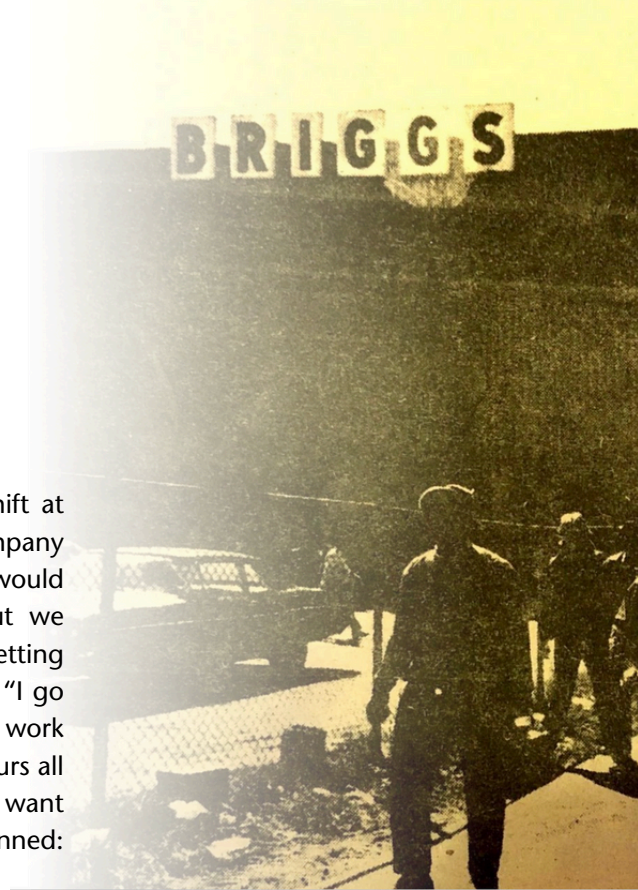




Labor@Wayne

Notes on Labor History, Democracy, and Human Rights



On an early June morning in 1973, Gary Kapanowski clocked in to start his shift at Briggs Manufacturing, once a major automaker in Detroit. By the 1970s, the company had been reduced to a small stamping plant in Sterling Heights. "We would occasionally do piece rate work for Chrysler," Kapanowski remembered, "but we mainly did bathtubs." Members of UAW Local 212, Briggs employees were getting ready for a union election the next day. That morning, Kapanowski saw trouble: "I go in and there's orange fliers all over the factory, the lunchroom and all over the work areas. And then there was graffiti... They put 'Kapanowski is a queer' and other slurs all over the place. I was totally humiliated," he recalled. "The fliers asked, 'Do you want this queer to negotiate with management?'" Blindsided, Kapanowski was stunned: "Everyone knew that I was gay," but he had never been attacked publicly for it.

This wasn't Kapanowski's first foray into shopfloor politics, neither as a voter nor as a candidate. "I decided to run for head of the shop committee in 1972," he recalled, "because there were rumors that [Briggs] was going to close." He reasoned that if he and other allies could make it onto the plant's shop committee, they might force the company to keep the plant open. Kapanowski was defeated in a close race and after negotiations produced a contract laden with concessions, management announced they were closing the plant. Kapanowski then ran for the shop committee, reasoning that while the factory's closing was assured, the shop committee could still fight against management abuses as they began winding down operations. With the public attacks against him, however, Kapanowski was shaken: "I wasn't even sure I was going to go back in the factory the next morning [for the election]," he later reflected.

Although the gay liberation movement had begun making gains for gay and lesbian rights by the the 1970s, public hostility towards gays and lesbians remained. Homophobia and bigotry were everywhere, and the auto factories of Detroit seemed to be no exception: "I didn't know how everyone else was going to respond to it," Kapanowski later admitted. At his union family's insistence, he decided against abandoning his campaign. He returned to the factory the next morning and voted in elections for shop committee chairman alongside hundreds of his coworkers. "I had to go in; just keep my chin up and go in. I did," he remembered, "and we won two to one. In that election we won, two to one." His leadership in defending Briggs workers was more important than either his sexual orientation or the bigotry of his opponents.

