SEC.-TREAS./MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

RONNIE TRAINA
RECEPTIONIST

My Steward is:__________________________________

Phone: ______________________________________

Steward directory can be found online at:
www.mcgeo.org/steward-directory
YOUR UNION CARD

Your Local 1994 Union Card is a passport to peace of mind on the job. It is your guarantee of fair treatment, your assurance that all you have to do is your job and your union will safeguard your rights at work, protect you against favoritism, and work on your behalf to make sure that your wages, benefits and your safety on the job will always be the best.

In addition to tens of thousands of dollars of value that the union card can bring you, throughout your career and into retirement, your union card is the gateway to substantial other benefits.

This card is key to getting the most value from your membership.
You have the right to union representation if you are called to a meeting with management that could lead to discipline.

Weingarten rights were won in a 1975 Supreme Court decision with these basic guidelines. However, these rights are not automatically extended to workers unless they are negotiated by your union in your collective bargaining agreement. Please refer to your respective contracts, and familiarize yourself with your respective Weingarten rights.

- You must make a clear request for union representation either before or during the interview. Managers do not have to inform employees of their rights.
- Management cannot retaliate against an employee requesting representation.
- Management must delay questioning until the union steward arrives.
- It is against the law for management to deny an employee’s request for a steward and continue with an interrogation. In this case, an employee can refuse to answer management’s questions.

If you have any questions about your Weingarten rights, speak to a steward or call your Union Field Representative at 301-977-2447.

READ WORD FOR WORD TO YOUR SUPERVISOR

If this discussion, meeting or telephone call could in any way be related to my being disciplined or terminated or affect any of my working conditions, I hereby exercise my contractual rights and request that my union representative or shop steward be present. Without their presence, I choose not to participate in this discussion or meeting. Please do not request that I waive this right.
YOUR CONTRACT

View contracts online at: www.MCGEO.org/contracts

Local 1994 Representatives negotiate collective bargaining agreements with management.

This contract regulates everything related to where and how you work: your pay, promotions and awards, retirement eligibility, safety procedures and safety equipment. It must be followed by managers, supervisors and workers.

Over the years, your negotiating teams have won substantial improvements in all of the bargaining units we represent. It is important to understand that the benefits listed in your contract — vacations, holidays, premium pay and wage rates — are not "gifts" from management; they were established by the hard work of the union bargaining team with the support of members like yourself.

Every contract is negotiated by your union brothers and sisters who serve on negotiating committees, with technical assistance from leaders, staff, lawyers, consultants and economists retained by Local 1994. Each contract is written to address the circumstances of your particular job. When conditions or circumstances change, we typically address those changes by either reopening a contract or simply negotiating a "side letter" that deals with the changes.

Some contracts — especially those covering craft and trade workers — include tool allowances and procedures for upgrading certifications to enhance earning power. Other contracts specify how work assignments are handed out to prevent abuses of overtime assignments. All contracts include firm safety and health protections.

You and your coworkers own the contract in your workplace and it’s up to you — working in conjunction with your stewards — to make certain that no one undercuts the provisions of that agreement. For example, if a supervisor is directing or even "suggesting" that work be performed "off the clock," it is up to individual members to report those violations because such practices quickly lead to problems with understaffing or cheating on overtime.

Sometimes supervisors will assign work that is outside of an individual’s position description, experience or training. Such practices, whether they are deliberate or accidental can lead to bad performance ratings.

The union never tolerates any practices that weaken a contract and you are the union in your workplace. When contract violations occur, we protect you and your coworkers by invoking the contract’s grievance procedure. Most often, if a grievance is filed, the union and management representatives can resolve it quickly at the first step by talking through the issue and agreeing to a solution. If a grievance remains unresolved at the earliest steps, it ends up in arbitration where an impartial third party is called on to weigh the facts and render a solution. Because Local 1994 trains its stewards and staff thoroughly, we have earned a reputation.
for professionalism and competence that helps us to keep the level of grievances and arbitrations to a minimum.

Local 1994 is proud of all of our contracts, many of them have been used by other unions as models for their own negotiations. Many of our agreements for instance, provide a unique benefit that allows individuals who believe that their positions are misclassified to request a review by classification experts who then can recommend an upgrade where the evidence supports it.

Your union contract is an important feature of your union membership. We encourage you to read yours carefully, discuss it with your coworkers and your family, and keep a copy of that contract handy for easy reference while you are at work.

**IF YOU GET HURT ON THE JOB**

Regardless of how careful we are, people do get hurt on the job. If it happens to you, there are several things you must do as soon as reasonably possible:

- Report the facts to your supervisor immediately.
- Call the union and let your representative know what happened.
- Make an appointment as soon as possible with an attorney from the workers’ compensation law firm of Berman, Sobin, Gross, Feldman and Darby at 301-670-7030.

The attorney assigned to your case will see to it that a claim is filed properly with the Maryland Workers’ Compensation Commission in Baltimore.

Two common mistakes that workers make are failure to file an official Workers’ Compensation claim form and the tendency to downplay an injury out of concern for being branded or getting accused of “gaming the system.”

Your First Report of an Injury is not a formal compensation claim. Do not assume that you are protected just because you fill out the forms your supervisor gives you. The only way to initiate a claim is to complete and file official forms provided by the Workers’ Compensation Commission.

Many conscientious workers are so anxious to get back to work that they will downplay an injury, or think that an injury was their fault. Don’t make those mistakes. You have a right and a responsibility to protect yourself and your family by invoking your rights.
WE WELCOME YOUR HELP

We depend on you to add value to your union by volunteering to help with programs that increase your union’s voice in politics through our political action programs—the Active Ballot Club (ABC) and Volunteers in Politics (VIP)—or as a volunteer organizer, or to help us connect to any of dozens of community organizations that share our goals and values, such as Progressive Maryland. Ask your steward about these programs.

