

Special Collections and
University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

Charley Richardson Papers

1965-2008

22 boxes (38 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 862



[About SCUA](#)

[SCUA home](#)

[Credo digital](#)

[Scope](#)

[Overview](#)

[Series 1. Affiliated Companies](#)

[Series 2. Affiliated Unions](#)

[Series 3. George Meany Center for Labor Studies \(Silver Springs, Md.\)](#)

[Series 4. Labor Extension Program](#)

[Series 5. Research and Teaching Materials](#)

[Series 6. Work and Technology Program](#)

[Inventory](#)

[Series 1. Affiliated Companies](#)

[Series 2. Affiliated Unions](#)

[Series 3. George Meany Center for Labor Studies](#)

[Series 4. Labor Extension Program](#)

[Series 5. Research and Teaching Materials](#)

[Series 6. Work and Technology Program](#)

[Admin info](#)

[Download](#)

[xml version](#)

[print version \(pdf\)](#)



[Read collection overview](#)

A shipfitter and union activist, Charley Richardson was a visionary labor educator. After working for a time in a machine shop and driving a school bus, Richardson hired on as a shipfitter at Sun Ship in Philadelphia in 1976, and grew active in the labor movement as a steward for the United Steelworkers. After relocating to the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy seven years later, he sustained a workplace injury that ended his career, but he remained active in the workers' cause. Helping served as director of the Labor Extension Program at UMass Lowell and helped to create the Technology and Work Program where he and his wife Nancy Lessin developed educational programs to aid unions in countering harmful workplace changes and build strength and solidarity for the union. An advocate for social and economic justice, he became a vocal opponent of the U.S. war in Iraq in 2002, and was co-founder of Military Families Speak Out. After a long battle with cancer, Richardson passed away in May 2013.

The Richardson papers document over thirty years of work as a labor educator and United Steelworkers activist. At the heart of the collection are materials relating to Richardson's research and instruction at UMass Lowell, teaching "continuous bargaining" and other techniques for unions coping with economic and political change. The collection is informed throughout by Richardson's concerns for workplace safety and health and the impact of technology, downsizing, deregulation, and globalization.

Background on Charley Richardson

Charley Richardson (1953-2013) was a prominent local labor activist, union steward, and director of the Work and Technology and Labor Extension Programs at University of Massachusetts Lowell. He passed away in 2013 after a six-year battle with cancer. Along with being a labor educator and activist, he founded the organization Military Families Speak Out in the wake of the Iraq War in 2002 which sought to lend support to military families. Richardson authored several prominent papers on worker bargaining with management, including "Tricks and Traps" which taught employees how to hold-out against management demands on the shop floor. He began his career in unions when he became a ship-fitter for Sun Ship Co. in Quincy, Mass in 1976, and joined the United Steel Workers Union (USWA).

Prior to his work as a ship-fitter, Richardson worked on a ranch in Wyoming, and traveled throughout Chile for several years after completing his studies at Hampshire College in 1975. During his time at Hampshire, Richardson became very active in Vietnam War protests. However, it was the years he spent in Chile that had the greatest impact on him, and his concept of revolutionary class struggle during the 1970s.

Richardson worked in several positions as a union steward after he joined the union in 1976. As shop steward he supported the grassroots movement urging companies to detail the risk of chemical exposure faced by workers. In 1983, when he joined the shipyard in Quincy, Mass., Richardson became a union safety steward. He married his second wife, Nancy Lessin, in 1988, who was working on labor safety and health issues at the time.

During the 1980s, Richardson became more involved in labor education, after becoming the director of the Technology and Work Program in 1986 where he taught courses to students and union workers involving worker retraining in the face of technological change, and automation in various industries ranging from manufacturing to food service. He was a part of the Department of Work Environment, in the College of Engineering, starting in 1989 at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, after obtaining his M.B.A. from the same institution in 1988. Richardson taught courses in Human Resources Management, Ergonomics, CAD/CAM, Labor Relations, Labor and Technology, Modern Productivity Methods, and Industrial Hygiene. He participated and led numerous conferences and workshops hosted by labor unions, academic institutions, and corporations such as Six Sigma and "Training to Improve Working Conditions," (Helsinki, Finland), and worked closely with the Center for Productivity Enhancement at UMass Lowell publishing and co-authoring papers and studies. He later became involved in the Labor Extension Program.