After workers at Briggs rallied around the new leaders at Local 212, they were able to force the company to increase its severance payouts to workers and significantly extend their post-employment healthcare coverage. Kapanowski's story is just one of many union stories of democracy on the shopfloor, in union elections, and at the ballot box in every election. The majority of union workers see social and political equality, and the defense of co-workers rights, as both necessary workplace goals and practices worth teaching and maintaining, even in these uncertain times. At its best, union democracy advocates for equality for all workers across the lines of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, and skill.

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Jamie McQuaid, Program Extension Coordinator and Newsletter Editor
Elizabeth Faue, Director, Labor@Wayne



From the Wayne State Labor School and Advanced Labor Academy



Labor School and Labor Academy Graduation 2024

On June 8, 2024, over 100 people attended the Labor School and Labor Academy graduation ceremony held at Wayne State University. The forty-two graduates completed either the non-credit Labor School or the Labor Academy and came from over twenty-four different union locals. Our diverse group of graduates represented AFSCME, MEA, IBEW, Bricklayers, IATSE, IAFF, EMUFT, and 11 different UAW Locals. Family, friends, labor leaders, part-time instructors and staff from our programs joined the graduates to celebrate their accomplishments, hard work, and professional development and achievement.

Ms. Shunte Sanders Beasley, Assistant Director of the UAW Women's Department and part-time faculty member and graduate of the Labor School and Labor Academy was this year's keynote speaker who discussed the importance of labor education, especially for women seeking leadership within their respective unions. The highlight of this year's graduation program was the speeches presented by three 2024 Labor School and Labor Academy graduates; TAP Rep Torrey Green-King, UAW Local 140, President Deborah Robertson, MEA Local 1 and President Kiarra Whitelow, AFSCME Local 1228. Graduate speakers addressed the value of labor education and their journey to union leadership.

SCAN ME! >>>



LABOR SCHOOL COURSES

FALL 2024 US Labor History
Basic Grievance Handling
State of Labor
Your Rights in the Workplace

WINTER 2025 Effective Leadership
Intro to Collective Bargaining
Economics for Workers
Power in Politics
Building the Union
Leading a Diverse Organization

ADVANCED LABOR ACADEMY

FALL 2024 Transformational Leadership
Strategic Planning

WINTER 2025 Media Matters
Advanced Grievance Handling
Powerful Presentations

GAYLE HAMILTON ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, LABOR SCHOOL



Associate Director Gayle Hamilton leads the Labor School programs of Labor@Wayne that offer non-credit labor and employment courses, workshops, webinars, and conferences to labor and community organizations, employers, and workers. Prior to her reappointment as associate director, Gayle served as the interim director of Labor@Wayne.

At WSU, Gayle became very active in her local union and was elected two terms as treasurer of the faculty and academic staff union, AAUP-AFT. Prior to joining WSU, Gayle headed the legal department of SEIU Healthcare MI, and worked as the Labor Relations Advisor for MGM Grand Detroit. She has more than 20 years of experience in management, labor education, dispute resolution, labor relations, and training and development.

Gayle holds a law degree and has conducted extensive research on various labor and employment topics. Recently, Gayle was awarded the "S'Hero Award" from the University of Michigan's School for Women Workers at its 50th anniversary conference. Gayle is co-author of a chapter, "The Future of Unions in the United States," in a book, titled *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*.

LABOR@WAYNE HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL LABOR EDUCATION WORKSHOP



After the end of winter term, we at Labor@Wayne wasted no time getting ready for the next academic year by taking concrete steps to reflect on and improve our educational programming. On May 6th, Labor@Wayne hosted its first annual Labor Education Workshop to bring the latest teaching strategies to labor education specialists from across the state. The Labor Education Workshop, included instructors from Wayne State’s Employment and Labor Relations (ELR) program, the non-credit Labor School, and other local labor educators. The intensive, one-day workshop was made possible through cooperation with WSU’s Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) and labor education experts from across the country, including Tobias Higbie (UCLA), Trevor Griffey (UCLA), Megan Brown (Metropolitan State University), and Robyn Gulley (New Brookwood Labor College). Workshop sessions focused on topics like “Building an Inclusive Syllabus,” “Creating and Designing Content,” and “Effective Communication Strategies Online.” Plenary sessions focused on the past, present, and future of labor education.

