

IN MEMORIAM

Lung cancer has claimed **KEN MACKILLOP**, retired president of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555. He passed away Sept. 10 at his home in Hollywood, Florida. He was 72.



Kenzie Melville MacKillop was born on June 24, 1939, in Sydney, Nova Scotia. He moved to Los Angeles in 1951 with his mother and sister, where he reunited with two older sisters.

After graduating from Eagle Rock High School, MacKillop found a job at a Western Electric telephone manufacturing plant and joined the Communications Workers of America.

In 1961 he moved into the retail field as a clerk at a Safeway supermarket in Southern California, where he joined Retail Clerks Local 770.

After a decade there, MacKillop transferred to Oregon and worked at the chain's store in Lincoln City, where he was a member of Salem Local 992. While living at the coast he also owned and operated a campground for tourists and a fast-food drive-in.

In 1979, MacKillop was hired to work for Local 992 as an organizer and union representative. Soon after that, UFCW was formed by a merger of a number of retail-oriented unions.

The UFCW consolidated Local 992 into Eugene Local 201, and MacKillop continued his staff duties at the merged local. In 1985, when UFCW merged Oregon and Southwest Washington locals into Local 555, MacKillop moved to the Portland area to work on the staff.

In 1987, MacKillop ran for president of the 19,000-member local, de-

feating incumbent Mike Hereford.

He retired from that post in 1997.

During his tenure, MacKillop served as a trustee on the seven health and welfare and pension trust funds which cover the local union's members. He was a delegate to the Portland-based Northwest Oregon Labor Council and to the Salem-based Marion-Polk-Yamhill Counties Labor Council. He served on the Oregon AFL-CIO's Executive Board and was a vice president of the state labor federation.

MacKillop also was on the board of directors of the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Company, the non-profit entity that publishes the Northwest Labor Press.

He was inducted into the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council's Labor Hall of Fame in June 2005.

Outside of labor, MacKillop served several terms as chair of the Oregon Wage and Hour Commission.

He also was interested in racehorses. As a business venture in the 1990s, he and two partners owned a string of eight race horses that ran at racetracks in the Pacific Northwest.

Survivors include his wife Mary (Lyons), a former office manager of the Labor Press; four children from a previous marriage, John, Michael, Robyn, and Kara; three stepchildren from Lyon's previous marriage, Casey, Robin, and Jessi; one grandchild and two step-grandchildren.

At MacKillop's request, no service will be held. According to his wife, Mary, he wanted only to be cremated and have his ashes strewn on the horse track — "because they've shit on me all my life," he told her.

Niemi elected president at SEIU Local 49; major contracts ahead

Members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 49 elected Meg Niemi to a three-year term as president in mail ballots counted Aug. 31. Niemi outpolled challenger Patti Harris, a longtime Kaiser Permanente chief steward.



MEG NIEMI

Niemi has been president since May 2009, when she was appointed by the Local 49 Executive Board.

Headquartered in Southeast Portland, Local 49 is a private-sector affiliate of SEIU, with about 9,100 members in Oregon and Southwest Washington — principally health care and building service workers such as janitors and security guards. Local 49 also represents about 900 members of Workers United (formerly UNITE) who work at Pendleton Woolen Mills, a Xerox plant in Wilsonville, and several industrial laundries.

President is Local 49's top elected office. As president, Niemi directs a staff of 25. She'll have her hands full in the coming year, as nearly three quarters of the local's membership will be in contract negotiations in 2012. Relations are strained with many employers, Niemi said.

"I think the economy being tough is an excuse for a lot of employers to feel insecure and try to take that out on low-wage workers," Niemi said.

Many Local 49 members are in low-wage occupations, Niemi said, and are having to fight back against proposals for cuts. Contracts up for renegotiation include the Portland-area master janitorial contract, the national agreement at Kaiser Permanente, and contracts at Good Samaritan hospitals in Corvallis and Albany.

Pendleton Woolen Mills launches made-in-the-USA clothing line

Fabric for the 'Portland Collection' is union-made in Oregon & Washington

Decades after most apparel companies abandoned U.S. manufacturing to chase cheaper labor overseas, Portland-headquartered Pendleton Woolen Mills is launching a new made-in-the-USA clothing line. Its "Portland Collection" debuted Sept. 8 at a fashion show in downtown Director Park.

The clothing won't be union-made, but it will be made of union-made fabric

— from the company's mill in Washougal, Washington. The 141 workers there (and 20 at the company's Pendleton, Oregon, plant) are members of Workers United (formerly UNITE), a division of Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and are represented by Portland-headquartered SEIU Local 49.

Under the union contract that runs through October 2013, wages at the Washougal mill range from \$12.91 to \$15.87 an hour with overtime pay on weekends or after 8 hours in a day. Other benefits include full-family health coverage, a defined-benefit pen-

sion plan, paid vacation, and eight paid holidays a year.

The company is a 140-year-old family-owned business.

Pendleton blankets are union-made in Washougal and Pendleton, but Pendleton Woolen Mills' previous apparel lines have been manufactured overseas. A large tote bag in the new Portland Collection is foreign-made, but all the clothing is U.S. made, said Pendleton spokesperson Linda Parker. Pendleton's production manager did not return Labor Press calls seeking further details.

CWA defends AT&T/T-Mobile merger

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — Communications Workers of America (CWA) is defending the proposed merger of T-Mobile into AT&T after the Justice Department on Aug. 31 formally sued in court to stop it.

The \$39 billion sale would let AT&T take over the wireless provider from its current owner, Germany's Deutsche Telekom, which wants to unload it.

If the deal goes through, T-Mobile would become part of AT&T, which has a neutrality clause its contract with CWA. That would open the way for the union to organize T-Mobile employees without facing the constant opposition it now receives from current

T-Mobile management.

"In today's sinking economy, where millions of Americans are looking for work, DOJ has filed suit to block a merger that will create as many as 96,000 quality jobs," CWA said in a statement. "In a nation where workers' rights are routinely violated, as occurs everyday at T-Mobile, DOJ apparently believes workers should be on their own instead of having a fair choice about union representation. DOJ's action would put good jobs and workers' rights at the bottom of the government's priorities."

The day before, AT&T had said that if it took over T-Mobile, it would also return 5,000 offshored jobs to the U.S.

"In the U.S., where too many Americans, especially in rural areas, don't have access to the tools of Internet technology, the DOJ is looking to block a plan to build out high speed wireless access to 97 percent of the country," CWA added. "Instead of acting to block this merger, our government should be looking to support companies that create, keep and return good jobs to the United States."

Justice Department officials ignored those points when they announced their lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in D.C. They want the U.S. wireless market to stay "vibrant and competitive," and said that if the two firms merge, it wouldn't.

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