

Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



Sid Stoddard dies

SID STODDARD, a retired Northwest union and government official, died Sept. 2 at his home in Tucson, Arizona. He was 83. A family member said he died while taking a nap after returning home from kidney dialysis treatment. He had retired in 1987 as a Seattle-based general organizer for the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers.



SID STODDARD

Prior to taking that job in late 1980, he had been U.S. Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall's personal representative at the Labor Department's regional office in Seattle. Before accepting the post in the Carter Administration, he had been the business agent and financial secretary of Portland-based Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 from 1963 to 1978.

SIDNEY SMITH STODDARD JR. was born on March 24, 1923 in Providence, Rhode Island. The family's lineage dates back to 1636 England. After graduating from high school, he worked in several steel fabrication plants. With World War II in progress, Stoddard joined the U.S. Merchant Marine, following his family's long maritime tradition.

He worked on freighters throughout the war and beyond. He was an active member of the National Maritime Union, serving as a deck delegate and a ship's delegate and attending NMU conventions.

AFTER A DOZEN YEARS at sea, Stoddard found himself beached in California when his ship was taken out of service in 1955. He decided to look for another line of work and picked Portland as the place to do it. Because of his experience in steel fabrication in Providence, a job-finder at the Oregon Employment Service referred him to a job opportunity at a Portland metal fabrication factory. After being hired there, he joined Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 which represented the factory's workers. He soon was a member of the union's apprenticeship and training committee. Next came election to the Local 516 Executive Board in 1961, and two years later he was elected to the union's top job as financial secretary/business agent.

WHILE THE LEADER of Local 516, Stoddard was active in labor organizations with which the union was affiliated. He held the presidency of the Portland Metal Trades Council; served as secretary-treasurer and president of the Iron Workers District Council of the Pacific Northwest; and was a delegate to Iron Workers International Conventions from 1964 to 1986. He was a delegate to the Multnomah County Labor Council, the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, and served on the board of directors of the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Company, the non-profit entity that publishes the NW Labor Press.

IN HIS ROLE as an executive with the U.S. Department of Labor, Stoddard encouraged women to apply for apprenticeships in various trades that were non-traditional places of employment for them. His efforts produced success in Portland and Seattle and elsewhere.

UPON HIS RETIREMENT from the Iron Workers, Sid and his wife, Molly, whom he married in 1974, moved from Seattle to Depoe Bay on the Oregon Coast, but spent winters in Arizona. Ten years ago they decided to live in Tucson the year-around.

After becoming a dialysis patient, Stoddard traveled to Washington, D.C., to lobby U.S. representatives and senators for funding to provide dialysis treat-

(Turn to Page 11)

Bush appoints Wal-Mart lawyer to lead federal Wage and Hour office

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Bush made another backdoor appointment to his administration just before Labor Day, using a recess appointment Aug. 31 to install a lawyer for Wal-Mart to head up the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.

Paul DeCamp, who was grilled at an Aug. 1 Senate confirmation hearing, backed the Bush Administration's move in 2003 to gut overtime pay protections as defined in the Fair Labor Standard Act. He also drew criticism for having represented Wal-Mart Stores Inc. in a class-action lawsuit by 1.6 million low-wage female workers over alleged sex discrimination.

As head of the Wage and Hour Division, DeCamp will be in charge of enforcing rules governing minimum wages, overtime and other workplace issues affecting 130 million American workers.

Congress was on summer recess when Bush appointed DeCamp.

Article II of the Constitution allows presidents to make temporary appointments without Senate approval; those appointed can serve until the next Congressional elections.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) was expected to use Senate rules to block DeCamp's nomination. At the Aug. 1 hearing Kennedy said DeCamp's work for Wal-Mart "raises troubling questions. His record clearly

demonstrates that he does not have the commitment to workers' rights that is necessary to fulfill the goals of these important laws."

Kennedy also raised questions about DeCamp's work as a senior policy adviser to the Labor Department's Employment Standards Division and the division's failure to "stop rampant wage theft" involving wage and hour violations by employers engaged in Gulf Coast recovery work following Hurricanes Katrina.

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray of Washington asked DeCamp: "Have you ever defended a worker in a lawsuit against an employer?"

"I have not," DeCamp replied.

U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), ranking Democrat on the House Workforce and Education Committee, said as a lawyer, DeCamp "has never represented American workers in a single case. He has worked on behalf of Wal-Mart — a company with an abhorrent record of labor relations — and other companies against the interests of American workers and consumers in numerous cases. Yet he is the man that President Bush has chosen as one of the nation's top enforcers of workplace rights. It's no surprise that President Bush would appoint a corporate lawyer to a position intended to safeguard workers against corporate abuses. This recess appointment is one more reminder that the president does

not care about making sure that workers are treated fairly on the job or enforcing laws that he doesn't happen to like."

Bush has made numerous controversial appointments while Congress was in recess, including two to the National Labor Relations Board. Bush also bypassed the Senate in August 2005 with the controversial appointment of John Bolton as ambassador to the U.N., and in July 2004, when he named Deborah Majoras of Virginia to replace Timothy J. Muris as chair of the Federal Trade Commission. Majoras' nomination had been blocked in the Senate by Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who said there was no evidence she would change FTC policies that benefit oil companies and hurt consumers.

In a statement, Wyden said he hoped "that this undemocratic process for naming a new chair won't result in consumers being hammered with high gas prices again and again."

Bush made 113 recess appointments from January 2001 through April 2005. President Clinton issued 140 recess appointments during his two terms in office. Bush's father made 77 recess appointments during his administration. In eight years as president, Ronald Reagan made 240 such appointments. President Carter made 68 recess appointments during his four years in office.



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