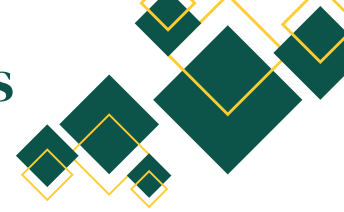
Above, from left to right: Tobias Higbie, Robyn Gulley, Megan Brown, and Trevor Griffey; Below: Director Faue introduces Higbie’s keynote address.



In Memoriam: Nancy F Gabin, 1954 - 2024

It is with a heavy heart that our community mourns the loss of Dr. Nancy Gabin. During her prolific career as an educator and historian, she changed the lives of innumerable students and significantly changed the way we understand labor history. Her work, which centered women’s activism and labor power, remains of enormous importance to the history of industrial unions like the United Auto Workers and of the labor movement as a whole. Dr. Nancy Gabin, was born in 1954, and passed away after a brief illness in late June, 2024.

New Employment and Labor Relations Classes More to Come from Labor@Wayne!



Labor@Wayne made history when, earlier this year, we were successful in having the first Employment and Labor Relations course added to the university's general education curriculum. Work and Democracy: An Introduction, or ELR 1110, will now invite students to learn about the labor movement and its role in safeguarding our democratic institutions for general education credit. Our first run of Work and Democracy has already filled up and more sections are likely to run in the future. This isn't the only class in development at Labor@Wayne, though. Look at other courses that are already in development below...

Black Women's Labor from the New Negro to Black Power

"Black Women's Labor from the New Negro to Black Power" is an interdisciplinary course that combines Black Studies, political theory, political economy, and political sociology," writes Charisse Burden-Stelly, Associate Professor of African American Studies. "It takes up the theories of triple oppression, triple exploitation, and double/multiple jeopardy to explore, analyze, and interrogate Black women's relationship to the capitalist mode of production in the twentieth century." The course will examine such thinkers as Claudia Jones, Louise Thompson Patterson, and Fran Beal. Students will grapple with the origins of racialized divisions and why some workers are "last hired, first fired."



Charisse Burden-Stelly,
Department of African American Studies

Labor and Health in the United States

"I'm building a survey course that covers the history of public health and labor, occupational cohort studies and health policy for workers," explains Michael Swain. The class will aim to teach students "how public health and labor are intertwined, the methods behind establishing the health of workers and the impact of the workplace, and how policies and contracts can determine the health of workers." This is a highly important subject, as Swain explains, "To my knowledge, there are no existing courses at Wayne State that cover this important intersection." We say, "not YET!"



Michael Swain, Department of Public Health
& Oakland County Health Division

Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining in Popular Culture

Eldonna L. May, Wayne State's Department of Music and Irwin D. Reid Honors College, explained how her new class on collective bargaining will explore unions, strikes, and collective bargaining "Through the prism of American popular culture [...], television, film, theater, and musical organizations." May continued, "By comparing and contrasting how forms of popular media portrayed both unionized and non-unionized workers during the collective bargaining process, [we can] investigate how workers' perceptions of themselves were in turn shaped by messages conveyed through media."



Eldonna May, Department of Music
& Irwin D. Reid Honors College

The Car in American Labor and Life

Associate Professor Jeremy Milloy, who teaches American Labor History, describes how his class will look at the American automobile "from the development and mass introduction of the personal automobile in the late 19th and early 20th centuries until the advent of the climate crisis 100 years later." More than speaking to labor studies alone, Milloy asserts that his new class will "consider the economic, urban, cultural, social, and environmental history of the car, one of the most ubiquitous features of our lives."



Jeremy Milloy,
Department of History

Work and Artificial Intelligence

Labor@Wayne staff members Jamie McQuaid and Sean O'Brien are proposing to develop a course to examine the implications of the rise of artificial intelligence on labor and on workers. Are recent developments with AI symbolic of a widespread shift in how we order and produce as a society, or should AI's promises be seen in a more measured light? How much will artificial intelligence change the world and in what ways?

For more on our new and returning class offerings, visit:



labor.wayne.edu

Labor@Wayne Events

Our Eventful Year



Labor Spring's Second Year

The Labor Spring Teach-In, organized by Labor@Wayne, the Department of History, and Georgetown's Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor last year, returned on March 20th for its second annual showing. Unionists, workers, and students convened at the Wayne State Student Center throughout the day to discuss and learn about issues pressing to the labor movement as well as to working communities. Topics covered ranged from "How to Start a Union Drive" and "Getting to Know the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)" to "Environmental Justice" and "Bargaining for the Common Good." Labor@Wayne will begin planning for Labor Spring 2025 this fall. Reach out if you want to get involved in these or other organizing efforts!

