



The

# Union Mail

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*"The Labor Movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."*— Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"As I have said many times, and believe with all my heart, the coalition that can have the greatest impact in the struggle for human dignity here in America is that of the Negro and the forces of labor, because their fortunes are so closely intertwined."*

*— Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter to Amalgamated Laundry Workers, January 1962*

***Black History is American History***

pg. 3

# Honoring our African American APWU Leaders



**Joseph Martir**

**B**lack History Month is a time to recognize the resilience, achievements, and leadership of African Americans who have shaped our nation's institutions. Within the United States

Postal Service, African American workers have played a critical role in ensuring reliable service to the public while advancing workplace equality and economic opportunity. Just as important, the American Postal Workers Union has served as a powerful vehicle through which Black postal employees have organized, advocated, and led the fight for fairness and justice on the job.

The Postal Service has historically been one of the largest and most inclusive employers of African Americans in the federal government. At times when discrimination limited access to stable employment elsewhere, postal jobs offered dignity, fair wages, and a pathway to the middle class. African American clerks, maintenance employees, motor vehicle service workers, and support staff have long been the backbone of postal operations, ensuring that mail reaches every community, regardless of race or income.

African Americans have also been central to the strength and evolution of the APWU. From its early years, Black members recognized that collective action through the union was essential to fighting discrimination, unequal treatment, and hazardous working conditions.

They helped organize local unions, mobilize members, and demand equal opportunity in hiring and training. Their activism strengthened not only the APWU, but the broader labor movement as well.

The New York Metro Area Postal Union's commitment to civil rights and equality reflects the values championed by our African American members. Through contract negotiations, grievances, and legislative advocacy, the union has fought to protect workers' rights, oppose discriminatory practices, and ensure that every employee is treated with dignity and respect. Black leaders within the APWU have played key roles at the local, state, and national levels, helping to shape policy and guide the union through periods of challenge and change.

The impact of African American postal workers and APWU members extends far beyond the workplace. Postal jobs have allowed generations of Black families to achieve economic stability, invest in education, and give back to their communities. Many postal workers have served as mentors, civic leaders, and advocates for social justice, reinforcing the idea that a strong public service can also be a force for positive social change.

As the Postal Service faces ongoing challenges ranging from technological changes to workforce restructuring, the lessons of Black history remain especially relevant. The perseverance and solidarity demonstrated by African American APWU members remind us that unity is essential to protecting good jobs and preserving the mission of the Postal Service. The union's strength

lies in its diversity and in the shared commitment of its members to stand together in defense of public services and workers' rights.

This Black History Month, we honor Josie McMillian, a pioneering labor leader who served as the first woman and first Black President of the New York Metro Area Postal Union. Leading the local from 1981 to 1999, she was a prominent advocate for women's rights and civil rights.

We also honor the present contributions of African American postal workers and union leaders. Leona Draper is APWU Northeast Coordina-

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**Metro NY**  
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tor for the Eleanor Bailey/Moe Biller Retiree Chapter. Her spirit exemplifies leadership and advocacy for the retirees. She continues to uplift voices, preserve hard gained rights, and uphold the legacy of those who paved the way before us.

Tiffany Foster is currently the APWU Northeast Region Coordinator. Before assuming this national role, she held three important positions here at NY Metro: shop steward, Bronx In-

stallation Coordinator, and Executive Vice President. She fought powerfully for members' rights on the workroom floor and is now responsible for union activity in parts of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Jonathan Smith, who led NY Metro since 2012, displayed great fiscal responsibility to make our union more solvent than ever. President

Smith is a staunch advocate for the retirees, the POWER committee, and Young Members committee. In 2025, he was elected National President of the American Postal Workers Union.

The sacrifices, activism, and dedication of our African American leaders have helped build a stronger union and a stronger Postal Service. Their story is not just history. It is a living legacy that continues to inspire today's workforce and future generations. ☑

# Black History is American History

By Howard Satterfield, Director of DVD P&DC

**A**pril 4, 1968 is a date that is forever etched in history as the day the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, but what many Americans don't know is what precipitated that fateful event. Why and what Dr. King was doing in Memphis in the first place is relevant to not just civil rights, but to workers' rights and the overall labor movement.

