

OSA's LABOR HEROES OF 2014

AFSCME DC37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts • Doctors Council SEIU President Barry Liebowitz and CWA 1180 Vice-President Linda Jenkins



This year, the Organization of Staff Analysts honors three major figures in New York City labor. Each has spent their career defending the rights of working people and each is preparing to celebrate a well-earned retirement.

LINDA JENKINS was elected First Vice-President of Communication Workers of America Local 1180 in 1982. An advocate of lifelong learning, Jenkins worked to expand educational opportunities for 1180 members as she also fought for their rights as vital city employees.

Jenkins started her municipal career in 1964 as a stenographer for the NYC Department of Social Services. By 1972, she had become an 1180 shop steward. Six years later, she was elected to the local's executive board.

As First VP, Jenkins has negotiated contracts and handled civil service classification and personnel issues.

She developed undergraduate and graduate degree programs, career-training classes and civil service exam preparation courses. She organized 2,000 new members into the local.

She has chaired the union's education committee and serves on the editorial council for the local's newspaper, *Communique*.

We salute her for her outstanding and committed work.

DR. BARRY LIEBOWITZ has one of the longest tenures of any municipal union president. Over the past 33 years, Liebowitz (or Dr. Barry, as he is known to his Municipal Labor Committee colleagues) developed the Doctors Council SEIU into the nation's largest union representing attending physicians and dentists.

Liebowitz began his career in 1964 as a physician for the Scripps Institute of Oceanography on an expedition to the Amazon.

He co-founded the Los Angeles Free Clinic in 1967, now the oldest continuously operating free clinic in the US.

Returning to New York, Liebowitz spent many years at Kings County Hospital and Downstate Medical Center. He worked tirelessly to expand the Doctors Council's influences to every HHC facility, the NYC Health Department, other City agencies and, eventually, into Illinois, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.



He fought to restore funding for school-based health programs, advocated against hospital closures and consolidation, and worked to boost health services in at-risk communities, here and abroad. He has always viewed health-care as a right rather than a privilege.

For his remarkable achievements as a doctor, advocate and union leader, we celebrate Dr. Liebowitz's career.

LILLIAN ROBERTS was elected AFSCME DC37's first female executive director in 2002, and has served five terms in that position, but that is not the beginning of her story with DC 37.

In 1959, as a nurse's aide in Chicago, she became a shop steward and officer of AFSCME DC34's hospital local. At AFSCME DC19, as a staff rep, she led an organizing drive in four Chicago mental hospitals and was instrumental in creating five locals. When Victor Gotbaum became the head of New York's DC37 in 1967, he brought Roberts with him to expand the union's Hospitals Division. She became DC37 Associate Director, a position she held until 1981.

Roberts' organizing skills helped DC37 grow from 30,000 to 120,000 members. In the late 70s and early 80s, she helped unionize thousands of workers in federally funded jobs and used this experience to create union jobs for workers receiving welfare assistance.



At DC37, Roberts helped develop the largest union-based adult education program in the country, a legal services program and a unit providing members with personal counseling.

Roberts was named "the most powerful black person in American labor" by *Essence* magazine in 2007 and one of the 30 most influential black New Yorkers by the *New York Post*.

These are only a few of the contributions that Roberts has made to municipal workers over a long career. She has helped to craft the city's labor landscape and will continue to influence its progress for years to come.

OSA recognizes and values the work that each of these illustrious labor leaders have done over the past several decades. For these reasons, and so much more, we are honored to name them as OSA's labor heroes of 2014.



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