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OSEA Lawsuit Seeks Payment Of Step-to-Step Pay Raises

OSEA has filed a lawsuit demanding that a group of classified employees on Oregon State University's oceanography vessel, the Yaquina, be paid salaries conforming to the civil service compensation plan adopted July 1, 1967.

The suit was filed in Marion County Circuit Court.

The employees, who range from a ship's electrician to the master of the vessel, received two-step adjustments in their salary ranges last July. However, they were given only one-step of the increase.

The association claims that they were entitled to step-to-step adjustments.

When the pay plan was adopted, the OSU personnel officer said some departments operating on grant funds would have problems implementing the plan on a step-to-step basis.

The commission at that time approved the plan but stated, according to its minutes, that if some departments had serious problem areas, they should "work with the civil service staff to get them ironed out."

Edward L. Wilson, OSEA staff member who represented the Yaquina's crew in prolonged discussions with university officials and civil service staff members, said there appears to be enough funds available to make the salary adjustments.

He pointed out that civil service rule 31-300 states that "when a pay range for any class is increased, individual salary rates shall be raised to the corresponding step unless the commission adopts an alternate procedure at the time of adjustment."

No formal "alternate procedure" was ever adopted by the commission.

Executive Secretary Thomas C. Enright, OSEA general counsel who is handling the suit, said that it is a mandamus proceeding in which OSU, the Board of Higher Education and the Civil Service Commission will be notified to appear in court and show cause why they should not be required to make the salary adjustments called for in the July 1, 1967 pay plan.

Employees represented in the suit are Rudolph Buda, Robert Fries, Robert Ingersoll, Francis Jennings, Howard Linse and Reuben Loskota.

About $5,400 in salaries for the biennium in involved.

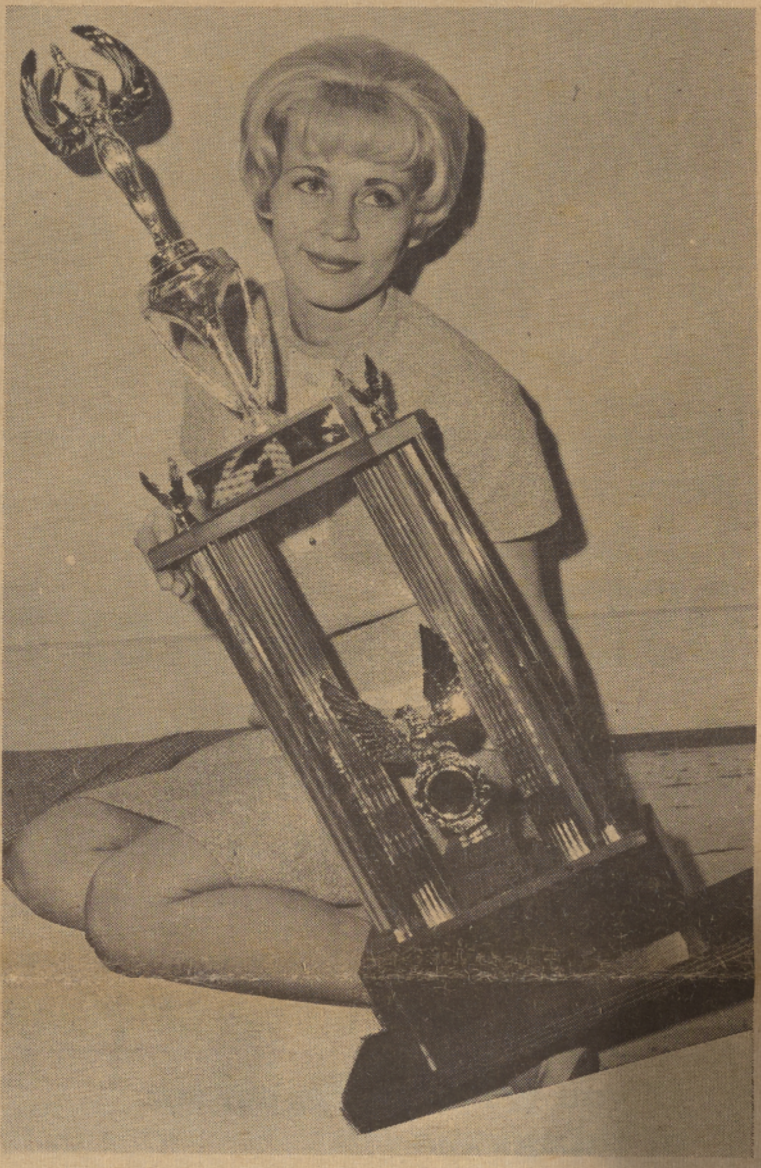
OSEA Elected By 17-3 Vote

Employees of the Water Resources Board in Salem elected OSEA as their collective bargaining representative Dec. 27.