In February 1968, Black History Month, Memphis sanitation workers went on strike protesting for better, fair, and decent wages and dignified working conditions. Being black men in the south, they were denied both. Dr. King at the time was preparing for a much bigger event, the Poor People's Campaign march that was set to take place in Washington D.C. This was to be a diverse multi-racial event to highlight poverty and socio-economic disparities.

Though he was busy and vital

to organizing that event, Dr. King understood that the cause of those sanitation workers and the stand they were taking were worth his attention and support. In late March, he led a protest to show solidarity with the sanitation workers. After that protest march, King went back to organizing the Washington D.C. event.

However, on April 3, the night before tragedy would strike, he returned to Memphis and gave what would become known as the mountaintop speech. We all have heard that famous quote of him reaching the mountaintop, looking over and seeing the promised land. In that nearly hourlong speech, he spoke about not just the Memphis sanitation workers' strike, but workers' rights overall.

Dr. King was committed to the collective good, believing that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. Not only was he a champion of civil rights and social justice, but also a

strong advocate of unions. He often spoke of equating workers' rights with human rights. Dr. King believed all workers, regardless of race or the job itself, were worthy of a fair day's pay and deserved to be treated with dignity and respect.

So as we celebrate Black History Month, we should know that the positive contributions of African Americans benefit all Americans and America as a whole. We should always be mindful that Black History is in fact American history. ☑



# Black History in the Post Office

**The highest concentration of African Americans in federal employment is in the USPS; these postal jobs were the product of struggle.**

By Flo Summergrad  
From *The Union Mail* February 2015

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, mail was moved primarily on the rails. The Railway Mail Service was a critical part of the Post Office Department (POD). Train lines that passed through large towns or cities had a mail car with a clerk responsible for receiving and dispatching mail.

The Post Office Department employed a high percentage of blacks as railway clerks because it was a dangerous job. The wooden mail cars often broke apart in transit, causing severe injuries and fatalities to the clerks working in them. White workers were willing to leave these hazardous jobs for blacks.

However, in 1913, things began to change. The railroads began to change over to steel cars, which made the job less dangerous. At the same time, President Woodrow Wilson appointed a Postmaster General, Albert B. Burleson, who instituted a program to make railroad jobs, including mail cars, exclusively white.

Since the existing union, the Railway Mail Association, did not admit blacks, POD railway clerks from 13 states met in Chatanooga, TN, in October 1913 and formed the National Alliance of Postal Employees (NAPE) to organize black railway clerks to defend their jobs. In 1923, the NAPE constituted itself an industrial labor union when it opened up membership to all postal workers, regardless of race, sex, creed, or religion. This differentiated their union from the craft unions in the POD at that time.

The National Alliance of Postal Employees had a proud history of fighting injustice in various key strug-



gles over the ensuing decades.

In 1914, when President Wilson instituted a system of photos for civil service exams, which was used as a tactic to screen out black applicants. NAPE recognized that this was part of a system of racial barriers to federal employment, including hiring for the Post Office Department. The National Alliance protested this practice for 26 years until it was finally dropped in 1940.

In the McCarthy era of the 1950s, NAPE members were among the labor leaders who were targeted and fired for being communists. During this “Red Scare” period, many AFL-CIO unions caved in to right wing forces and abandoned their militant leaders, weakening the power of the labor movement. The National Alliance, however, defended its fighters and continued the struggle against racial discrimination in the Post Office.

By the 1960s, they had broadened to include all federal workers, thus becoming the National Alliance for Postal and Federal Employees. In the Post Office, while their shop floor stewards stood up against management abuses, they also fought racism in the work place—something NAPFE criticized other unions for ignoring.

In the great Postal strike of 1970, which forever bettered the wages,

hours, and working conditions of U.S. postal workers, members of the Alliance were active participants. The three key areas where mail movement was critical to the economy—New York City, Chicago, and Washington, DC—had the greatest concentration of black postal workers and, therefore, a high membership in the NAPFE. National Alliance members were important cogs in the week long strike that so crippled the Post Office and threatened the U.S. economy that President Nixon himself was forced to the table.

The resulting Postal Reorganization Act that won bargaining rights for postal workers was in part the fruit of the struggles begun by the black railway clerks in 1913. However, the NAPFE itself as an organization was not included in the exclusive representation given to four major postal unions, including the APWU. As a labor union, NAPFE’s power was essentially over. The organization changed its nature by opening its doors to black federal workers from management as well as craft. It continued to grow through institutions like its Federal Credit Union, but not as a militant trade union.