Founded in 1995, the Labor Extension Program was a state-wide initiative to provide workers with further training in a broad range of subjects along with technology such as leadership training, contract bargaining, and strategic planning. It serves individual unions, central labor councils, community-based organizations and institutes, union members, and community activists. In Lowell, the Extension Program has frequently partnered with local organizations, and the scope of its activities covers several central labor councils such as the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council/AFL-CIO, the North Shore Labor Council, and the Central Massachusetts Labor Council for whom it provides workforce and economic development activities, including workshops, and retraining.

In 2002, Richardson founded the Military Families Speak Out after impending deployment of his son, a marine, to fight in the Iraq War. After attending a large antiwar rally in 2002, he sought to inform the public of the experiences of military personnel and their families, as well as draw attention to what he perceived as the administration's unjust motivations for going to war such as the search for oil in the Middle East. Richardson participated in antiwar rallies, protests, and even was interviewed by C-SPAN. His

organization grew to 4,000 families throughout the country, with chapters in 18 states where it provides a network that lends support and encourage to thousands of individuals affected by the war.

He was also an active member of the Marine and Shipbuilding Workers (IUMSWA), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the United States Steelworkers Union (USWA) throughout his working life.

Scope of collection

The bulk of this collection contains materials related to Charley Richardson's work as a college professor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell where he taught courses on technological retraining in trades and manufacturing in the Work and Technology Program (1988-1995) and the Labor Extension Program (1995-), which seeks to provide more training to labor leaders and workers in key areas such as steward training, collective bargaining, health and safety, and union organizing. Beginning in the 1990s, Richardson began to emphasize the impact of globalization and the ability of employers to track workers electronically in an effort to preserve worker rights on the job in his materials. He sought to teach labor union leaders how to collectively engage with workers to protect their rights at a national level when he conducted classes at the Labor Leadership Institute at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies (now the National Labor College at Silver Springs, Maryland).

The collection also contains course material generated for union and company classes related to manufacturing and trades technology, Total Quality Management processes, Six Sigma, and Kaizen practices that lead to continual improvement of product quality while conducting work more efficiently. Richardson focuses on the need to follow William Edwards Deming's 14 points, and how workers must be prevalent in the entire process of manufacturing a product from the design to completion to reduce risk of worker attrition, litigation by customers, waste and cost reduction, and rework. He criticizes Frederic Taylor's philosophy of Scientific Management (Taylorism) where the worker becomes merely a delegate of management in an effort to improve workflows.

Research and teaching materials contain lectures with transparencies, notes, presentations, as well as research files highlighting changing work expectations and challenges to the working class such as automation of unskilled work, longer hours, electronic monitoring, job outsourcing, and global market competition, beginning in the mid-1990s and leading into the days of George W. Bush's efforts to bust unions (2001-2004). A few research files and subject files highlight the negative economic impact of the War in Iraq, along with a file of several correspondence from a deceased marine's family speculating on the cause of his death. They further contain publications such as papers, articles, and theses by Richardson and individuals affiliated with him. The collection includes "Tricks and Traps of the Trade," "Train the Trainer"; an article on labor leadership, as well as numerous other reports and papers by Richardson on labor issues.

Series descriptions

Series 1. Affiliated Companies

1986-2008

This series consists of companies affiliated with Richardson for which he worked as a consultant on issues surrounding labor-management relations, and technology skills. He held retraining in Kaizen, Six Sigma, Total Quality Management (TQM), labor-management relations, and changing technologies. These companies work primarily in the areas of manufacturing, telecommunications, building, and trades, as well as the health care and services sectors, nursing, teaching, and librarianship. Richardson became involved in teaching workers how to maintain a voice in company workplace restructuring and changing environments in the workplace. He was a key player in teaching workers to organize in various scenarios, and urged employees to band together to demand collective bargaining by their employers in the face of rapid globalization and change. Examples include efforts to retrain Bell/Nynex telecommunications workers in New York and at Disney World (Orlando, Florida) in the 1990s. He also became involved in Algoma Steel's efforts to reeducate its workers in technology and change after they bought the company to rescue it from bankruptcy in 1992. Materials consist primarily of files including correspondence, notes, informational packets on company, workshop information, and handouts or questionnaires.

