

Laura Unger Biography

A CWA Leader:

Laura Unger has been President of Local 1150, covering New York City, Long Island and New Jersey, since 1987. She is the first President of her Local to be elected for consecutive terms. Prior to that she was Secretary-Treasurer for 3 years, after serving as Shop Steward and Building Steward. In the 15 years she has edited the *Local Spirit*, it has won 5 CWA First Place Newsletter Awards, numerous merit awards and a NY Metro Labor Communications Association First Place Award.

Laura has been a delegate to the last 14 CWA Conventions. Twice, she has successfully introduced a Constitutional Amendment on the floor of the Convention, including the one that required consultation with Bargaining Committees prior to all agreements that amend our contracts. The pages of stipulations stretched end-to-end at the '89 Los Angeles Convention is remembered by everyone who attended that year.

She also introduced the resolution to establish a National Mobilization Committee at the CWA Communications and Technologies Leadership Conference in 1988, and was the District 1 representative on the Committee. Laura was elected to the CWA Operations Bargaining Team for AT&T 1992 in the "marketing seat", and was re-elected in 1995 and 1998 in the "At-large" seat.

A Lifetime of Work Experience:

Laura held several jobs before she was hired as a Communications Technician at AT&T in 1979. Her job as a Customer Service Rep for UPS, handling telephone complaints and orders, gave her an understanding of our Customer Services Jobs. She also worked in manufacturing (and was an IBEW member), assembling dimmer switches and operating a packing machine at the Leviton Electric plant. At the New York Public Library, she got experience as a clerical worker (and a member of AFSCME). As a paste-up artist in several print shops in New York, she participated in an organizing drive with the Typographers Union.

A Respected, Experienced Trade Unionist:

Laura is respected as a speaker on change within the telecommunications industry. At the Telecommunications Informational Exchange Conference in Amsterdam, she gave a presentation on U.S. Telecommunications policy and the impact of deregulation to representatives of 14 different communications unions from around the world. This led to an invitation to present a three-day workshop on restructuring and technological change to representatives of DPG (the Post/Telegraph Union) Operator Services Local in Frankfurt, Germany. She was recently an invited participant in the conference on "Union Building through Worker Participation" sponsored by Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations and SIPTU, the largest Union in Ireland. Laura was Panel member in a discussion of dealing with technological change and industry restructuring at the CWA District One Leadership School.

She has served on several advisory boards, including one on "Woman and Girls in the Technologies," for the New York State Dept. of Labor (1993-1994). The CWA appointed her to participate in advisory conferences of the AFL-CIO's "Committee on Workplace Democracy." She was elected a member of the NY Metro Labor Communications Association Executive Board (1995-1996). A critique of Workplace of the Future that she wrote for the 1995 book Working Smart: A Union Guide to Participation Programs and Reengineering was published by Labor Notes. She has attended many classes and workshops at the George Meany Center (AFL-CIO) and Cornell ILR Extension in New York City.

A Unionist At Home:

Laura graduated from New York University. She has been married to Nick Unger for 26 years. He is an official of UNITE, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, a leader of NYC Jobs With Justice and an activist in the movement for Single Payer Health Insurance. They have two children. Katie, age 22, is the Stage Carpenter at the McCarter Theatre in New Jersey and a Union activist. David, 19, is a freshman at Cornell Univ. School of Industrial and Labor Relations and a leader in the campaign to fight the use of sweatshop labor to produce College "logo" garments. Laura has lived in New Jersey for 14 years.