

# DPE President's Report

## June 1, 2015 – May 31, 2016

DPE launched a number of projects this year to assist affiliate organizing, continued its efforts to look at the future of work, and kicked off 2016 with a new logo and improved communication tools, including a new brochure and folder inserts that detail DPE's work. DPE's work this year helped its affiliates understand how the workforce and the labor movement has changed and how their unions can best be positioned to organize new members. DPE's organizing materials and sector-specific reports come at a time when professionals are expanding their foothold within the labor movement. In 2015, over 300,000 new professionals joined the labor movement, the only area of growth for labor.



At its core, DPE is a forum for its affiliates to collaborate, connect, and strategize. To that end, DPE hosted an Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries meeting, 4As meetings, and worked with the leadership of affiliates to make connections and support their work. DPE also made connections with international allies to gain perspective on the issues faced by union professionals abroad.

Sadly, DPE and its affiliates lost four labor leaders this year whose contributions to their professions and their unions will be greatly missed.

This report details DPE activities under these headings:

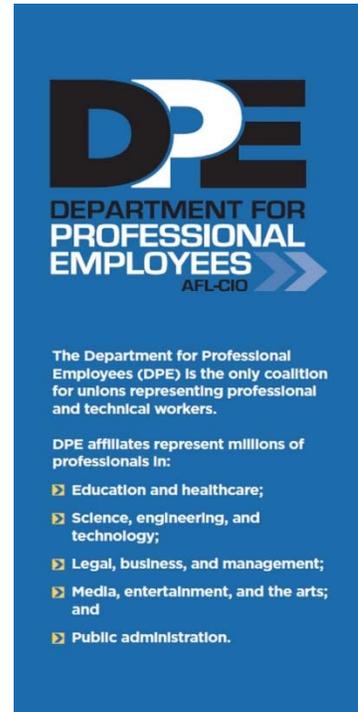
- » **New DPE Communication Tools**
- » **Support for Affiliate Organizing**
- » **DPE Leads on the Future of Work**
- » **Research and Publications**
- » **DPE Supports Affiliates**
- » **Public Policy and Legislation**
- » **Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries (AEMI)**
- » **Associated Actors and Artistes of America (4As)**
- » **Outreach to Professional Associations**
- » **DPE Website and Social Media**
- » **International Outreach**
- » **In Memoriam**

## NEW DPE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

In addition to its new logo above, DPE kicked off 2016 with two new communication tools, a brochure and folder inserts. The brochure communicates the growing importance of professionals in the labor movement and the value of DPE and its affiliates to the changing face of the labor movement. The tri-fold brochure details DPE's mission, its work, the value of affiliate collaboration, and lists DPE leadership and the 22 DPE affiliates.

DPE also created stacked folder inserts that include five pages describing DPE's work in more detail. Included are pages that describe: DPE's work; why professionals matter; DPE publications; DPE affiliates and leadership; and the DPE mission. The folder inserts are useful when meeting with allies and the public who may be unfamiliar with DPE's mission and work and the importance of professionals to the labor movement.

DPE brochures and folder inserts are available for use by DPE affiliates.



## SUPPORT FOR AFFILIATE ORGANIZING

DPE launched several projects this year to support affiliate organizing and help affiliates develop future organizing strategies. First, the *DPE Guide to Organizing Professionals* was rewritten. A companion PowerPoint presentation was also created. Second, DPE released two reports this year that detail the workforce changes and organizing opportunities in the utility industry and healthcare industry. DPE devised and created these reports, which are only available for affiliates, to identify past and future industry trends that affect union membership. Each report utilizes workforce and union membership data to identify tangible future organizing opportunities for affiliates.

### »» **Updated *Guide to Organizing Professionals***

In May, DPE published a new version of its *Guide to Organizing Professionals*. DPE utilized attitudinal surveys of professionals as well as academic research to develop the recommendations in the guide. The new guide includes issue and campaign strategies, organizing obstacles, and recommendations for outreach to professionals.

The *Guide to Organizing Professionals* advises unions and their organizers to utilize tangible examples of how their unions can: give professionals a voice in decisions; enhance the quality of service; address attacks on fairness; and advocate for professions. Demonstrating a

union's effectiveness with examples from previously negotiated contracts or political and policy victories for the same or other professions will clearly demonstrate to professionals why collective action is more effective than going it alone.