Still, the legacy of the struggles of the National Alliance fed into the ongoing development of African American leadership in the postal unions—particularly the APWU. Many officers of our local and national unions who are African American, have some part of their roots in the black railway clerks who defied white exclusion and formed a labor organization to fight for their postal jobs. ☐

# Your Steward is Here for You, But Only If You Ask

## You Have the Right to Representation in a Pre-Disciplinary Interview (PDI)

Interview from Edward Dalton, Executive Vice President  
Written by Andrea Adleman, Editor



Edward Dalton

If your supervisor notifies you of a Pre-Disciplinary Interview (PDI), don’t mourn, organize. You have rights. Your steward can represent you, but only if you ask.

“You have the right to a steward in PDIs, but management isn’t required to tell you this,” said NY Metro Executive Vice President Ed Dalton. “The worker has to know their rights and choose to exercise them. A steward will only get involved if the worker speaks up and makes the request.”

This authority comes from both Weingarten Rights and the APWU collective bargaining agreement.

PDIs, also called investigatory interviews, are governed by these Weingarten Rights:

- The employee can request union representation before or at any time during the interview.
- When an employee asks for representation, the employer must choose from among three options:
  1. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives;
  2. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
  3. Give the employee a choice of: (a) having the interview without representation or (b) ending the interview.
- If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues the meeting, the employee can refuse to answer questions.

The Grievance-Arbitration Procedure (Article 15) of the APWU collective bargaining agreement specifies the right to representation. When conducting a grievance meeting, “the employee, if he or she so desires, may be accompanied and represented by the employee’s steward or a Union representative.”

### Members are encouraged to bring their steward to a PDI.

“This is an important right to exercise,” said EVP Dalton. “You can’t use it if you don’t know about it. Stewards and members should always keep this in mind. You don’t have to go to a PDI meeting alone. The Union has your back, but it’s your job to arrange for representation.” ☐

# APWU Scholarship Program Open Announcement for 2026

**Deadline Is May 31, 2026 – Apply Today!**

## The Union Plus Scholarship Program

Union members and their families can earn an affordable, online associate or bachelor's degree or certificate that fits their schedule, interests, career goals and budget. Explore school and degree options at [unionplus.org/college](http://unionplus.org/college).

Since starting the program in 1991, Union Plus has awarded more than \$5.2 million in educational funding to more than 3,600 union members, spouses, and dependent children. Union Plus Scholarship awards are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school, or recognized technical or trade school.

## The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship

The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship will award \$8000 (\$2000 annually) to ten recipients (one male and one female from each of the five postal regions) to apply towards their four-year college tuition.

## Vocational Scholarship

Vocational Scholarship winners will receive up to \$3,000 for specialized training in such fields as culinary arts, medical or dental assistant, electrician, real estate, auto mechanic, certified IT/computer education, cosmetology, or massage therapy, etc. Eligible programs can be of a nine-month to three-year duration.

## Best Essay Award

One "Best Essay" winner is selected from the applicant pool to receive a one-time \$2,000 award towards his or her four-year college tuition.

## How To Apply

The scholarship deadline for this year's applicants is May 31, 2026. The scholarships are open only to high school seniors. Applicants may apply for only either Hallbeck or Vocational, not both. **Please note: APWU will be accepting unofficial transcriptions in lieu of official transcripts for the time being.**

**Applicants must be a child, grandchild, stepchild, or legally adopted child of a current, retired, or deceased APWU member. Proof of membership required for deceased members.**

## Additional Scholarship Opportunities

Union Plus also sponsors a scholarship program. The Union Plus Scholarship Program, created by the AFL-CIO, has awarded nearly \$2 million to union members and their families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education at colleges or trade and technical schools. Their awards range from \$500 to \$4,000. To view the 2025 Application (Deadline: 12PM EST, January 31, 2026), visit [www.unionplus.org/scholarships](http://www.unionplus.org/scholarships).



Union Plus also offers a free Scholarship Search, with a database of more than 3,700 scholarships worth over \$3.1 billion.

Scan the QR codes below to access the following documents:

## APWU 2026 Scholarship Program Brochure



## E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship Application



## Vocational Scholarship Application



# This is What Solidarity Looks Like: Picketing With Striking Nurses

By Andrea Adleman, Editor

The New York State Nurses Association went on strike against three New York City hospitals on Jan. 12. Some 15,000 nurses walked off the job to protest management's refusal to negotiate a just contract.

