

Words on the retirement of Secretary-Treasurer Dave Politte

By DAVID COOK
President



COOK

Typically, the words I write for this page are contained in one column where I do my best to speak directly to our partners and our brothers and sisters in Labor.

But the retirement of a close friend and one of Labor's best champions compels me to make an exception to this rule. After 23 years as a partner of the staff of UFCW Local 655, Dave Politte has announced his retirement. By the time you read this, it will be in effect.

I have had the honor of knowing Dave Politte for decades. We have served on staff together in organizing and servicing since the day he joined our ranks more than two decades ago. When I was elected to serve as your President, Dave Politte was elected as your Secretary-Treasurer.

I could not have asked for a better ally than Dave Politte in that position, and the partners could not have asked for a better "second in command" at this Local. Having a guy of Dave's caliber working next to me has allowed me to grow into the leader I am.

Dave has been the guy behind the scenes for years helping me move Local 655 into a force in the Missouri Labor community. Thanks to his help, we are recognized by our International as a leading progressive Local Union.

It takes a special person to develop a thought process, implement a plan, watch the plan succeed and then watch another person reap the benefits of your work. That's what Dave Politte did day in and day out. It has always been my belief that a good leader does not have to come up with every idea; they just need to recognize a good idea when they see it and have the fortitude to move it forward.

With Dave as my co-pilot, this has been easy.

Dave always worked with the staff to make sure that ideas that made it to my desk were worthy of moving forward.

By title, he was your Secretary-Treasurer. The true definition of that job is to oversee the finances of the Local. He was absolutely the right person for that job. He made sure every dollar we spent was of value to our partnership. Not a single penny was spent under his watch unless it met the simplest of tests: does this somehow help our partners?

Dave never cared for the spotlight. So in typical fashion he took a few vacation days and did not attend the last staff meeting, monthly meeting or executive board meeting to avoid any unnecessary fanfare on his behalf. He simply did not want the story to be about him. I asked Dave if he'd like a going-away party. He humbly declined.

When you spoke to management or other Labor leaders about Dave, the common response was that he was hard-working and dedicated to our partners he represents. They'll say he was a fair man that always lived up to his word. In these jobs that is how you want to be repartnered.

His sincere compassion for every partner of this Union and his steadfast discipline will be sorely missed not just by this organization, but by myself personally. Dave has been more than a Secretary-Treasurer in his time here. He has been a close advisor and confidant. He has been involved in virtually every decision that comes out of this hall – no matter how major or minor.

Dave asked one thing of me upon his retirement. He asked that we include his resignation letter that was presented to our Executive Board. The words he speaks are words each and every one of us should heed. And we've included it in this week's page.

In closing, I want to thank Dave for his years of service. Local 655 is a better organization, and I am a better leader for having had him work next to me during all of these past years.

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TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR

UFCW 655
MEMBERS &
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Dear Partners of UFCW Local 655 and our Executive Board

I hereby resign my position as Secretary-Treasurer and partner of the UFCW Local 655 Executive Board, and announce my retirement effective April 1, 2017. I leave this great organization knowing it is in capable and caring hands.

It has been my honor to serve the membership of Local 655 as a member of the staff and Executive Board for the past 23 years. I know in my heart that I have always given my best efforts for the organization and the partners of Local 655. I have always believed it is a moral obligation to always give your best effort for the partners who pay your salary. I ask each of our staff to continue to do the same. There could be no more rewarding livelihood than to make people's lives better and represent those that could not represent themselves.

To the partners on our Executive Board: You have the best Labor leader I have known. You should be proud. Give President David Cook your support, and together you will keep Local 655 strong.

You are tasked with carrying on the tradition of your predecessors that served on this Board. That tradition includes leadership, oversight of the Local's operations and spending, and willingness to donate time to make Local 655 the best it can be.

