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Rand Wilson Papers

1977-2017
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Read collection overview

A union organizer and labor communicator, Rand Wilson became a rank and file organizer for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and helped win the first-ever contract for workers at Clinical Assays in Cambridge, Mass., in 1982. He has since taken part in dozens of successful organizing and contract campaigns, both regionally and nationally, for the Communications Workers of America, the Paperworkers, Carpenters, Teamsters and Service Employees International Union, and other unions. Wilson's notable achievements include coordinating solidarity efforts with the CWA and IBEW during the massive NYNEX telephone workers' strike in 1989; founding the Massachusetts branch of the community-labor coalition, Jobs with Justice; coordinating communications for the Teamsters in 1997 during the lengthy contract campaign and historic 15-day strike by the 185,000 workers at UPS; and organizing an AFL-CIO-led effort focused on financial institutions' conflicts of interest that helped to thwart the Bush administration's efforts to privatize social security. He served as national coordinator for "Labor for Bernie" during the presidential campaign on 2016, and currently works for SEIU Local 888 in Boston.

Documenting forty years of labor activism, the Wilson papers include important material from most of his major initiatives, including organizing campaigns with the CWA, files relating to the Justice at Work/Just Cause for All initiatives, organizing high tech, health care and telephone workers, and Jobs with Justice. Nearly half of the collection is comprised of a comprehensive collection of source materials and documents from the Teamsters' UPS contract campaign and strike.

Background on Rand Wilson

Biographical note by Rand Wilson.

I started my work in the labor movement after I met OCAW union leader and nationally acclaimed workers'

health and safety pioneer Tony Mazzocchi at a conference sometime in 1978 or 1979. He inspired me to want to organize for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union.

Soon after, I met Carolyn Mugar and Dick McManus who were building a volunteer core of organizers in Massachusetts for OCAW that we called the Boston Organizing Project. Some of the activists included Janet Corpus, Tim Griffin, Alex Keyssar, Kathy Moore, Michael Musuraca, David Nobel, Sid Peck and John O'Connor.

Each week, a group of organizers would travel to factories all over eastern Massachusetts, pass out leaflets at shift changes and engage with workers about the benefits of forming a union.

Dick McManus was past president of OCAW Local 8-149 and an organizer for the OCAW District 8 Council. At some point Dick told me that Local 8-149 had an "in" at American Chemical and Refining (owned by Handy and Harman) in Waterville, CT and that I could get a job there if I was interested in organizing on the inside. I moved to Waterville, got a job at ACR, and began building an organizing committee of interested workers. Ed Ott was my staff organizer from Local 8-149. After a few months, we petitioned for an NLRB election and the union won.

I returned home to Somerville and I got a job as a "quality control checker" at Clinical Assays (owned by Baxter Travenol Labs) in Cambridge MA in 1981. Some of the most active workers who organized with me included Creceta Allen, Hubert Allen, Enrique Allen, Ferdinand Baretto, Gloria Barrett, Carmine Crespo, Tim Griffin, John Morawitz, Jaime Salamanca, Mario Salinas, Darlene Stout, Clyde Williamson, and June Salvi. Some of the materials from the organizing campaign at Clinical Assays are in the #1 box.

While working at Clinical Assays I began to meet other labor activists throughout the Great Boston area. We began meeting in groups to do labor solidarity for each other and other union initiatives. After a strike at Greyhound, we decided to formalize our grassroots solidarity work into the Labor Support Project. Domenic Bozzotto, then the newly elected president of Hotel Workers Local 26 offered the union's meeting hall and resources to support the group. Gene Bruskin, Lisa Gallatin, and Enid Eckstein eventually became the LSP co-chairs.

Some of us also organized a series of conferences to bring labor activists together and share our experiences. In 1981, we organized a conference: "Labor in the 80s." In 1982, we held a second conference: "Organize the Unorganized" and in 1983 "Action for a Change." Some of the activists involved in these conferences were Gene Bruskin, Erica Bronstein, Charlie Rasmussen, Ann Sills, Ken Geiser, Peter Olney, Lisa Gallatin, Ed Warshauer, MeiZhu Lui, Mark Erlich, Jim Green, Ferd Wulkan, Steve Early, Dave Slaney.

