

## Forging Bonds

Last fall, a nine-member labor delegation from Hubei Province in the People's Republic of China met with officers of IBEW Local 3, New York City, the Joint Industry Board—a labor-management electrical industry group—and members of Local 3's Chinese American Cultural Society, including President Carl Chew. The result was the signing of a historic cultural exchange agreement that will facilitate communication and the sharing of information between the IBEW and the Hubei Provincial Federation of Trade Unions.

Members of the Hubei delegation represent more than one half million trade union members of 140 different labor organizations. As China undergoes economic reform, the representatives came to learn more about the workings of unions in the United States. They chose to enter into an exchange agreement with Local 3, the first time labor representatives from China have signed any such agreement with any labor union in the world.

Hubei Province is known for the construction of the world's largest hydroelectric project, the mile-long Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River. The first phase of the dam will begin operation in 2003.



**Local 3, New York City, Business Manager Thomas Van Arsdale and Madam Guo Pei Ying, Senior Economist of the Hubei Provincial Federation of Trade Unions, sign the historic cultural exchange agreement, the first of its kind between Chinese labor and any other trade union in the world.**

## A Leader Steps Down

Robert A. Georgine, one of the most respected and influential union leaders in North America, submitted his resignation as President of the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD), AFL-CIO, at the department's annual leadership meeting in January. The resignation is effective April 15, 2000.

The General Board of Presidents of the BCTD elected Edward C. Sullivan, head of the Elevator Constructors Union, to fill out the remainder of Georgine's term. Joseph Maloney, executive director of the Canadian office of the building trades was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. The BCTD will hold a convention and election in July of this year. Georgine will continue to serve as Chair-

man, CEO and President of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company (ULLICO).

Georgine has led the organization of 15 building trades unions, which together have 3 million members, since 1974. He said he had accomplished the goals he had set at the BCTD's last convention in 1995 and wanted to give new leadership the opportunity to develop a new agenda for the 21st century. One day before Georgine announced his resignation, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that building trades union membership had increased by 131,000 in 1998-99, the largest jump in decades, while union density in the trades



**BCTD President Robert A. Georgine addressing the 1996 IBEW International Convention.**

jumped from 17 percent to 19 percent. Georgine had implemented policies and programs to encourage and facilitate organizing in the trades.

IBEW International President J. J. Barry said of Georgine, "Bob is one of the most visionary, dedicated and loyal trade unionist with whom I have ever had the privilege of working. We will all miss his leadership that has made life better for

countless workingmen and -women. We wish him every success in his future efforts, and know he will continue to be one of the strongest advocates of working people our movement has ever known."

## Honoring Veterans

Each November, members of Local 124, Kansas City, Missouri, gather to honor the veterans in their ranks. In 1999, retired Marine Captain Al Lary, a veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. On display with a floral tribute to the veterans was a poem, which read as follows:

### VETERANS POEM

*The white is for peace.*

*...In return for the ugliness, hatred, and cruelty brought to bear on your soul, may the simple beauty of this pale flower give back, if only for a brief moment, tranquillity.*

*"The red is for love.*

*...It may be only one day we remember you, but it is with great affection for the trials you endured and the scars that will never truly heal. We say...thank you.*

*The blue is our accolade to you.*

*...Blue is a majestic color of honor and strength. It is the color of the ocean, of which no man knows its true depth. It is also the color of the sky, of which there is virtually no way to measure its magnitude or size."*

*God Bless America!*

The author of this poem is Janet Meek, who wrote it for Local 124 member Daniel Keifer for Veterans Day 1998. ☐

*(Thanks to Brother Rudy Chavez, Press Secretary of Local 124, for submitting this information.—Ed.)*



**Local 124's display honoring its veteran members.**

## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE SCHEDULED

The IBEW has scheduled its second National Women's Conference for July 13-15, 2000, at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. All IBEW locals are invited to participate. The conference will address numerous issues of importance to IBEW members and working



women in general. For further details, please check the IBEW's web site ([www.ibew.org](http://www.ibew.org)) or contact the Human Services Department at the International Office at (202) 728-6204; e-mail: [human\\_services@ibew.org](mailto:human_services@ibew.org). ☐

## T R A N S I T I O N S

The IBEW is saddened to announce the death of retired Twelfth District International Vice President M. A. "Burr" Williams on February 22, 2000.

A dedicated trade unionist, Brother Williams was appointed International Vice President on April 1, 1977, and elected as International Vice President in 1978 at the IBEW International Convention. He served in that position until his retirement on April 1, 1982. From 1963 to 1977, he was an International Representative and in that capacity served the Twelfth District locals in the field.

Initiated into Local 175, Chattanooga, Tennessee, on December 20, 1937, he served his local as business manager, Executive

### DECEASED



**M. A. Williams**

Board member, president and assistant business manager. Very active in the labor movement, he served as secretary-treasurer of the Chattanooga Area Labor Council, president and secretary-treasurer of the Chattanooga Building Trades, and secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee State Electrical Workers Association. He also represented the IBEW on the Council on Industrial Relations.

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on March 30, 1917, Brother Williams was a veteran of World War II and a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Elks, the Masonic Order and Shrine (Alhambra).

The IBEW extends sincere sympathy to his wife, Linnie, family and friends. ☐