Series 2. Affiliated Unions

1983-2007

This series consists of unions affiliated with Richardson where he worked as a consultant and union representative to improve organizing efforts, operations and functions of such local (primarily Massachusetts and Maine) union branches of the American Federation of Labor Organizations (AFL-CIO), International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IUE), United Steelworkers Association (USWA), and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) dealing with issues involving worker-management relations such as collective bargaining and fair treatment in the workplace. He also worked with non-manufacturing unions such as the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Massachusetts Nurses Association, and the Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Union (FNHP) on issues ranging from Total Quality Management in education to electronic monitoring of healthcare and service employees. Other notable union-led efforts in this series include job retraining and advocacy for services and government employees in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE/NCFL), as well as other labor unions involved in

representing workers in technology and automotive manufacturing such as the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and the United Automobile Workers (UAW). The series contains several folders containing correspondence, brochures, trade magazines, and files relating to Richardson's trip to Brazil (Sao Paolo) in 2001 during which he held a seminar at a Daimler-Chrysler Plant. A portion of the series contains files from Canadian organizations that Richardson worked with such as the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), and other affiliated Canadian labor organizations from the 1990s. This series includes materials from the UPS strike in the mid-1990s which the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) was also involved in.

Series 3. George Meany Center for Labor Studies (Silver Springs, Md.)

1965-1999

This series contains materials related to Richardson's time at the Labor Studies Center at Silver Springs, Maryland on the site of the National Labor College. It includes material from the Labor Leadership Institute held regularly on various topics surrounding labor and labor relations issues such as bargaining, technology, and workplace change. Richardson taught and attended sessions on workplace change and technology at the six-week institute during each semester from approximately 1992-1996, during which he also continued his duties working with labor unions at the national and state level to cope with changes brought on by technology and the global economy. The Leadership Institute and Center held regular sessions on various labor topics ranging from collective bargaining to workplace change.

Series 4. Labor Extension Program

1990-2006

Contains materials related to the Labor Extension Program founded in 1995 to improve opportunities for workers across the state. The Labor Extension Program offers courses through the University of Massachusetts Lowell (formerly University of Lowell) to retrain workers on various manufacturing equipment and with labor issues such as collective bargaining and organizing to promote workers' right to education and continued development. Thus, some materials from UMass Lowell interdisciplinary programs are also included. Materials primarily consist of correspondence, minutes, agendas, conferences, retraining program notes, and informational packets or files related to work programs and retraining conducted with local (central Massachusetts) labor councils, unions, and companies.

Series 5. Research and Teaching Materials

1980-2008

Contains materials related to Richardson's time as a professor and educator primarily consisting of research files, publications ranging from scholarly papers and working papers to shorter articles, outlines for speeches, as well as global correspondence with academics in Canada, Europe, Australia, and Brazil related to research and conferences. Some correspondence and files come from a conference held in England (1996) dealing with the Communication Workers Union (CWU), and workplace deregulation and change, as well as several conferences across Europe related to industrial technology during the 1990s. Subject matter includes automation in the workplace, CAD/CIM, newer methods of quality management such as Total Quality Management (TQM), "Taylorism" where innovation and change occurs top-down, as well as labor relations, and how to train workers in collective bargaining processes so that decisions affecting workers can be made less unilaterally. Several files come from conferences and training workshops held at prominent universities dealing with labor law issues such as Cornell University and Harvard University.