ACTIVE BALLOT CLUB

ABC raises voluntary donations to help elect worker-friendly lawmakers at the local, state and national level. A healthy ABC program ensures that we can help the kind of candidates who speak up in the political arena for working families. We welcome donations of from $2 to $10 per pay period that can be automatically deducted from your paycheck.

VOLUNTEER IN POLITICS

Your union's most important asset is our people. VIP is a program that recruits and mobilizes volunteers like you to work on political campaigns and community issues—registering voters, attending rallies, distributing materials, canvassing the community, working phone banks or working with coalitions that help the community.

MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Membership in Local 1994 enables you to expand your knowledge and experience by accepting leadership and activist roles — as a union steward or as a volunteer in Local 1994 programs.

Local 1994 has several committees which allow you to be active in the community while engaging in social activism with your union brothers and sisters. Committees include Political Action, Women’s Network, Civil Rights/Equity, Veterans, Events, and Young Members.

As well, you can participate in your Labor-Management Relations Committee (LMRC) where you can work with management to help facilitate communication to address concerns in a proactive fashion. The LMRC manage the labor-management relationship during those periods between contract negotiations periods.

BENEFITS TO MAKE YOUR PAYCHECK GO FARTHER

Local 1994 participates in many benefit programs that help you make your paycheck go farther. Through our International Union, UFCW, Local 1994 offers LifeMart benefits that provide discounts for you on child care, movie tickets, vacations, appliances, home buying, automobile maintenance and insurance, cell phone bills and more. New discount
Credit Cards
We offer several card choices. Each card has different features, and all offer competitive rates.

Entertainment Discounts
Save on entertainment with discounts at more than 50 theme parks (including Disney), movie theaters, museums, zoos, and more.

Wireless Savings
Save on the monthly service charge of qualified wireless plans through Union Plus.

Free College Benefit
Earn an associate degree completely online — for FREE! Take advantage of this accessible, debt-free and convenient higher education opportunity for members and their families.

Car & Truck Savings
Save on auto insurance, Goodyear tires and service, emergency roadside assistance, and on the purchase of new and used cars.

Mortgage Program
Buying or refinancing a home for you and your children is easy and affordable with the Union Plus Mortgage program. Unique assistance helps make mortgage payments.

PROGRAMS AND DISCOUNTS
Start saving. Talk to your union representative about joining today!

Money-Saving Programs For UFCW MEMBERS & Their Families
Credit Cards
We offer several card choices. Each card has different features, and all offer competitive rates.

Entertainment Discounts
Save on entertainment with discounts at more than 50 theme parks (including Disney), movie theaters, museums, zoos, and more.

Wireless Savings
Save on the monthly service charge of qualified wireless plans through Union Plus.

Mortgage Program
Buying or refinancing a home for you and your children is easy and affordable with the Union Plus Mortgage program. Unique assistance helps make mortgage payments.

Car & Truck Savings
Save on auto insurance, Goodyear tires and service, emergency roadside assistance, and on the purchase of new and used cars.

Free College Benefit
Earn an associate degree completely online — for FREE! Take advantage of this accessible, debt-free and convenient higher education opportunity for members and their families.

Offer are added regularly. The Union also partners with Union Plus for additional benefits. You can access these services through the UFCW.org/value website or call the union office (301) 977-2447. Our Membership Benefits Coordinator will answer any questions you have.

You may also want to look into educational opportunities offered to Local 1994 members through our free college benefit. Because of your UFCW Local 1994 membership, you and your family members can earn an associates degree online from a public, accredited community college — with no out-of-pocket costs to you. The process is simple and can save you thousands of dollars. The UFCW Free College Benefit ensures that UFCW members and their families do not have to pay out of pocket for any tuition, fees or e-books at Eastern Gateway Community College.

Children (or stepchildren), grandchildren (or step-grandchildren), spouses, domestic partners, and financial dependents of UFCW members are eligible for the UFCW Free College Benefit.
BRIEF HISTORY

MCGEO began in response to unilateral pay cuts and benefit reductions imposed on the workplace in 1978. County workers were angered when the Montgomery County Council cut expected pay raises by 60 percent, refused to honor full cost of living increases, and cut retirement benefits by 50 percent by integrating retirement benefits with Social Security. As well, they forced employees to pay more out-of-pocket for health care. In 1983, Gino Renne and a slate of candidates challenged the MCGEO leadership at the time because they were not responding to the needs of the membership and were instead kowtowing to management. In 1984, the newly elected officers persuaded Montgomery County’s Charter Review Commission to allow voters to decide if the county should authorize collective bargaining for county workers. The issue got huge approval from county voters.

The group merged with Local 400 in 1984 and then received its own charter in 1993. The UFCW designated it as Local Union 1994 to coincide with the year of the transition from an arm of UFCW Local 400. Renne became the Local’s first president, working with one full-time and one part-time employee to serve two Montgomery County bargaining units: OPT and SLT.

Since that time, the union has grown from a single employer union representing approximately 3200 workers to now representing more than 8,000 members at eight different employers and growing.
UFCW LOCAL 1994

MC GEO

Address: 600 South Frederick Ave,
Gaithersburg, MD
Phone: 301-977-2447

Web: www.MCGEO.org
e-mail: info@mcgeo.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Local.1994
Twitter: twitter.com/UFCW1994