



HISTORY OF LABORERS' LOCAL 332

An affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), Local 332 was chartered on November 1, 1932.

Harry Murray was the founder and first Business Manager of Local 332 from 1929 to 1961. Local 332 was originally called the HOD Carriers Builders & Common Laborers' Union #332. Harry Murray was a courageous and fearless leader. He was able to organize Local 332 during the heart of the depression and during a time when jobs for black people were scarce. In 1950, 332 built its first union hall at 1350 Ridge Avenue. (On the site of the current Harry Murray Park).

Due to failing health, Mr. Murray resigned in 1961 and was succeeded by William Foster, who remained Business Manager from 1961 to 1967 when he lost an election to Reginald Lopes. Reginald Lopes was Business Manager from 1967 to November 7, 1968 when LIUNA put Local 332 under trusteeship. The local remained under trusteeship until June 9, 1970. During this time LIUNA appointed a new Business Manager, Kenneth Odom who resigned from office in 1969. Odom was succeeded by Leroy Burroughs (from 1969 to 1972). In 1972, Burroughs left to become the Business Manager of the Laborers' District Council. Burroughs was followed by Harry Williams who was Business Manager from 1972 to 1978. On August 1, 1978 Sam Staten, Sr. became Business Manager and served in that capacity until 2008.

In 1980, Local #332 purchased a more spacious building and moved its hall to 1310 Wallace Street, which is its current home. Soon the hall became a busy place for Local and community activities. It truly became "the member's hall".

To enhance the member's skills, Staten, Sr. along with James Harper, Business Manager of Local 413 took the lead in having the District Council build a Laborers' Educational and Training Center, in 1984, in Exton, PA. They knew that improving the skills of the laborer gave the member additional pride in himself, but it also provided a better quality worker for the contractor.

Staten also took the lead in establishing the Laborers' Apprenticeship Program and the Laborers' Annuity Plan.

At Local 332, a Sergeant of Arms Committee was established to provide scholarships for the children of member's and an Emergency Relief Committee was set-up to provide financial assistance to members who encountered disastrous experiences such as fires, evictions or foreclosures. Funds for these committees came from fund raising activities organized and operated by the members.

On October 3, 1987, Local 332's Friends of Labor Committee held a dinner honoring Samuel Staten, Sr. for his leadership. At the dinner, Sam was presented with \$25,000 by his members.

Sam awarded the \$25,000 to (4) charitable organizations that same night. From that generous act, evolved the Annual Friends of Labor Charity Dinner, from which Laborers' Local 332 members have raised and given more than \$1.2 million to local non-profit organizations that provide services to the needy. In addition to the Friends of Labor Dinner, Sam has raised and allowed his good name to be used to raise millions more for charity.

In 1991, the Local 332 Retiree Council was established, the first in the region. This not only provided an opportunity for the retirees to reunite with old friends and the Local, but it allowed retirees to participate with the current members and to provide history and guidance at the local's orientations for new members.

Sam Staten, Sr. brought unity and a new sense of pride to Local 332. He moved Local 332 beyond the walls of the union hall and embraced the larger community getting involved. Local 332 became a major player in national, regional and local labor issues. Staten was able to convince the members to contribute thousands of hours of "free" labor to non-profit organizations, churches, synagogues and housing groups.

Under the leadership of Sam Staten Sr., Local 332 changed the face and design of politics in Philadelphia. Beginning in 1983, with the campaign of W. Wilson Goode for the Mayor of Philadelphia, Local 332 made a major incursion into elective politics. The local provided Goode almost one hundred cars every Saturday during the campaign for motorcades, hung thousands of Goode's posters and provided 500 members as Election-day (E-day) street workers in the primary and 700 in the General Election.

From that point, political pundit and candidates knew 332 was a force to be aligned with. The demand for poster hanging, endorsements, and E-day workers grew. In 1999, for John Street, a Laborer and later 332 member's first run for mayor, at Sam's request, more than 900 members, literally declared "a holiday", taking a day from work to serve as E-day workers for John Street.

In 1995, Local 332 joined with the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) and the Housing Association of Delaware Valley to establish the Philadelphia Revitalization and Education Program (PREP), a program to provide training to public housing tenants with an opportunity to enter the Local 332.

When Philadelphia decided to build two new sports stadiums (Phillies and Eagles) in 1998, Philadelphia's State Black Elected Officials joined together to oppose the use of State funds for the project. Their opposition was due to the fact that they had supported several major projects previously completed in Philadelphia and African-Americans, they felt, had been systematically excluded by the Building and Construction Trades.

The then Governor Tom Ridge, called upon Samuel Staten, Sr., for assistance. A series of meetings were hosted by Samuel Staten, Sr., which included the Mayor, the Pennsylvania Black Elected Officials, labor leaders, and several community organizations. Over the next year, a committee chaired by Tony Lewis, Managing Director of the Housing Association of Delaware Valley, also a member of Local 332, met at Local 332 to develop a program that would move the process forward. In December, 1999, the Diversity Apprenticeship Program was unveiled.

The Diversity Apprenticeship Program, (DAP) was created to prepare and increase the number of minorities in the building trades' apprenticeship programs. DAP has placed over 400 minorities in the various trades. Staten, Sr. was Chairman of the Board from its inception until 2009, when Sam Staten, Jr. assume and continues to hold that position.

In June 2008, Sam Staten, Sr. resigned as Business Manager and was replaced by Sam Staten, Jr.

On June 9, 2009, Business Manager Sam Staten, Jr. was reelected to his first full term as the 8th business manager of Laborers' Local 332.