



My Harvard Experience

TERRY REID

Trustee, Disability Coordinator

I arrived on January 6, 2008 ready for what turned out to be the experience of a lifetime. As I checked into the hotel I encountered Lorette Baptise, the assistant program director. She gave me a mountain of books, and my first syllabus that I had seen in almost 15 years. I knew the challenge was great, but I was ready. There were classes in Labor History, Economics, and Dispute Settlement. Each day consisted of eight hours of intense lecturing from world renowned professors who helped shape the union movement that we are a part of today. The program had 42 participants from as far away as Australia, British Columbia, Hawaii, and Alaska.

The one thing I noticed is that the Labor movement is getting younger. The baby boomers are retiring and we the younger generation, have more responsibilities and greater expectations. We are building our knowledge based on actual information from our own personal expe-

riences, and soaking up as much as we can from our predecessors. This wealth of information is why I went to Harvard.

Professor Paul Weiler from Harvard Law School, suffers from a disability that took away his ability to walk or speak, and with the assistance of a computer and a graduate student he was able to communicate with us. He lectured us on how the government is systematically chipping away at unionized labor, and what we need to do to get it back. He stated that if we allow the union movement to die wages, benefits and pensions will die with the movement. He explained to us that he was there during the height of the union movement and also during the steady decline in the 80's; it is his hope with a slight upward shift in the union movement and newer ideas on the horizon, the labor movement would once again be strong. Despite his disability I thought that Professor Weiler had one of the most brilliant minds at

Harvard. Dr. Elaine Bernard (Director of the Harvard Trade Union Program) understands more about unions than any person that I have ever met. She was able to tell what trends are developing and which are not. Elaine made our stay in Cambridge / Boston very exciting. Elaine planned several trips to visit other unions, brought in guest speakers from all over the country to give us a well balanced view of the Labor movement. We had Economist Barry Bluestone, a Harvard professor, who worked on former president Bill Clinton's campaign and is currently working with Barack Obama's campaign. He fascinated us with how the trends in the economy directly affect the labor movement. Barry stated that we set the trends in salary, benefits and pensions. Private industry uses us as a model, and we should pay attention to big business because they are definitely watching us.

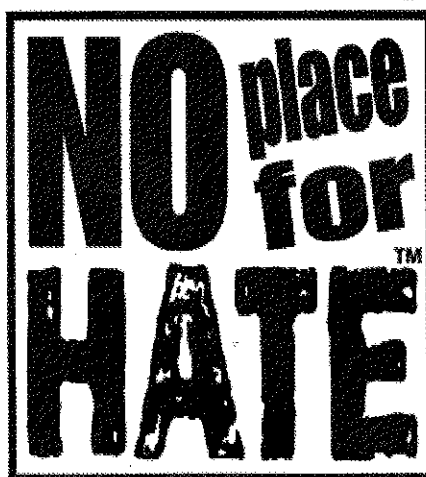
During this six week program, I learned to step outside my comfort zone. Think-

ing outside of the box made some of the world's best labor leaders. Harvard's Trade Union program teaches you how to accomplish this goal. There always needs to be a strategic plan, a budget, individual goals and team goals but no one person can accomplish this goal on their own. The Labor movement was built on a team concept and that is how it continues to grow. At the end of the six week program I was proud to share with my classmates and instructors that we at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #5 have been working as a team for quite some time. We realized that we are stronger as a team.

And I would like to take this opportunity to thank President McNesby for the opportunity of a life time, my fellow board members for taking care of things at the FOP while I was away. None of this would have been possible without you guys having my back.

Fraternally Yours,
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