

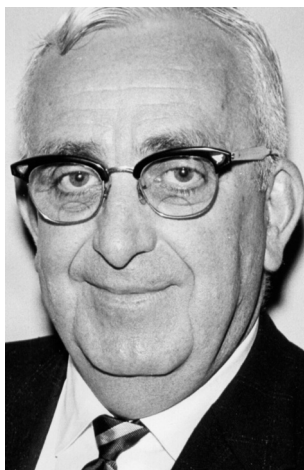
Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



The man from Butte

IN THE SPOTLIGHT this week are two unionists of the past who deserve being on the Labor Honor Roll. This column started the Labor Honor Roll to acquaint readers with unionists whose roles in the labor movement took place before the Labor Hall of Fame was started in 1997 by the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council. The Retirees Council established the Labor Hall of Fame to honor retired labor union members while still living.



JAMES LEARY

This edition's honorees are Jim Leary, a Portland-based official of the national AFL-CIO who retired in 1973 and died in 1985; and Celia Boggs, a life member of Portland Service Employees Local 49 who was 105 years old at the time of her death in 1989.

JAMES JOSEPH LEARY was born in Butte, Montana, in 1908 and began his working career at age six selling newspapers on a downtown street corner in his native city. The Anaconda Copper Mining Company ruled Butte and most of Montana like an economic fiefdom. Jim once told me that as a newsboy he joined what he called "the old Newsboys Union." Later he joined the Industrial Workers of the World, known as the Wobblies.

At age 16, Leary went to work in the copper mines and at 28 he was elected president of Miners Union No. 1. Four years later, at age 32 in 1940, Leary was elected secretary-treasurer of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. Holding that union post also gained him a seat on the national executive board of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). While holding those two offices, Leary participated in union organizing campaigns throughout the United States and Canada.

IN WORLD WAR II, Leary was appointed to a regional War Labor Board and a regional War Manpower Commission. A personal highlight of his federal service was a meeting with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Democrat FDR was the only U.S. president to be elected to four terms; he held the office from 1933 until his death in 1945.

In 1947, Leary ran for international president of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers with the pledge that if elected he would clean out the Communists from the union. He lost by a narrow margin. The union was later expelled from the CIO.

IN 1951 AND '52, Leary represented the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions as a delegate to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Also in the early 1950s, he was appointed as a staff representative of the CIO. After the 1955 national merger of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the CIO, Leary was appointed director of organizing for Montana and Idaho. He held that job until 1964 when he was transferred to Portland to become assistant director of AFL-CIO Region 21, covering Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. AFL-CIO President George Meany appointed Leary as regional director in 1965 upon the retirement of Claude Shaffer.

Leary's AFL-CIO regional office was on the second floor of the Portland Labor Center next door to the Labor Press office, so we became well-acquainted. (The Labor Center, at 201 SW Arthur St., served as labor's home from 1966 until 1978 when a bank foreclosed on it.)

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Anti-union lawyer called on to head federal OSHA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A partner in one of the nation's largest anti-union law firms was confirmed by the U.S. Senate March 13 to head the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Edwin G. Foulke Jr. of the law firm Jackson Lewis LLP was nominated by President George W. Bush last September and was confirmed last month on a voice vote in the Senate.

Foulke replaces Jonathan Snare, who has served as interim administrator since January 2005. OSHA has operated without a permanent administrator since December 2004, when John Henshaw resigned from the post.

Snare will remain as OSHA's deputy assistant secretary.

Prior to his nomination, Foulke worked at Jackson Lewis' Greenville, South Carolina, office.

Jackson Lewis represents management exclusively in labor, employment and immigration law. It has nearly 400 attorneys in 21 offices nationwide. One of its specialties is defending businesses fined by OSHA for unsafe workplaces.

Foulke chaired the law firm's OSHA practice group and served as a member of the Society for Human Resource Management's panel on workplace health, safety and security. Prior to joining Jackson Lewis in 1995, he was chairman of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

On Jackson Lewis' Web site, the

company promotes itself by stating:

"When a business is subjected to an OSHA inspection, Jackson Lewis provides the necessary representation to ensure the rights of the client are fully protected. In cases where an employer is subject to criminal or civil legal action based on alleged violations, we provide the expertise to defend the allegations.

"We have extensive agency experience at the national and regional levels to enter into settlement negotiations, and the expertise to contest citations before the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, all state safety and health commissions, and in federal and state court review proceedings."

Jackson Lewis also promotes itself as a leader in "union avoidance." Its

Web site says the law firm "engages assisting many employers in winning NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) elections "or in avoiding union elections altogether."

"The preservation of management rights is our goal, whether prior to a union offensive, during a union-organizing campaign or in collective bargaining negotiations."

Foulke received a strong endorsement from Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., who is chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and a proponent of OSHA "reform." Enzi has a 9 percent Committee on Political Education voting record as tracked on worker-related issues by the national AFL-CIO.

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