The guide also outlines the issue and campaign strategies that can help win support from professionals. The issue strategy section focuses on developing messages that utilize the workplace issues important to professionals. The campaign strategy section focuses on the tactics necessary to get the message out and build and maintain solidarity.

The guide directly addresses the obstacles unions may face in organizing professionals. Many of these obstacles can be overcome if the union can demonstrate that it is an effective organization that can deliver for its members.

Finally, the guide offers several suggestions for how unions can pro-actively reach out to professionals and raise their union's profile. The outreach suggestions would be particularly helpful to unions that are seeking to organize a specific profession.

A PowerPoint presentation has been created as a companion to the *Guide to Organizing Professionals*. DPE staff is available to make the PowerPoint presentation to the staff, leadership, and membership of DPE affiliates.



### **»» The Utility Industry: Workforce Changes and Organizing Opportunities**

In April, DPE published its report on the utility industry. Low demand for power and water, the prevalence of natural gas, and an increased focus on green energy is remaking the utility industry. DPE's report provides meaningful insight into the utility industry workforce from 2003 to 2015, including how union membership, occupation employment, demographics, and geographic distribution changed. The report also explored changes that impacted the utility industry, including price and revenue volatility, increased government regulation, and mergers and acquisitions and assessed the impact these industry changes had on the utility industry workforce and union members.

In its analysis of workforce, industry, and union membership changes, the report identified several areas where organizing potential may exist. The report also provided recommendations for strategic planning for those unions with membership in the utility industry or for those unions interested in pursuing organizing opportunities.

The report was distributed to DPE affiliates with membership in the utility industry. A PowerPoint presentation is available as a companion to the report and focuses on the significant findings and recommendations.

## » Professionals in the Healthcare Industry: 1990 – 2015

In September, DPE distributed its report on workforce changes and organizing opportunities in the healthcare industry. The report explored healthcare industry growth from 1990 to 2015. Three sub-industries within the healthcare industry were analyzed, including ambulatory healthcare services, hospitals, and nursing and residential care facilities. Growth, geographic employment changes, occupational employment, demographics, education attainment, public and private-sector employment, and union membership changes were analyzed.

The report looked at the policy and industry changes that have driven growth in sub-industries and explored the employment changes that can be expected in the future. Suggestions for action by unions seeking to organize professionals in the healthcare industry concludes the report.

Kelly Trautner, Director of AFT Nurses and Healthcare Professionals shared the report with AFT Healthcare organizers at a training in December.

## DPE LEADS ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

DPE continues to play an active part in guiding the discussion on the future of work for professionals so that its affiliates know how work is changing and can position their unions to be successful in the future. To this end, DPE held the second part of its ongoing series on the “Changing Working Environment for Professional and Technical Workers.” DPE also contributed to the AFL-CIO task force on the on-demand economy and advocated for the revival of the contingent worker survey.

## » DPE Holds Part II of “The Changing Working Environment for Professional and Technical Workers”

In November, DPE hosted part II of the series that brings together DPE affiliates and experts to look at how work is changing for professionals and how affiliates can represent jobs that result from new work processes and changing technologies. Attending were 28 representatives from seven DPE affiliates, including Actors' Equity Association, the American Federation of Government Employees, the American Federation of Musicians, the American Federation of Teachers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, SAG-AFTRA, and the United Steelworkers of America.

American Constitution Society President Caroline Fredrickson delivered the keynote speech. Fredrickson spoke to the harm caused to workers by the sharing economy. Fredrickson noted that people died fighting for Title VII yet the protections of the Civil Rights Act do not apply to workers who are not employees.

University of Texas, Austin, Professor Diane E. Bailey delivered a sobering presentation on how high-skilled work is threatened by the increase in computing power and machine learning. MIT Professor Thomas Kochar tackled the possibility of large-scale job losses in higher education from Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) by demonstrating a path for MOOCs to add value to the work already being done in the classroom.

George Washington University Associate Professor Patricia Pittman described how the delivery of healthcare is changing along with the skills necessary for workers. Associate Program Director for the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions Josh Rutkoff and Executive Vice President Denise Duncan from the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP) also spoke on the topic of how healthcare is changing. Since a labor-management partnership was ratified by the coalition unions in 1997, the coalition has been able to represent new work and train workers in new skills needed to do the work. In addition to the UNAC/UHCP and other unions, the coalition includes DPE affiliates: AFT, IFPTE, OPEIU, and USW.