Waging the largest nurses' strike in city history, the union is advocating for "safe staffing for our patients,

protections from workplace violence, and healthcare for frontline nurses."

Nurses are picketing daily at four locations of Montefiore-Bronx, three locations of New York-Presbyterian, and three locations of Mount Sinai.

When the call for support went out, NY Metro mobilized in solidarity. With our orange shirts and fighting

spirit, we joined the picket line on Jan 14.

"When management attacks one union, it attacks all unions," said President Joseph Martir. "The labor movement stands with the nurses today because every union knows we could be next. When working people unite, we win. It's the only way." 🗨️



**"When working people unite, we win. It's the only way."**  
—Joseph Martir, President



# Rooted in Shop Leadership: Shop Steward Appreciation Dinner

**NY** Metro stewards came together in January to celebrate collective power at the annual Stewards Appreciation Party. “Like any tree, our union depends on its roots to lift it up and strengthen it,” said President Joseph Martir. “Stewards are our roots.” In between socializing, eating, and dancing, awards were given to four leaders among our ranks.

Director of Organizing Diane Erlanger presented the COPA award to steward Afroja Khatun. “When we first met, Afroja was so shy,” said Director Erlanger. “We’ve seen her go from a caterpillar to a butterfly.”

Executive Vice President Ed Dalton presented the Dedication Award to Cassandra Black, newly promoted to Director of NJI NDC. “She is very knowledgeable,” said EVP Dalton. “She teaches me a lot.” Dalton received the award on Black’s behalf.

Secretary-Treasurer Denisha Dobbins presented the Leadership Award to Bronx Director Plynie Williams.

Last but not least, President Martir presented the Eleanor G. Bailey Award to past President Jonathan Smith. The award is given to the officer who best reflects the qualities of our late beloved sister, Eleanor Bailey. Sister Bailey’s dedication through the Great Postal Strike of 1970 and beyond helped build the foundation for the strength and fighting spirit of the American Postal Workers Union.

President Smith was regrettably unable to attend, so President Martir accepted the award on his behalf. ☐



■ Afroja Khatun, Morgan steward and recipient of the COPA Award.



■ Plynie Williams, Director of Bronx Installation and recipient of the Leadership Award.



■ Ed Dalton accepts the Dedication Award on Cassandra Black’s behalf.



■ Joseph Martir accepts the Eleanor G. Bailey Award on Jonathan Smith’s behalf.



■ New York Metro Local 10 Union Stewards

## POSTAL PRIDE

### I am what I am.

Following are excerpts of an interview with APWU President Jonathan Smith, conducted by Government Executive writer Sean Michael Newhouse, posted on Jan. 6, 2026.

**JONATHAN SMITH:** I've been working in the Postal Service for 38 years, and I am the proud grandson of a postal worker. My grandfather was a custodian in the Postal Service, and he worked in the Postal Service for 25 years. I can remember when I first came to the post office, my grandfather told me to go find that union.

My grandfather said that because [he] was originally from Macon, Georgia, and he worked on the tobacco fields. He left the bigotry, the racism and the hatred of the South to come up North to give his family a better opportunity. So I grew up under the umbrella of the Postal Service, because when he came up North, he got a job in the Postal Service, and he got introduced to rights that he never knew existed when he worked out on the tobacco fields.

He got introduced to the principle of "We are only as great as our unity." And he instilled those principles in me.

With an eighth grade education, through the Postal Service, he got an opportunity to bring his family and introduce them to a piece of the American dream. That's what the Postal Service means to me, and that's why I ran for national president.

I happen to be lucky that I was educated on the great 1970s strike of the Postal Service, and it was an illegal strike. I can remember watching the video of this great postal strike, and there was a woman on there that left a lasting impression on me. I can't really remember her name, but I can remember her words. They asked her "Why would you go on strike and take a chance on losing everything because of the illegal strike and they can fire you?" And she said "This is not about me. This is about the next generation."

Well I am that next generation, and I owe her a debt of gratitude by starting to educate the postal employees to take their power back by standing up. We're the last blue collar bastion left in America where we hire veterans, where we have people coming from all walks of life. What is a better example of what America should look like than the Postal Service?