Robin DG Kelley Comes to Wayne State

Labor@Wayne joined the WSU Department of African American Studies, the Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies (CGS), and Department of English in welcoming historian Robin D.G. Kelley, who gave a talk "Notes toward a Global Labor History of Detroit," on Friday, March 29th, in the Undergraduate Library's Bernath Auditorium.



Above: Organizers from Jobs with Justice and GEOC at Labor Spring, Joseph McCartin, and Mildred Kress from the Department of Labor, Wage & Hours
Adjacent: Mia Michael, Director Faue and panelists at OAH Conference, Robin DG Kelley at Wayne State, and Kidada Williams from the Department of History

Joseph McCartin Talks Bargaining for the Common Good at Irving Bluestone Lecture

Dr. Joseph McCartin joined Labor@Wayne to give the keynote address for this year's Labor Spring, which served as Labor@Wayne's Irving Bluestone Lecture as well. McCartin's talk, titled "Labor Spring: Higher Ed, Union Revival, and Labor History at a Crossroads," looked at labor's 1990s resurgence, strategies the labor movement can use today to build that resurgence (like Bargaining for the Common Good), and the historical importance that this work takes on today. This event was made possible by generous support from the Walter P. Reuther Archives, the WSU Department of History, and Higher Ed Labor United. Dr. McCartin wrote *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers and the Strike that Changed America* and other studies of labor.

From Cleveland to New Orleans, Labor@Wayne Makes Waves!

Labor@Wayne staff and affiliates made a big showing at this year's Organization of American Historians (OAH) Conference in New Orleans, LA. Director Elizabeth Faue moderated a panel on labor education, Assistant Professor of History Mia Michael was awarded the Labor and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA)'s Herbert G. Gutman Prize for Outstanding Dissertation for her work, "Caring for the Commonwealth: Domestic Work and Worker Organizing in Boston, Massachusetts, 1960–2015." Labor@Wayne's own Program Coordinator Jamie McQuaid won honorable mention for their dissertation, "This Union Cause: The Queer History of the United Auto Workers." McQuaid also spoke at Cleveland State Law School's Labor Spring event in April. Labor@Wayne affiliate and History Professor Kidada Williams, won the OAH's Civil War and Reconstruction Book Award for her *I Saw Death Coming: A History of Terror and Survival in the War Against Reconstruction*.

Labor@Wayne Events

Our Eventful Year



Margot Canaday Talks *Queer Career*

Professor Margot Canaday, Princeton University, came to Wayne State's campus in early April to present on her most recent book, *Queer Career: Sexuality and Work in Modern America*. Her lecture included gripping testimonies taken from workers across workplaces ranging from American textile mills to San Francisco General Hospital's Ward 5B during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The event was part of Labor@Wayne's Fraser Center Lectureship series and was made possible by generous support from the WSU Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies (CGS), the WSU Department of History, and the Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. Dr. Canaday's full lecture, along with the audience discussion that followed, can be viewed online through Labor@Wayne's website: labor.wayne.edu.



Above: Margot Canaday at the WSU Student Center
Top Left: Steve Babson at the 2024 Dave Miller Memorial Lecture
Bottom Left: Labor Journalist Kim Kelly at the MLHS Annual Meeting



Dave Miller Lecture Features Steve Babson

Labor and working-class historian Dr. Steve Babson joined Labor@Wayne on Wednesday, May 22nd, for its revival of the Dave Miller Memorial Lecture. Babson, as the speaker invited to bring back the lecture series, gave a stirring talk about Dave Miller's legacy as a pacifist, unionist, and ardent defender of workers' right to free expression in the face of political repression. A full recording of Dr. Babson's talk, titled "The Great Fear, Then and Now: Dave Miller Faced HUAC in His Time, as We Now Face the Threat to Democracy in Ours," can be found online at: labor.wayne.edu