### **On-Demand Economy**

DPE has long tracked the issues surrounding the “on-demand economy” which has its roots in the misclassification of workers, contingent employment, and temporary workers. DPE’s 2014 report on professionals in the contingent workforce led to its participation in the AFL-CIO On-Demand Task Force. The work of the task force culminated in the publication of the AFL-CIO Principles on the On-Demand Economy. DPE’s participation helped to ensure that the conversation was not solely focused on ride-sharing apps like Uber and Lyft.

### **BLS Contingent Worker Survey**

DPE has long championed the revival of the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ (BLS) contingent worker survey. DPE raised the issue with the BLS Commissioner in the summer of 2015 at a meeting of union researchers and economists and worked with the AFL-CIO to highlight the need to revive the survey. The survey was conducted between 1995 and 2005 until it was defunded by Congress. U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez announced in January that the contingent worker survey would be reinstated and expected release of new data in May 2017.

The contingent workforce has changed since the survey was discontinued. The survey will collect information about contingent workers’ occupation and industry employment; pay and benefits; race and ethnicity; education attainment; age and gender; and work preferences.

## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

DPE research continues to demonstrate how critical professionals are to the future of the workforce and the labor movement. DPE publications highlight the benefits of union membership for professional and technical workers and educate organizers on the nuance and demands of professional and technical occupations.

In addition to the new organizing guide, utility industry report, and healthcare industry report mentioned above, DPE updated seven of its fact sheets and reports, including:

- Safe-Staffing Ratios: Benefiting Nurses and Patients
- Recourse for Employees Misclassified as Independent Contractors
- Intellectual Property Theft: A Threat to U.S. Workers, Industries, and Our Economy
- Nursing: A Profile of the Profession
- Professional Women: A Gendered Look at Occupational Obstacles and Opportunities
- The Union Difference for Working Families
- Library Workers: Facts & Figures

## DPE SUPPORTS AFFILIATES

DPE worked throughout the year to support the work of its affiliates. DPE's work is done in response to affiliate requests or at DPE's initiation. Below are some of the projects and activities that DPE undertook on behalf of affiliates this year.

### »» **American Federation of Teachers**

DPE contributed to the AFT task force on professionalism utilizing its knowledge of diverse professions and its projects exploring the future of work. The task force is led by AFT Executive Vice President and DPE Treasurer Mary Cathryn Ricker. The task force is charged with “looking at what it means to be treated as a professional in any workplace; barriers to professional treatment in the workplace and in society; and strategies for eliminating those barriers to make it easier to attract and retain qualified employees, gain greater respect for our work, elevate the dignity of all workers and create professional work environments.” The work of the task force will result in a resolution for the 2016 AFT convention.



» **International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers**

In April, DPE hosted leaders and activists from the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001 to discuss the prospects for high-skilled visa reform in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. Ron Hira, Associate Professor at Howard University joined the meeting to lend his insights into visa reform proposals that have been introduced this session.

SPEEA is a professional aerospace labor union representing engineers, technical workers, pilots, and other professionals in the aerospace industry.



» **Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union**

DPE has long encouraged its affiliates to reach out to professionals through their professional association. In May, DPE worked with RWDSU to staff a booth at the New Jersey Library Association conference. DPE worked with RWDSU and Local 108 leadership in New Jersey to develop messaging for conference attendees, including the benefits of membership in Local 108 and the expertise of Local 108 in its representation of librarians and library workers in New Jersey.



» **Utility Workers Union of America**

In conjunction with the publication of the new DPE report, *The Utility Industry: Workforce Changes and Organizing Opportunities*, I made a presentation to the Utility Workers Union of America Executive Board on April 14<sup>th</sup>. My remarks focused on the significant findings and detailed the organizing opportunities that were identified in the report.



DPE also worked with the UWUA to produce an infrastructure analysis in November that chronicled infrastructure failures in the U.S. in an effort to shed light on the critical need for investment to repair our nation's infrastructure.