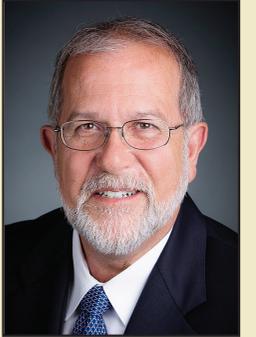
Reach inside yourself to make sure you are giving all you can to the positions you have accepted. I know you will. You have kept this organization strong by avoiding infighting or divisive behavior; the wrecking balls of some Unions. Please continue to put the organization before yourself in your decisions as Board members.

Let me add how proud I am of the diversity this Board and our staff reflects. We have come a long way and we have done it the right way. We have added diversity with quality and have improved our quality with diversity.

I wish you all the best in your futures.

Union Proud Always,

Dave Politte
Retired partner



POLITTE

Standing up for families: Striking at Holten Meat

Local 655 partners at Holten Meat have been on strike now for a few weeks, and anyone who has walked a picket line knows that this is a challenging time for them. They have braved cold weather, high winds, and more than a little rain. But despite this, they remain steadfast.

Last week, we held a rally outside of Holten Meat and invited all of our brothers and sisters in Labor to join us and stand in solidarity with these hard-working men and women on the picket line. We're happy to report that members of IBEW, Machinists, and sister UFCW Locals were all in attendance.

We sent a clear message to Holten that these partners are demanding nothing more than respect on the job and a better quality of life for themselves and their families.

So far, Holten has refused to come back to the bargaining table. Like every strike, this is a staring contest. The company believes that their employees will blink, bend to the pressures of the picket and go back to work without gaining what they have earned.

We believe if we stand firm and strong that we can shut down their factory and bring employees back to work with a better deal.

Holten Meat employees must continue to take ownership of their picket. While this Union can provide them the tools they need; while the public can voice their support and the media can tell their story, it is ultimately up to those men and women to stand strong until they win the better life they've earned.

For those of you that remember the strike of 2003, you know how important the support of others can be when you're walking picket. Every partner who has a free moment is urged to drive by the Holten picket and show their support. A



simple honk from a passing car, an extra body on the picket for an hour, or even a few bottles of water for the strikers can go a long way in lifting spirits during the challenging times.

We have begun the second phase of this strike. We are now targeting employers around the area that sell Holten Meat or Branding Iron products.

This week, President David Cook sent a letter to all Local 655 employers that sell these products and urged them to reconsider until this strike is over.

We are also beginning to handbill stores on the Illinois side of the river and asking customers not to buy these products until Holten and Branding Iron do right by their employees.

Strikes are unpredictable. We cannot say when this one will end, or what the result will be. But we do know that solidarity always favors hard-working families over companies. A strong picket line and a strong message will beat a stubborn employer any day of the week. This is what we are counting on.

Tell your friends, your family, and your co-workers not to buy these products. Encourage one another to swing by this picket line to show your support. Stand with us and stand with your brothers and sisters in this Union so that we can win this fight and bring them the better life they strive for.

Holten Meat workers on strike



MANY UNIONS JOINED Local 655 strikers at Holten Meat last week urging the company to do the right thing for their employees and offer them a fair contract. (Photo at left), President David Cook addresses the crowd.

Local 655 held a labor rally outside of Holten Meat last week to urge the company to do the right thing for their employees and offer them a fair contract.

The rally came on the same day that union contracts for maintenance workers in the plant expired, allowing them to honor the picket line by refusing to work in solidarity with their co-workers in production that are currently on strike.

Rev. Dr. Martin Rafanan joined President David Cook at the rally to pray on behalf of the men and women of Holten and urge their employer to respect their hard work. "We say we are the 'show me' state,"

Rafanan said. "Today we say, 'Show Me Respect!'"

Allies from IBEW and Machinists joined the rally, along with partners of sister UFCW Locals. The rally attracted about 75 attendees despite the rain that came down for much of the day.

"I am proud and honored to stand with you today," Cook said. "You are asking your employer for respect on the job, for a better quality of life and for more time with your families. In a time where we are constantly hearing about family values, there is no more important fight than this one."

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