

'Get Together and Win!'



(Photos by Tessa Berg)

"We will not turn back now!" The Rev. Dr. William Barber has the delegates up and cheering.

In an electrifying address that had Convention delegates on their feet and cheering repeatedly, the Rev. Dr. William Barber on Thursday underscored a message of coalition building and solidarity with references pulled from the civil rights and labor movements, as well as Scripture.

"We are all trade unionists. We are all civil rights activists. And it's about time for all of us to get together and organize America like never before! It's time to say to America, 'We will not turn back now!'" he declared.

The Rev. Dr. Barber, pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina, and president of the North Carolina NAACP, is the architect of the Moral Mondays-Forward Together movement that began in North Carolina and is spreading across the nation. He charged that political extremists, backed by corporate billionaires like the Koch brothers, are pushing "an immoral agenda" that includes denying rights to workers, immigrants, women, African Americans, the LGBTQ community and others.

"And all these agendas intersect because all the same people fighting labor rights are fighting civil rights. So if they are together, by God, we ought to get together and fight them back!"

Working with allies is a winning strategy, President Saunders told delegates, pointing to the immense challenges we face. "The people who are trying to take out our union have a lot of money. That's where they get their power," he said. "But for workers like us, we get our power through solidarity. Solidarity with our union sisters and brothers, but also with a broad coalition of workers, retirees, students, clergy, community groups and even business owners who believe every worker deserves respect and dignity."

The power of alliances with community organizations was demonstrated in an address by Barb Kalbach, board president of the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement. Her fight with corporate-backed forces began with a personal fight to preserve her fourth-generation family farmer way of life.

But her fight is also AFSCME's fight, she said. "What's happening in farms is happening to you, too," she said. It's a "deliberate plan" by corporations and billionaires to "enhance their power in order to

generate more profits," she said. Fighting back "will take all of us pulling together, but when we're done, family farms will then be passed to a new generation," and we will have an economy "that values all of our public-sector workers."

Paul Moist, president of our sister union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), offered his union's support for AFSCME Michigan Council 25 in its fight against privatization of water services. He and members of his union will march over the Ambassador Bridge that connects Detroit and Canada next week.

The march is to show solidarity with AFSCME in opposing Detroit's decision to turn off the taps to thousands for failure to pay their bills, and also to oppose privatization of the city's public service jobs and to support the municipal retirees, who are faced with cuts to their benefits because of the city's bankruptcy.

Among the successful member and ally campaigns showcased was one launched two years ago by New York's Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/



The Rev. Dr. William Barber

AFSCME Local 1000, which joined forces with New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness, a statewide coalition of more than 130 community and consumer-based faith, labor, environmental, human services and other groups, to stop a planned downsizing of the State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn (SUNY).

"Two years ago, mismanagement and budget cuts led the state to question our hospital's mission and

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HIGHLIGHTS

CHILD CARE

7 a.m. – 1 hour after session, McCormick Place North, Level One, Rooms N126 – N129

CONSTITUENCY GROUP CAUCUSES

7:30 – 9 a.m., McCormick Place, North and South

Conservatives in AFSCME Room N137

Green Caucus Room N135

Progressives in AFSCME Room N230

Veterans Caucus Room S401 D

LUGGAGE HOLD

8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., McCormick Place North, Level One, Room N140

BOOTHS

8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. McCormick Place North, Level Three, Hall B,

Information and PEOPLE Booths only

CLOSING GENERAL SESSION

9:30 a.m., McCormick Place North, Level Three, Hall B

Speaker: Sister Simone Campbell

AFSCME IEB MEETING

(at conclusion of Convention) McCormick Place North, Level Four, Room N426

RESOLUTIONS

Delegates passed 29 resolutions on Thursday, including Women's Economic Agenda (59); Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Signing of the Civil Rights Act (18); Immigration Reform (80); Health Care Equity for All (7); Safe Staffing Levels in Health Care Settings (47); Organizing Law Enforcement Workers (83); Promoting Early Childhood Education Throughout the Nation (85); Building a Broader Movement of Working People (29); The Burden of Student Debt (8); The Pitfalls of a Privatized Safety Net (14); Opposing Outsourcing in Corrections (25); In Defense of Public Education (36); and UNCF and the Koch Brothers (102).



Melvin Hughes Elected to Executive Board

Members on Thursday elected Melvin Hughes as International Vice President representing the Southwestern Legislative District. Hughes won the seat with 12,349 votes. He is president and a founding member of the Houston Organization of Public Employees (HOPE)/AFSCME Local 123.