Twenty-one employees were eligible to vote.

The association received 17 votes, and three were cast for no representation.

OSEA was unopposed in the election. It was the 45th election won by the association since collective bargaining started in state government nearly two years ago.



BIG TROPHY Sherry Kinsland holds the king-sized OSEA trophy which will be presented to the "State Employee of the Year" by Governor Tom McCall at a dinner in Salem Jan. 27. The award will become the permanent property of the winner. Incidentally, Sherry doesn't go with the award. (Photo by Bill Pratt)

$1,000 in Back Pay Awarded to Member

An Oregon State University employee was reinstated and granted $1,000 in back pay after being represented by OSEA before the Civil Service Commission in an employment problem.

Mrs. Marie D. Hutchens, a secretary in the Music Department at OSU, was suspended and later dismissed from her job last September. After the action was taken, she contacted OSEA.

Staff member Edward L. Wilson pursued the dismissal through the grievance procedure at the university.

After unsuccessful attempts to resolve the matter at the school, OSEA appealed the action to the Civil Service Commission. Mrs. Hutchens was represented by the association and a private attorney.

OSU, in defending its action, said the employee was suspended and later dismissed because of alleged "misconduct and irresponsibility" toward her job.

J. Kenneth Riley, who represented OSU, alleged Mrs. Hutchens did not return to work after completing a leave of absence.

Her attorney, assisted by Wilson, pointed out that Mrs. Hutchens was out of the state due to circumstances beyond her control and therefore could not return to work at the appointed time.

They said she informed OSU and her department of this fact by telephone and telegram.

"In her contacts with the school, Mrs. Huchens was never informed her job would be in jeopardy if she didn't return to work at a certain date," Wilson said.

After a two-hour hearing, the commission upheld the 10-day suspension without pay, but struck down the dismissal. It ordered the school to reinstate her with full pay retroactive to the date the suspension ended.

News, Bargaining Win AGE Awards

OSEA received two awards recently from the Assembly of Governmental Employees, a federation of public employee organizations throughout the United States.

OSEA's collective bargaining program was honored as the "most effective single activity" of any employee association in the nation.

The AGE also named the OREGON STATE EMPLOYEE NEWS as the outstanding regular publication for 1967.

Seniority Pact Between OSEA, Hospital Signed

An agreement calling for vacant positions at Columbia Park Hospital and Training Center to be filled on the basis of employee seniority has been signed between OSEA and the institution.

The supplemental agreement has been made a part of OSEA's basic collective bargaining contract with the hospital.

Under terms of the document, the hospital will post an employee seniority list by classification in each department of the institution.

A notice of new positions and vacancies to be filled will also be posted.

If two or more employees request the same assignment to a vacant position, seniority shall be used to determine the assignment, providing the applicants meet civil service requirements to do the work.

Whenever a change is made in the working hours or days off within a department, the agreement gives employees the right to request their choice of new shifts and different days off. Rescheduling will be done on the basis of seniority.

If two or more employees request the same vacation time, the senior worker will get his choice.

The agreement was negotiated for the association by Field Representative Donald A. Beninger.

35 State Employees Compete for Award

A new program initiated by OSEA recently to select a "State Employee of the Year" entered its second phase last month when 35 state employees received "Chapter Employee of the Year" certificates signed by Gov. Tom McCall.

The chapter award recipients will now compete for "District Employee of the Year" awards. One will be selected in each of OSEA's nine districts throughout the state.

The program will culminate Jan. 27 when a district award winner will be selected as the "State Employee of the Year."

The recipient will be named that evening at an OSEA-sponsored awards dinner in Salem. Gov. McCall will present the awards.

All of the chapter award recipients were nominated by their fellow employees.

Although sponsored by OSEA chapters, membership in the association was not a requisite to be nominated.

Selection of the district award recipients will be done by committees of local citizens who do not work for the state. District directors will appoint committee members.

The state award winner will also be chosen by a committee of non-state employees.

In discussing the new program with the NEWS, Ralston E. Smith, OSEA's Public Relations Director, said, "We hope this awards program will help to increase public appreciation of the dedicated state employee and at the same time make the employee more aware of the importance of his role as a public servant."

He said the committee planned the program to "honor and recognize publicly the employee whose attitude, ability and dedication to his job and contribution to his community reflect with great favor upon state service as a career and the state employee as a good citizen."