**PUBLIC POLICY AND LEGISLATION**

DPE continued to advance the interests of professional and technical workers through its public policy and legislative advocacy efforts. Recent issues covered for the professional and technical workforce included immigration, overtime rules, and equal pay. DPE attends the weekly AFL-CIO legislative meeting to monitor legislation and policy affecting professional and technical workers.

## »» **Immigration**

DPE continues to work with its affiliates to educate members of Congress and the public about needed high-skilled immigration reforms. This year we worked on issues surrounding the H-1B and L-1 visas, O and P visas, and the Optional Practical Training program. The prospect for any comprehensive immigration reform proposals making their way through Congress remained bleak this year. However, the Obama Administration sought expansions of temporary worker programs through agency action.

### »» *H-1B and L-1 Visas for Specialty Occupations*

Members of Congress introduced numerous bills this year that would reform as well as expand visa programs. Proponents and opponents of the H-1B and L-1 visas do not fall neatly within a predictable ideological spectrum. Legislation has been sponsored in this Congress by Democrats and Republicans on both sides of the H-1B visa debate.

DPE played an important, but largely defensive role this year on H-1B and L-1 visa reform proposals due to the unlikelihood that any immigration bill would make it through Congress and to the President's desk. DPE helped affiliates and the AFL-CIO assess the impact of proposed H-1B and L-1 visa bills and urged union members to educate their members of Congress about the impacts of H-1B and L-1 visas.

Most H-1B and L-1 visas are used to employ workers in computer-related occupations, which is evidenced by the high-profile displacement of tech workers at some of America's leading companies. Layoffs at Walt Disney World, Southern California Edison, Mass Mutual, and others shined a light on what we have known about the misuse of temporary guest worker visas for over a decade. While the H-1B visa is rife with abuses, Congress has been unable to reach consensus on reforms even though most agree the program is broken and hurts both domestic and foreign workers.

In assessing support or opposition for an H-1B and L-1 visa reform proposal, DPE stands by the principles outlined in the Ray Marshall Plan. Those principles were incorporated into the labor movement's framework for comprehensive immigration reform, which was adopted by the AFL-CIO and Change to Win.

### »» *O and P Visas for Entertainment and Sports Occupations*

DPE worked with its arts and entertainment affiliates this year to seek a dialog with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to clarify the USCIS position on the role of union consultation in the visa approval process as well as other issues. To that end, DPE worked with USCIS to arrange a telephone engagement between USCIS and entertainment unions in May. Numerous DPE affiliates were on the call. I will be working with affiliates on how we move the conversation on O and P visas forward, including communicating our concerns to the next administration.

### *Optional Practical Training Program*

In November, DPE provided analysis for affiliates and the AFL-CIO on a proposed rule by the Department of Homeland Security that would expand the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program for international students who graduate from a U.S. university with a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree. The OPT program allows F-1 visa students to work in the U.S. for one year after graduation. F-1 students with a STEM degree, under the adopted rule, are allowed to work for another two years after their first year of OPT expires.

OPT employers are not required to test the labor market and realize a cost savings since foreign students are exempt from Social Security and Medicare taxes. DPE opposition to the proposed rule rests on the urgent need to reform all of our guest worker programs for the protection of both domestic and foreign workers. The rule went into effect in May.

### **Economic Policy**

The DPE assisted the AFL-CIO with its September comments to the Department of Labor (DOL) proposed rule on overtime pay. Specifically, DPE lent its expertise on the question of whether additional computer-related occupations should be added to the list of occupations that DOL uses to administer white collar exemptions. Using occupation examples to administer DOL regulations is ill advised because it tends to put too much weight on job titles as opposed to job duties. Computer-related occupations, in particular, are in a rapidly changing industry where jobs change and job titles become quickly outdated, making it easier for employers to treat workers who should be entitled to overtime as exempt. The final rule was released in May and DOL decided against adding new job title examples.

### **Women's Rights**

In January, I addressed an assembled group of 50 at “Change the Rules: Working Women’s Strategy Session,” to urge unions to take action on issues affecting women, including controlling skyrocketing healthcare costs, student loan debt, and equal pay and pay equity. My remarks addressed, in part, how unions can take the results of the AFL-CIO National Survey of Working Women as a call to action to advance the interests of union women.