Michigan Labor History Society (MLHS) Hosts Annual Meeting, Kim Kelly

Labor@Wayne was proud to sponsor this year's Michigan Labor History Society (MLHS) Annual Meeting, which was held on Saturday, June 22nd, at the Detroit Operating Engineers' Education Center on Howard Street. The events kicked off with a free labor history bus tour, followed by a light reception and presentation by Kim Kelly. A labor journalist, Kelly spoke about her work and her new book, *Fight Like Hell: The Untold History of American Labor*

In Memoriam: Jane McAlevey, 1964 - 2024

Labor recently lost one of its great leaders: Jane McAlevey. She was a prolific writer, mentor, and activist. Her creation, Organizing 4 Power, carries on her call for mobilization and activation. For many, McAlevey may have been described as brazen or obstinate. That obstinate persistence was a key characteristic in inspiring and guiding her students and readers. She never gave up. Her work began in high school and followed her to university, where she was one of many champions challenging university investments in Apartheid South Africa. She joined the AFL-CIO and engaged in social justice activism. In 2009, she began her long battle with cancer. Even so, McAlevey led by example. Like her, labor needs to be brazen and obstinate, relentless and innovative. She taught us to organize for power. Her efforts, gifts, and contributions to labor will never be forgotten.





Labor@Wayne Events

Upcoming Programs and Other News

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Spring/Summer 2024

Bluestone Endowed Scholarship:
Emily Forbes & Shatha Alhijazeen

**Fraser Center Graduate
Student Research Grant:**
Kellan McNally

2024-2025 Academic Year

Kahn Endowed Scholarship:
Shatha Alhijazeen & Joshua Hansknecht

**Michigan Quality of Worklife and
Irving Bluestone Scholarship:**
Kia Kirkwood and Erin Smith

Massaron Endowed Scholarship:
Alex Coleman & Devynn Stepowski

**Ethel Schwartz Memorial Scholarship
for Labor Education:**
Adiaha Expo and Joanne Brodbek

**Irving and Zelda Bluestone
Endowed Scholarship:**
Lanying Brown & Erika Bruce



Upcoming Events

September 2024

- September 18: Irving Bluestone Lecture - Ruth Milkman, "A New Political Generation: Power Resource Theory and 21st Century Union Organizing"

October 2024

- October 10-12: North American Labor History Conference

November 2024

- November 11: Fraser Center Lecture - Joe William Trotter, "Building the Black City"
- November 14-17: WISE Conference (Labor School), at the Hollywood Casino Hotel in Greektown

February 2025: Jennifer Guglielmo, Smith College, Heidi Gottfried and Mia Michael, Wayne State, discuss organizing domestic care workers (date TBD)

April 2025

- April 2: Fraser Center Lecture - Lane Windham, "Labor Spring, Class, and the Future of the U.S. Common Good"
- April 3: Third Annual Labor Spring Student Teach-In
- April 23: Keona Ervin, Bowdoin College, "Refusal: Black Women Workers and the Practice of Freedom"

May 2024

- May 7: Dave Miller Labor Lecture - Robert Bruno, "'Work is Why I'm Not Fishing More: Justice at Work and the Labor Movement's Moral Imperative'"

THE NORTH AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY CONFERENCE (NALHC) RETURNS OCTOBER 10TH-12TH

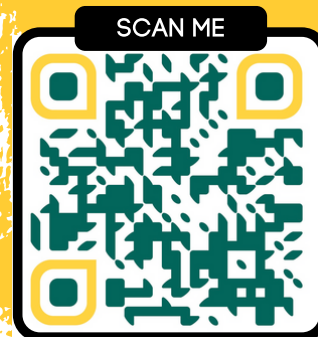
The North American Labor History Conference (NALHC) has been on hiatus since the 2020 pandemic, but we are coming back this year amid a presidential election campaign, to consider questions about the relationship between work and democracy. The year 2024 comes at a crucial juncture for workers and labor organizations in the United States and throughout the world.

The working classes, people of color, ethnic minorities, women and LGBTQ+ people are organizing against voting restrictions while struggling against indifference, apathy, and fear. As labor scholars, historians, activists, archivists, and union members, we meet to consider the relationship and role of workers, labor unions, and worker organizations in democratic societies, and the importance of democratic governance in local, institutional, national, and global contexts.

For more on NALHC, visit: <https://nalhc.wayne.edu/>



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