As president of HOPE, Hughes negotiated two labor agreements and four across-the-board raises for City of Houston employees. He oversaw a major campaign which reduced health care costs for all city employees, and he was part of the successful push to raise the city's base wage. Hughes works in the Department of Public Works and Engineering in Houston, and has worked for the city for 20 years. He will finish out the unexpired term of outgoing IVP Greg Powell.

(Photo by Tessa Berg)

Hot Off the Presses: Wellness Booth Results!

Nurses from AFSCME United Nurses of America (UNA) took a total of 1,064 blood pressures at the Wellness Booth. There were 631 normal screenings (almost 60 percent), 347 elevated screenings (32 percent) and 86 significantly elevated (aka "high") screenings (8 percent).

Last Chance: Donate Your Extra Toiletries!

Don't forget, before you pack up, drop off your extra toiletries at the Information Booth. They will go to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) to help the less fortunate.

Cyber Dome Winner

The winner of Thursday's Cyber Dome raffle is **Christina Ferris, Local 2234 (Pennsylvania Council 13).**



(Photo by Khalid Najji-Allah)

Maricruz Manzanarez, executive board member of Local 3299 in California, is embraced by Sec.-Treas. Reyes after addressing the delegates on immigration reform.



(Photo by Tessa Berg)

Tashia Hankerson-Smith of Local 1488 (Washington Council 28) tells her story at the Women's World Café on Thursday.



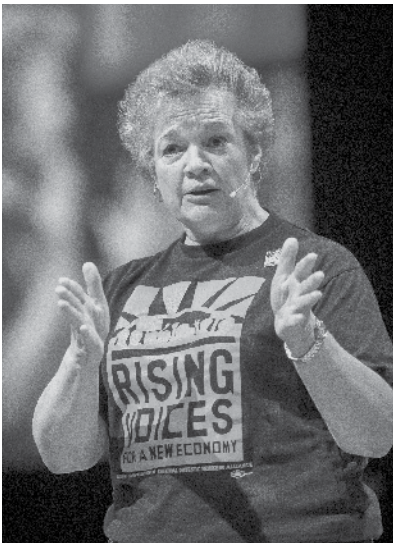
(Photo by Tessa Berg)

Walt Whitman's Soul Children of Chicago get the crowd dancing in the aisles with "Happy," opening Thursday's session.



(Photo by Tessa Berg)

The Blues Brothers warm up the crowd for the AFSCME's Got Talent competition Thursday. Winners of the event will be announced at the Convention today.



(Photo by Tessa Berg)

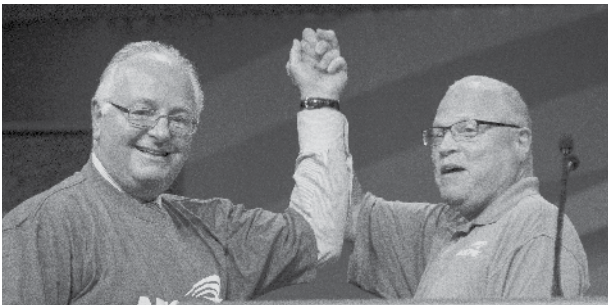
Barb Kalbach of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement talks about the power of working in coalition.

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explore outsourcing its services," said CSEA Region 2 Pres. Lester Crockett. "For us, this wasn't just an attack on our jobs; it was an attack on patient care, our community and a proud New York institution." Together, CSEA and New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness put up a fight that made the difference. Crockett said hospital staff joined patients and preachers to make public demonstrations to save the institution. The state backed down and "threats of cuts, outsourcing and closings stopped," Crockett said. Describing a successful campaign to raise the minimum wage in Minnesota, Dennis Frasier, a member of Council 5's executive board, was joined by Kris Jacobs, executive director of the Jobs Now Coalition. Working together, they were able to get lawmakers to raise the state's minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour by 2016.

AFSCME's efforts to create a Medical Interpreters program in California were also highlighted during the program. Carlos Garcia, an interpreter and a member of UDW Homecare Providers/AFSCME Local 3930 explained how the union expanded its reach with the help of allies. "To ensure quality of care and communication

between health care providers and patients, the members joined forces with more than 40 organizations statewide including the Korean American Senior Association of San Diego County," Garcia said. Delegates approved 29 resolutions (see box, Page 1), including support for comprehensive immigration reform and the Dream Act, which would provide an avenue for undocumented immigrants to attend college. Maricruz Manzanarez, an executive board member of Local 3299 in California, shared her family's story of struggle to stay together and achieve their American Dream. "No matter your politics; no matter your birthplace; we are all human," she said. "And the human dignities of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness have no boundaries."



(Photo by Tessa Berg)

CUPE Pres. Paul Moist and President Saunders show solidarity.