## **ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES (AEMI)**

Eleven DPE affiliates make up the AEMI, which meets about intellectual property protections, treaties, trade agreements, work visas, and other issues important to the arts. The Directors Guild of America also participates as they are an ally on legislative and policy issues.

The AEMI met in October to discuss O and P work visas for professionals in arts and entertainment industries. DPE reported on policy and legislative proposals affecting the industry as well as new DPE publications and programs relevant to the AEMI.

Jobs with Justice (JWJ) was invited to the AEMI meeting by DPE to present on the development of new member orientation programs. JWJ had been researching the use of new member orientation programs to build strong, powerful unions. JWJ was interested in working with AEMI affiliates due to the unique path to membership for arts and entertainment union members. Following the October meeting, JWJ surveyed and interviewed a number of AEMI members. The findings and recommended best practices for new member orientation for arts and entertainment unions will be presented at the June AEMI meeting.

### **ASSOCIATED ACTORS AND ARTISTES OF AMERICA (4AS)**

DPE continued to provide limited administrative functions for the 4As as well as facilitate their meetings. At its convention in December, 4As delegates elected SAG-AFTRA Executive Vice President Gabrielle Carteris as President. I was elected Executive Secretary.

### **OUTREACH TO PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

An important element of the DPE mission is “building alliances with professional associations and societies promoting the interests of professional and technical workers.” The work of DPE in the last 12 months continued to honor that emphasis through its work with the American Library Association (ALA).

DPE works directly with ALA and its companion organization, the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA). Since 2005, DPE has also co-chaired the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee. Labor members of the committee include Jannie Cobb; Justin Crossfox, AFT; Lisa Lum Jorgensen, RWDSU; and Jessica Storrs, AFSCME. Library workers are represented by several DPE affiliates, including AFGE, AFT, IFPTE, IAM, OPEIU, RWDSU, and USW.



#### **» American Library Association 2015 Annual Meeting**

Over 20,000 library professionals met in San Francisco, CA from June 25 – 30, 2015, for the American Library Association Annual Conference and Exhibition. DPE made several contributions.

The Labor Committee developed and organized a program for the annual conference. The program, “Advocating for a Library Future,” featured speakers from AFT and IFPTE, including Miki Goral, Secretary Treasurer at University Council-AFT; Axel Borg, Vice President for Legislation at University Council-AFT; Andrea Prebys-Williams, Coordinator for Special Projects and Administration at IFPTE Local 21; and Alex Tonisson, Field Services Director at IFPTE Local 21. The program drew 168 conference attendees.



The Labor Committee’s booth in the exposition hall featured labor materials, including DPE fact sheets, pro-labor badge ribbons, resource guides, and pens provided by RWDSU Local 108.

The 2015 John Sessions Memorial Award, named in honor of a former AFL-CIO Education Director and co-chair of the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee, was presented to the Calcasieu Parish Library System for its Southwest Louisiana (SWLA) Workforce Resource Guide. This honor, presented annually by the Reference and User Services Association and supported by a donation from DPE, recognizes a library or library system that made a significant effort to work with the labor community and brought recognition to the contribution of the labor movement to the development of the United States.

### »» **American Library Association 2016 Midwinter Meeting**

At the January ALA midwinter meeting, the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee met to finalize its program and activities for the 2016 ALA Annual meeting to be held in Orlando, Florida June 23 – 28, 2016. The program, “Building Stronger Libraries through Collective Action,” will feature librarians and a representative from the National Labor Relations Board, Region 12 to talk about how to build strong libraries and exercise your rights in the workplace.

## **DPE WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Traffic on the DPE website continued to exceed expectations, DPE replaced NewsLine with a blog, and added followers on its Facebook and Twitter accounts. The DPE website, blog, and Facebook and Twitter accounts allow DPE to highlight the work of DPE and its affiliates.

### »» **DPE Website Traffic**

From June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016, the DPE website had 244,000 unique pageviews, a 45 percent increase over last year. Last year the DPE website had just over 167,000 unique pageviews. Unique pageviews is the number of times a specific page is viewed during one visit (discounting repeat views by the same visitor during the same session).