Series 6. Work and Technology Program

1986-2000

This series contains materials from the Work and Technology Program at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, a program dedicated to worker retraining first founded after Richardson conducted studies in conjunction with the Engineering and Center for Advanced Reproduction in Manufacturing. They determined that manufacturing and trade workers would need steady reeducation to stay current and employed with the wealth of technological changes, including automation coming to trades and manufacturing beginning in the late-1980s. This series contains numerous files consisting of memoranda, correspondence, technological surveys, and questionnaires encouraging workers who participated to consider technology's role and potential impact on their jobs, as well as asking for support from organizations and the administration for the program citing a dire need for retraining in central New England. It further contains files, correspondence, publications, workshops, and retraining sessions for workers in Massachusetts in the face of major technological change in the early 1990s such as the emergence of CIM/CAD software in building and manufacturing trades.

Inventory

Series 1. Affiliated Companies

1986-2008

Companies: A-L

1986-2008
Box 1
Companies: M-Z
1988-2007
Box 2
Series 2. Affiliated Unions
1983-2007
AFL-CIO to ATU
1983-2007
Box 3
Canadian Labor Organizations/Algoma Steel
1989-2007
Box 4
Bakers Union to FNHP
1982-2004
Box 5
IAM to Massachusetts Teachers Association
1987-2006
Box 6
IBT, IFPT, ITF
1987-2006
Box 7
Massachusetts Teachers Association to UAW
1987-2006
Box 7
UAW to UWUA
1989-2005
Box 8
UPS (Corresponding IBT Files)
1993-2000
Box 9
Series 3. George Meany Center for Labor Studies
1965-1999
Bargaining, Interest-Based
1999
Box 10
Bargaining Over New Technology
1993-1995
Box 10
Bargaining Over Workplace Change
1996
Box 10
Changing Workplace Structure
1995
Box 10
Construction Workers Retraining
1994
Box 10
Continuous Bargaining
1995
Box 10
Employee Involvement and Total Quality Management
1993-1995
Box 10
Labor Leadership
1965-1996
Box 10
Organizing for Unions
1997

Box 10
Role of Technology in Undermining Union Strength
1993

Box 10
Secretary-Treasurer (of Unions) Training
1993

Box 10
Technology and Work Organization
1993

Box 10
Total Quality Management Strategies
1995-1997

Box 10
Unions and Joint Labor Management
1994

Box 11
Union Leadership
1994-1996

Box 11
Union Leverage Analysis (SWOT)
1995

Box 11
Union Role in Participation Programs
1997

Box 11
Series 4. Labor Extension Program
1990-2006

Agendas; subject files: Center for Protection of Workers Rights to SEA
1990-2000

Box 12
Subject files: SEIU to West Coast Industry; Workshops
1999-2006

Box 13
Series 5. Research and Teaching Materials
1980-2008
Addresses-Exercises for Courses
1985-2008

Box 14
Exercises for Courses-Files
1988-2002

Box 15
Files-Memos
1980-2004

Box 16
Newsletters-Publications (Academic)
1984-2006

Box 17
Publications-Research Files
1982-2005

Box 18
Research Files
1988-2005

Box 19
Research Files-Subject Files
1989-2005

Box 20
Subject Files-Workshop Materials
1988-2008

Box 21

Series 6. Work and Technology Program
1986-2000
Arbitration Panels-Workshop Handouts
1986-2000
Box 22

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Susan Winning, Apr 2015.

Processing Information

Processed by Michelle C. Sigiel, May 2018.

Languages:

English, Portuguese

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Charley Richardson Papers (MS 862). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Collective bargaining--Stewards
George Meany Center for Labor Studies
Industrial management
Labor movement--United States--History--20th century
Labor relations consultants
Manufacturing industries--Brazil
Manufacturing industries--Canada
Manufacturing industries--United States
Massachusetts
Richardson, Charley
Six sigma (Quality control standard)
Total quality management--United States
University of Massachusetts at Lowell
Women--Employment--United States

Contributors

Richardson, Charley [main entry]

Genres and formats

Correspondence
Organization files
Transparencies



Special Collections & University Archives
University Libraries : UMass Amherst
154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275
Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)



