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Issue # 184

WE CAN  
WE WILL  
WE MUST

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Membership meetings will be held from 2pm - 4pm the third (3rd) Saturday of every month. We rotate monthly between the Children's auditorium and the WHC auditorium



**President Michael Jeter**

## ABOUT US

We are a proud dedicated group of union professionals united in our mission to negotiate collectively for better wages, benefits, working conditions, and a fair & just working environment for our diverse community of workers. Below is just a few examples of the fun members enjoyed at the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Visit our website to see more of the pictures.

## GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Grievance Committee Meets on the first and last Wednesday of every month starting at 6pm



[www.seiu722.org](http://www.seiu722.org)



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## HONORING THE 50 YEARS OF LOCAL 722

Honoring fifty years of advocacy, professional excellence, and unwavering commitment to uplift the lives of healthcare workers and the labor community at large. SEIU Local 722 has impacted countless lives through tireless efforts, integrity, and compassion. We have inspired excellence, strengthened those around us, and reminded us all of the power of service. It is with deep gratitude and admiration that we recognize SEIU Local 722 for being a shining example of what it means to make a difference.

So let me ask you this question. Where were you and what were you doing in 1975?  
(pause)

Holler out if you were not even born in 1975. (Pause) Please stand if you were working at Washington Hospital Center or Children's National Hospital in 1975. (Pause) These people stood in the gap; it was their willingness to sacrifice what little they had to make it better for today's workforce. Now we stand today on their shoulders, and we thank them. (Be seated)

Local 722 received its charter and was officially established on January 25, 1975. Some didn't think we'd last and threw many curveballs and placed countless hurdles in our way, but here we are 50 years later still standing strong. (Pause) (If you have served in an elected position on the Executive Board of Local 722 in any capacity since 1975, please join me up here)

Let's be reminded that members of the Washington Hospital Center and Children's National Hospital didn't always have the many benefits that so many of our current members take for granted today. Some of you may recall when there were no guaranteed work hours or workers' compensation. We fought to get our members short-term disability before it was accepted across the nation. We didn't always receive extra pay for working off shifts and weekends. (You know, that shift differential) No time-and-a-half for working holidays. Did you know that Local 722 negotiated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday as a paid holiday for our members before anyone else? Unfortunately, we are still fighting to get Juneteenth recognized.

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By the way, we negotiated a \$15 minimum wage for our workers before the government increased it.

Do you recall what wages were like in 1975? Workers complained then about being overworked and underpaid. We have the same complaints today, so I want to share just a few wage comparisons from back in the day til today:

Environmental Assistance had a minimum of \$4.25/hr now \$17.95/hr; E.R. Tech was \$4.75/hr now \$21.17; Pharmacy Tech was \$7.23/hr now \$23.68/hr; Phlebotomist was \$5.59/hr now \$20.30/hr; Respiratory Therapist was only one level and paid \$5.79/hr now has 4 levels plus ECMO \$37.57 hr. These are just the minimums; individuals in these positions typically earn more than these figures.

But don't just compare wages; working conditions, job protection, health insurance, vacation, and sick leave are all better today than they were back then. However, there's no doubt that we still have a lot of work ahead of us. Health insurance premiums are rising, the cost of gas and groceries is rising, and home ownership is out of reach; what does affordable housing really look like? So the fight continues.

Upward mobility for all of us remained a constant for the Local 722 leadership. Pushing for growth in the workplace, ensuring that as times changed and classifications required additional credentials (certifications, licenses, etc.), wage adjustments correlated with the new credentials. We pushed for different training opportunities throughout the years to enhance the skill sets of our members; some came to fruition, while others never got off the ground. We negotiated tuition assistance from the employer while also establishing our own Local 722 scholarships. (Pause)

The Alton Akinsegun Scholarship is for our members (Named after our first Local 722 President), and the Marchel Smiley Scholarship is for the offspring of our members (In honor of our longest serving President)

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has over 2 million members nationwide. Many local unions within SEIU have 20 - 40 thousand members or more, some even hundreds of thousands, but not us.

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We are much smaller, but carry a big punch like the larger Local unions. Growing our membership is high on the SEIU International agenda. Local 722 has been building and growing as we add new job classifications and organize the off-site locations. I encourage everyone to stay connected, as we are looking to organize more workers who are not currently with our organization.

For 30 of our 50 years, Local 722 has been at the forefront of growing SEIU International's Caucuses around the country. That's right, SEIU has the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, AFRAM Caucus, Latino Caucus, Lavender Caucus, and the Indigenous Workers Caucus. Our very own Marchel Smiley is one of the founders and the first President of (Afram) the African American Caucus. We have with us several of our Afram leaders and members from around the country here celebrating with us tonight (Please stand).

This caucus work helps build worker power. And worker power is achieved through solidarity and our ability to grow and sustain the labor movement. That means working together, building the workforce, and developing future leaders. These key cornerstones of the caucus are necessary if we plan to leave society better for our kids and grandkids.

Members of SEIU Local 722, your original leaders established the path forward for you, knowing that there would be challenges. They faced those challenges head-on, celebrating wins whenever they could, but suffering many losses along the way as well. They never gave up, and that's why we are still here.

I have talked about some of the changes over the years. Society is ever-changing, and we have to change with it. Or shall I say "Crossover" with it? We can't just embrace the comfortable parts of it, we have to embrace it all.

I want you to think about this: A.I. Artificial Intelligence. It's a "Crossover". All of us, individually and collectively, have accepted the crossover that took us from manual labor to technology. Writing notes and letters to sending text and emails; Customer Service has moved to Self Service; **continue on page 5**

Receiving cash and spending cash has crossed over to electronic banking, debit and credit cards; shopping in stores to online shopping. We've even crossed over to robotic surgeries.

We've embraced that part, and now I want you to take on this call to action:

So the challenge is to embrace a different A.I. (still a Crossover): Basketball fans know him as Allen Iverson (A.I.). It was his "Crossover" that made him successful in his career. I call on you to use your "Crossover" to keep SEIU Local 722 moving forward for the next 50 years.

Embrace A.I. and Crossover to help build more solidarity and less division. Crossover to help maintain current benefits while obtaining even more. This is not a spectator sport. Crossover to help organize the unorganized. Crossover to saving our society and our democracy (Get out and vote in every election). Crossover to hold our leaders at every level accountable. Crossover to build a better tomorrow for those who come behind you. Step up your Crossover and become the shoulders for others to stand on.

We can, We will, and We must continue the progress made while fighting for our future. It is just that "**Progress**", nothing is complete. We all have value that we can bring to the table of success. What's your value? Bring it to our membership meeting on the third Saturday of the month. Our children and grand-children and all those who come behind us, their lives depend on it.



**SEIU LOCAL 722**

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**From a vision to a reality, Local 722 has sustained many challenges over the years; but stands strong 50 years later. Thank you to all of our past elected leaders who's shoulders we stand on; and Congratulations to all of our current elected leaders that continue to represent the workers of Children's National Hospital and Medstar Washington Hospital Center**