- Fact sheets and reports drew the most visitors to the site this year, 145,700. DPE's *U.S. Health Care System: An International Perspective* fact sheet had the highest number of unique pageviews with 41,700 for the year. Fact sheets on safe-staffing ratios, pharmacists, and misclassification of employees as independent contractors also had a significant number of unique pageviews (between 10,100 and 23,600 for the year).
- DPE's "professionals in the workplace" pages, which provide employment, demographic, and union information for 12 different occupation categories garnered 38,500 unique pageviews. The majority of those pageviews, 27,900, were for the *Women in the Professional Workforce* page.
- Webpages on collective bargaining and organizing had 20,700 unique pageviews for the year. Most of those pageviews, 9,900, were for the report *The Benefits of Collective Bargaining for Professionals*, and the *I'm a Professional. What Can a Union Do for Me?* page, which had 9,300 unique pageviews for the year.

On average, visitors spent a significant amount of time viewing fact sheets, reports, and professionals in the workplace pages. Each visitor spent an average of 4 minutes and 6 seconds on the DPE website. The page with the most unique pageviews, *U.S. Health Care System: An International Perspective*, was viewed for an average of 6 minutes and 49 seconds. *Women in the Professional Workforce*, was viewed for an average of 5 minutes and 23 seconds.



## » DPE Blog

DPE launched the DPE blog in December. DPE transitioned its NewsLine publication to a blog located on the DPE website at <http://dpeaflcio.org/blog>. The blog allows DPE to post affiliate news, DPE activities, and professional and technical worker news as it happens. Updates on blog entries are sent to DPE's list of 400 subscribers every two months. Previously, these subscribers were emailed copies of NewsLine.

## » DPE Facebook and Twitter Accounts

DPE can be found on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/dpeaflcio/> where it has 44 likes and Twitter @dpeaflcio. The Twitter account had 229 followers as of May 31<sup>st</sup>, up from 141 last year.

## INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

In March, DPE met with three representatives of the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco). Saco has 22 affiliates which, together represent 650,000 union members. The 22 affiliates represent employees, students, researchers, self-employed, and retired professionals who are economists, lawyers, physiotherapists, graduate engineers, doctors, teachers, and many other professions.



SACO representatives were visiting the United States on a grant to study how organizations and companies work with affiliates on recruitment and membership representation. The DPE and Saco discussed a number of common issues, including, why professionals join unions; a comparison of labor laws and rights in both countries; ways in which DPE supports its affiliates; and what challenges and opportunities unions face in organizing and representing professionals.

While visiting Washington, DC, Saco also held meetings with DPE affiliates AFT and IFPTE.

In May, as a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council Committee on Women Workers, I had the opportunity to sit down with Catelene Passchier, Vice President of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV). Passchier is a champion for working women and an expert on work-family policy. Passchier spoke of the urgent need for affordable child care options for Dutch workers, which is an issue the U.S. is also grappling with.



FNV represents 1.1 million members in a mix of manual and non-manual jobs. About 25 percent of Dutch workers are union members.

## IN MEMORIAM

This past year saw the passing of four labor leaders who were active in DPE and represented their respective unions with great distinction – Dr. Emelise Aleandri, Theodore Bikel, Alan S. Gordon, and Ken Howard.

**Dr. Emelise Aleandri.** Dr. Aleandri was a member of AGVA, AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and GIAA. Dr. Aleandri was an AGVA Regional Vice President and a 4A delegate. Dr. Aleandri was an actress, singer, author, teacher, and producer.

**Theodore Bikel.** Bickel was a member of AEA, AFM, AGVA, and SAG-AFTRA. He had been the 4As president since 1988. From 1973 – 1982, he was president of Actors' Equity. Bickel's union activism and work on social justice issues were just as prominent as his career in the arts.

**Alan S. Gordon.** Gordon was National Executive Director of AGMA. Prior to that, he worked for the DGA. Gordon was a DPE vice president and 4As delegate. Gordon most recently led the contentious bargaining on behalf of AGMA at the New York Metropolitan Opera.

**Ken Howard.** Howard was a member of SAG-AFTRA and AEA. Howard was the first elected president of SAG-AFTRA. Prior to that, he was president of SAG. Howard was a DPE vice president and 4As delegate. As SAG president, Howard helped steer the union to a merger with AFTRA and had been instrumental in seeing SAG-AFTRA successfully navigate the merging of the unions and the bargaining of many contracts as one union.