Around this time, workers at Mass General Hospital were trying to organize a union with the UAW. A pal of mine, David Russell was one of the rank and file leaders. It was an important campaign. And workers at MGH are still without a voice. Dave donated his entire file from the campaign to me, so it's included here as a valuable piece of history.

After negotiating a first contract at Clinical Assays, in 1982 I left to take a job as an organizer for the Communications Workers of America (CWA). This began a lifetime of close collaboration with CWA organizer and later International Rep. Steve Early. Some of our early campaigns were at Western Electric in North Andover, MA with not-yet-union Engineers, the 1983 pre-divestiture ATT Strike, California Psych Techs, Missouri Public Workers, New Jersey Public employees, and eventually NYNEX.

With CWA's support, we started the High Tech Workers' Network as a vehicle for workers in not-yet-union high tech shops in the greater Boston area to meet up and support one another. Some of the early activists were Ginny Gordon, Ken Allen (UE), Sharon Sawyer and Mark Pickering.

To complement the workers organizing, Ken Geiser (my roommate at the time) and I started the High Tech Research Group which brought together labor friendly academics interested in the high tech industry in Massachusetts. The group published three reports: "Massachusetts High Tech: The Promise and the Reality," in 1984; "High Tech Toxics: Communities at Risk," in 1984; and "Whatever Happened to Job Security? The 1985 Slowdown in the Massachusetts High Tech Industry," in 1986.

Sometime in 1985 or 1986, folks at UMass Boston enlisted me to help with a campaign to broaden Just Cause job rights to all workers in Massachusetts. Jim Green, Bill Fletcher, Cheryl Gooding, and Terry McLarney helped lead the initiative. Nearly 30 years later, I tried to renew interest in the "Just Cause for All" idea and Terry donated all of his files from the project to me which are included here in Box #2.

The union work in the high tech industry and my close association with a number of environmental activists led to some coalitions with environmental groups and the formation of "Integrated Circuit" a network of groups and individuals concerned about the impacts of the high tech industry on workers and the environment. Ken Geiser, Lenny Seigel, Mike Eisenscher, Ted Smith and George Kohl (CWA's research director) were some of the key activists.

Lenny wrote and published a small newsletter, Global Electronics that reported on all aspects of the industry.

Using the frequent flyer points I earned working in Missouri for CWA on organizing Missouri public employees

(with CWA's Vic Crawley and Ken Margolies), I took a trip around the world visiting high tech facilities in 1986 with Cheryl Hirshman (we got married in 1990 and had two kids together.) I published a report on our trip, "Workers' Rights in High Tech: A Global Perspective."

After returning from the global tour, I initiated a broad "sectoral organizing" plan for printed circuit board manufacturing workers in Mass. I found support for this organizing approach with an unlikely partner: the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). I started the campaign in the Merrimack Valley with ILGWU in 1987. It was a great idea, but the wrong union. Joe Danehy, then the ILGWU director of organizing, lost faith in the plan and wanted to proceed with organizing at one company where there was some "heat" by the workers for joining a union. I knew that "hot shop" approach was doomed -- and quit.

In 1988 workers at International Paper went on strike in Jay, ME, DePere, WI, Lock Haven, PA, and Mobile, AL. I was enlisted by Ray Rogers (who had been hired as a consultant to the Paperworkers) to help build solidarity for the strikers throughout New England. We raised tens of thousands of dollars to support the striking families in Jay and hit members of IP's board of directors with actions to remove them from any other boards they sat on.

After the Paperworker's campaign I took an organizing job with Carpenters Local 815 in Beverly, MA. In that capacity, I also managed the North Shore Affordable Housing Corp. a non-profit sponsored by union. Phil Mason, Sr. was the guiding light for the local. Mike Schipani was my predecessor who helped me get the job.

While I was with the carpenters, I began working with Tony Mazzocchi and Les Leopold on Labor Party Advocates, the organizing initiative that we hoped would lead to the founding of a Labor Party. We did surveys of union members to build support for the idea and show that there was broad support among union members for a new approach to politics and starting a labor party.