But we need to educate them that it was hard to get these rights that we have within our contract, but it's very easy to lose these rights. So my first priority is a campaign on educating the members on what it took for us to get to where we are, in order to encourage them to have the courage to stand up to fight for where we need to go.

## Postal News Briefs

### APWU Statement on the Death of Renee Good, ICE Activity

Following are excerpts of the National APWU statement on Minnesota violence and death of Renee Good.

[The] killing of Renee Nicole Good at the hands of ICE agents in Minneapolis was tragic. It has also laid bare the terror that ICE raids are inflicting upon workers and our communities across the country.

The APWU has received reports that ICE has used at least one postal facility as a staging area for its raids in Minnesota. This isn't just wrong; it places the health and safety of postal workers and our customers at risk, and we will be addressing it with postal management.

Our union has long stood for social justice. Instead of terrorizing our neighborhoods, our government should be investing in good jobs, affordable healthcare, and truly safe and strong communities. We demand an end to these dangerous and disruptive ICE raids, and a new politics that works for working people.

### President Jonathan Smith Speaks to *New York Times*

APWU President Jonathan Smith is quoted in a *New York Times* story on the status of the Postal Service. The Dec. 25, 2025, article looks at how "postal workers quietly, and sometimes heroically, serve their communities."

The article notes that "Mr. Trump's remarks on the future of mail delivery are worrisome to members of the American Postal Workers Union, who rallied behind the slogan 'U.S. Mail Not for Sale' at protests in March. But there's little doubt that the Postal Service is in financial straits and must change.

"Other Western countries, like Britain and Canada, have either privatized the mail or ended door-to-door delivery in recent years. The Danish postal service announced it would stop delivering letters after 400 years at the end of this month.

"Jonathan Smith, the president of the American Postal Workers Union, suggested ways the Postal Service could make it past the cash crunch. These include selling fishing and hunting licenses, being allowed to deliver wine, beer and liquor (currently prohibited by law) and letting the public use the vehicle charging stations now being installed at post offices across the country as part of the agency's ongoing electrification efforts for its mail trucks.

"The problem is you need the powers that be to see the postal service as a service, not a business," Mr. Smith said. "To not take these ideas seriously comes from greed."

## CALENDAR

### Wednesday, February 18

5:30pm  
General Membership Meeting  
Via ZOOM

### Wednesday, March 18

5:30pm  
General Membership Meeting  
Via ZOOM

## ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

### Members Only!

- Download Zoom App
- Enter Meeting ID #548-304-2304
- Mute audio
- Video must be on

For news, upcoming events and more, visit our website at [nymetro.org](http://nymetro.org)

## APWU LOCAL BLDG. CORP

Beginning Balance December 2025	_____	\$	935,530.97
Total Revenue December 2025	_____	\$	147,800.63
Operating Expenses December 2025	_____	\$	126,988.55
Total Net Income December 2025	_____	\$	20,812.08
Ending Balance December 2025	_____	\$	956,343.05

## NY METRO P.O.W.E.R.

**SISTERS!** As an APWU member, you are a member of NY Metro P.O.W.E.R. (Post Office Women for Equal Rights). Monthly P.O.W.E.R. meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday at 5:30pm via ZOOM.



## NEXT MEETING:

**Wednesday, February 25**

ZOOM Meeting ID #239-026-1053

[Follow ZOOM instructions outlined for the Membership meeting on this page.]

## JOIN THE NY METRO EMAIL BLAST!

Scan the QR code below to stay up to date on Union news, events, and more!

\*\*Please allow 3-5 business days to verify your New York Metro membership.





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# *Tax Information Regarding Temporary Federal Tax Deductions for Qualified Overtime Compensation*

**This notice comes from [APWU.org](http://APWU.org), posted December 19, 2025.**

The Postal Service recently notified the APWU that they will be sending a letter to employees regarding the tax deduction for the premium portion of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime that some employees may be eligible to take under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).

The letter explains what portion of overtime an employee was paid in 2025 qualifies for the deduction. Overtime payments are usually larger under the National Agreement than what is required by the FLSA, so not all overtime payments qualify for the deduction.

APWU members who have questions about the amount of qualified overtime or their eligibility for a tax deduction should direct those questions to their tax professional, the IRS, or the Postal Service.

**New York Metro urges all members to consult the IRS and/or their tax consultants for further information and advisement.**

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