Sadly, Local 815 was eventually merged along with two other carpenter locals into a new Carpenters Local 26 and, of course, I lost my job. In 1989, 60,000 NYNEX telephone workers who were members of CWA and IBEW went on strike. Although I no longer worked for CWA, Steve Early enlisted me to help with solidarity, and especially to assist IBEW Local 2222 and the other New England IBEW locals on strike. I camped out in the IBEW union hall with leaders Myles Calvey and Ed "Fitzy" Fitzgerald and assisted members for three very intense months.

The NYNEX strike was a defining moment for telephone workers. Our slogan against cost shifting, "Health Care for All, Not Health Cuts at NYNEX," helped turn the strike into a battle about the need for national health care reform and turned me into a lifelong proponent of Medicare for All.

During the NYNEX strike, we began discussions about starting a Massachusetts Jobs with Justice chapter, an exciting new community labor coalition being spear-headed by then CWA organizing director Larry Cohen. Much of the conception of JWJ was based on the work so many of us had already done in small labor support groups around the country like Boston's Labor Support Project. It wasn't hard to resurrect the vestiges of the LSP and ground it in the institutional based framework of JWJ.

By 1991 we had about a dozen unions and community groups that supported the concept and I had raised enough money to go full time. The union groups were CWA District 1 (Steve Early), IBEW Local 2222 (Myles Calvey), UE District 2 (Phil Mamber), Mass Teachers Association, SEIU Local 509, SEIU Local 285 (Celia Wcislo and Enid Eckstein), USWA Local at Market Forge, Teamsters Local 122 (John Murphy) and IUE Local 201 (Jeff Crosby). Citizen Action (Edward Kelly), DSA, Mass Senior Action (Manny Weiner), and ACORN (Maude Hurd) were our community partners.

JWJ had four committee to carry out the work: Health Care, Fair Trade, New Priorities and Solidarity. The Health Care committee focused on building support for single payer reforms; the Fair Trade committee campaigned against NAFTA; New Priorities focused on the wastefulness of the U.S. military budget; and the Solidarity Committee built support for strikes and organizing campaigns.

JWJ was a big part of a national ambulance drive for single payer led by Citizen Action in 1991 and a statewide caravan against NAFTA with support from the Teamsters union. We fought for labor law reforms and turned out members for dozens of strike picket lines.

I also served as director of the Campaign for Responsible Technology (CRT), an innovative coalition of labor, community and environmental groups concerned about the impact of new technology on workers and communities. CRT was organized to ensure that major national industrial policy initiatives benefit industry workers, communities and the environment. As a result of the campaign, Congress earmarked \$10 million for "environmentally safe manufacturing methods" research at SEMATECH -- the national chip industry research consortium.

In 1990, I supported Ron Carey's campaign for president of the Teamsters union. When offered as chance in 1995 to work as a Communications Coordinator for Carey and the Teamster's Communications Department in Washington, DC I jumped at it.

I was assigned to help Ken Hall, the director of the Parcel and Small Package Division with his communications needs. I wrote monthly UPS bulletins, press releases, and assisted with all internal and external communications. With the UPS contract set to expire in August 1997, I immediately began working on organizing a UPS contract campaign designed to involve members throughout the company's 200 plus local unions.

The UPS contract was the best opportunity to put into practice what Ron Carey and the reform movement wanted and what many of us had been preaching for nearly two decades. What made this campaign different was the size of the bargaining unit (about 185,000 members back then) and the resources available for the campaign at the IBT. UPS management's unwillingness to negotiate to create new full-time jobs for its part-time workforce, stop subcontracting and continue funding the union's pension plan resulted in a 15-day strike that garnered broad public support and brought increased attention to the problems that part-time and temporary workers face.

Scope of collection

Documenting forty years of labor activism, the Wilson papers include important material from most of his major initiatives, including organizing campaigns with the CWA, files relating to the Justice at Work/Just Cause for All initiatives, organizing high tech, health care and telephone workers, and Jobs with Justice. Nearly half of the collection is comprised of a comprehensive collection of source materials and documents from the Teamsters' UPS contract campaign and strike.

Series descriptions

[Series 1. Communications Workers of America](#)

1980-1998

In 1989, almost 60,000 telephone workers in New England and New York waged a fifteen week strike against NYNEX to protest a new contract that threatened cuts to medical benefits. Wilson played a key role for the Communications Workers of America in coordinating solidarity efforts with the IBEW.

[Series 2. International Brotherhood of Teamsters](#)

1978-1998

As coordinator of communications for the Teamsters Union beginning in 1995, Wilson played a key role in the lengthy contract campaign and historic fifteen day strike by the 185,000 workers at United Parcel Service. The dispute at UPS centered on the corporation's subcontracting practices and management's unwillingness to negotiate over their shift to a part-time and temporary workforce, rather than full-time. This series includes extensive documentation of the protracted contract negotiations and strike by UPS workers, along with materials relating to Teamsters' President Ron Carey's campaign; the Teamsters' newsletters and magazine; and other miscellaneous materials relating to the Teamsters union.

[Series 3. Jobs With Justice](#)

1990-2007

The Massachusetts chapter of Jobs With Justice was formed as a community labor coalition to support the labor causes. Focal points for the organization included health care, fair trade, new priorities, and solidarity. The issues that Wilson was most heavily involved in working toward single payer health care, opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Campaign for Responsible Technology.

[Series 4. Other activism](#)

1977-2017

The scope of Wilson's involvements in other labor campaigns and political work is extensive. Series 4 is particularly rich in documentation for Wilson's early work organizing at Clinical Assays for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union in 1981-1982 and his efforts to organize in high tech and health care, primarily in Massachusetts. Later materials relate to his support for presidential campaign for Bernie Sanders.

Inventory

Series 1. Communications Workers of America

1980-1998

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CWA Flying Squadron Wants You [poster]

1998

Box Poster

CWA Organizing Campaigns 1980's

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CWA Stewards Army Training Program
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CWA: IUE-CWA Local 201 History
Box 3
CWA: We'll Never Forget 1989 [NYNEX strike commemoration video]
1989
Box 14
Holding the Line in '89: Lessons of the NYNEX Strike [report]
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Box 4
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IBT Freight files
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Men in Brown
Box 14
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Box 13
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1997
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Poster: Attention UPS: No Pick-Ups Until Our Driver Has a New Contract
Box Poster
Poster: Blow the Whistle on UPS
Box Poster
Poster: Half a Job is Not Enough!
Box Poster
Poster: It's Our Contract: We'll Fight for A Safe Place to Work
Box Poster
Poster: It's Our Contract: We'll Fight for More Full-Time Jobs
Box Poster
Poster: Part-Time America Won't Work
Box Poster
Poster: Teamsters Fighting for the Future
Box Poster
Poster: We Support UPS Teamsters Fighting for the Future
Box Poster
Poster: What's really at stake in the Teamsters strike: A few facts. (UPS full page ad)
Box Poster
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1997
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Box 12
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Box 10
Teamster Magazine copies, 1994- August 1998
1994-1998

Box 8
Teamster Magazine February-March 1992
1992

Box 8
Teamster magazines

Box 10
Teamster training videos

Box 14
Teamsters 1997
1997

Box 8
Teamsters for a Democratic Union files

Box 7
Teamsters for a Democratic Union pamphlet: Building Rank and File Power at UPS

Box 13
Teamsters for a Democratic Union pamphlet: Building Rank and File Power at UPS (background materials and early draft)

Box 10
Teamsters Local 25

Box 13
UPS background and research files
1997

Box 12
UPS background and research files
1997

Box 15
UPS Business News Network, March 1997, May-June 1997 (audio tapes)
1997

Box 14
UPS contract campaign and strike (in two binders with all UPS Update newsletters)
1997

Box 10
UPS contract campaign and strike newspaper articles

Box 15
UPS contract campaign and strike: Contract campaign May, June, July and August folders
1997

Box 11
UPS contract campaign and strike: Contract campaign strike authorization vote
1997

Box 11
UPS contract campaign and strike: material for various workshops and classes

Box 10
UPS contract campaign and strike: Materials for workshops and presentations
1997

Box 13
UPS contract campaign and strike: Teamster videos and audio tapes
1997

Box 14
UPS contract campaign files (miscellaneous)

Box 7
UPS Contract Campaign: research files
1997

Box 8
UPS contract campaign: rolls of stickers
1997

Box 14
UPS History

Box 13
UPS Labor Relations Updates

Box 14
UPS package delivery truck [plastic toy]

Box 14
UPS Yours [newsletters]

Box 11
White Collars and Black Ties, by Len Hughes (audio compact disk)

Box 14
Wilson, Rand: calendar and note pads
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Box 11
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Box Poster
Poster: Stand Up to Walmart
Box Poster
Poster: Stop Corporate Greed, Jobs with Justice
Box Poster
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Box 5
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Box 14
Unity at Verizon
Box 5
Various Jobs with Justice Conferences
Box 3
Various news clips
Box 9
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Electronic files
Clinical Assays organizing files
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Digital Equipment Annual Stockholders meeting action
Box 4
Early, Steve: articles
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Global Electronics newsletters
Box 1

Health Care Action Day files
Box 3
Health Care Action Days news clippings
Box 3
High Tech: organizing
1987-2012
Electronic files
High Tech Toxics: Communities at Risk
Box 1
High tech: Workers' Rights in High Tech: A Global Perspective [report]
Box 4
High tech: Massachusetts High Tech; The Promise and the Reality
Box 1
High tech: News clips high tech workers organizing; engineers organizing
1981-1983
Box 1
High tech: reports from the high-tech industry:
Box 1
High tech: Research on discrimination in the high-tech industry
Box 1
High tech: Research on labor/management relations in the high-tech industry
Box 1
High tech: Research on Mass High Tech Council
Box 1
High tech: Research on temps in the high-tech industry
Box 1
High tech: Sharon Sawyer ULP at Digital Equipment file
Box 4
Hospital worker organizing files
Box 4
International Telecom Conference (1983?); clippings and notes
1983
Box 1
Justice at Work archive
Box 2
Just Cause for All: articles, sample resolutions
Electronic files
Labor conferences in the 1980s: brochures
1980-1989
Box 1
Labor for Bernie: endorsements, ballots
2020
Electronic files
Labor for Bernie Massachusetts: flyer, pledge card, resolutions
2020
Electronic files
Labor for Our Revolution: documents, statements, spreadsheets
ca. 2018
Electronic files
Labor Party files
Box 4
LASER files
Box 4
Mass General Hospital organizing file
Box 4
O'Connor, John: 1998 race for Congress District 7
1998
Box 4
Poster: Bernie for President
Box Poster
Poster: Bernie for President 2016 (white)
2016
Box Poster
Poster: Employee Free Choice Act Now, AFL-CIO
Box Poster
Poster: Future to Believe In
Box Poster
Poster: Honk Festival of Activist Street Bands Oct. 11-13, 2013

2013
Box Poster
Poster: Honk Festival of Activist Street Bands Oct. 11-13, 2013 (Subway poster)
2013
Box Poster
Poster: Honk Festival of Activist Street Bands Oct. 5-8, 2012
2012
Box Poster
Poster: Honk Festival of Activist Street Bands Oct. 6-9, 2017
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Box Poster
Poster: Labor for Bernie 2016
2016
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Poster: We are the 99% (from Occupy)
Box Poster
Poster: We Want a University for the 99% (from Occupy)
Box Poster
Poster: Workforce Development Institute Celebrates Bread and Roses 1912 -2012
2012
Box Poster
Report: From Daycare to DARPA: Bargaining for a New Industrial Policy
Box 4

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Rand Wilson, May 2018.

Processing Information

Processed by SCUA staff, June 2018.

Language:

English

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Cite as: Rand Wilson Papers (MS 1026). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Communications Workers of America
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- Justice at Work
- Labor unions--Massachusetts
- NYNEX Corporation
- United Parcel Service

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