

# Shuler elected as AFL-CIO president

**O**n Aug. 20, Elizabeth H. “Liz” Shuler was elected president of the AFL-CIO by acclamation by the AFL-CIO Executive Council to serve out the term of President Richard Trumka, who died on Aug. 5.

Shuler was secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO when Trumka passed away, and she served as acting president in the weeks before her election. Shuler is the first female president of the AFL-CIO, the federation of 57 unions that has 12.5 million members.

“NALC congratulates President Liz Shuler on her selection as president of the AFL-CIO,” said NALC President Fredric Rolando, who serves as a vice president on the federation’s executive council. “Liz has been a dominant force in bringing power and diversity to the labor movement. In this time of loss, she will bring a steady hand, strength and forward momentum in fulfilling the priorities of organized labor.”

The executive council also elected by acclamation United Steelworkers International Vice President Fred Redmond to succeed Shuler as secretary-treasurer, as he became the first person of color to hold the No. 2 office.

Shuler grew up in a union household—her father, Lance, was a power lineman and longtime member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 125 at Portland General Electric in Oregon. In 1993, Shuler was hired as an organizer at Local 125. When energy giant Enron Corp. tried to muscle electricity deregulation through the Oregon Legislative Assembly, Shuler worked with a broad coalition of labor, community and environmental activists to challenge and ultimately overcome



AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler (c) with Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre (l) and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond

Enron’s lobbying campaign, a victory that sparked her passion for mobilizing workers to make change even when faced with overwhelming odds.

In 1998, Shuler mobilized California IBEW members to help defeat Prop. 226, the so-called “paycheck protection initiative,” which threatened to silence union members in the political process. That victory prompted John J. Barry, then president of the IBEW, to hire her as an international representative in the union’s political/legislative affairs department in Washington, DC. In that role, Shuler ran grassroots political efforts and lobbied Congress on a range of issues important to working families. In 2004, she was promoted to assistant to the international president, where she served President Edwin D. Hill, who had succeeded Barry, in driving the agenda of the nearly 1-million-member union.

At the AFL-CIO’s 2009 convention, she became the first woman elected

to the position of secretary-treasurer. As secretary-treasurer, she steered the federation through multiple fiscal crises, including that associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am humbled, honored and ready to guide this federation forward,” Shuler said after her election as AFL-CIO president. “I believe in my bones the labor movement is the single greatest organized force for progress. This is a moment for us to lead societal transformations—to leverage our power to bring women and people of color from the margins to the center—at work, in our unions and in our economy, and to be the center of gravity for incubating new ideas that will unleash unprecedented union growth.”

Shuler addressed the delegates at the 2014 NALC National Convention in Philadelphia. She praised carriers for going beyond doing their jobs by serving their communities in various ways, including raising funds for the

Muscular Dystrophy Association. “As important as your work is to every family and business in America,” Shuler said, “millions of people count on you for what you do besides deliver mail.” She also spoke at the 2014 NALC Heroes of the Year awards ceremony in Washington, DC, praising the heroes for their “unbelievable courage.”

Redmond has been a USW member since 1973, when he went to work at Reynolds Metals Co. in Chicago. He became active in his local union almost immediately, serving as shop steward and vice president before serving three terms as local president.

For decades, Redmond served the USW in various staff and leadership roles, assisting local unions, developing and conducting training programs, and negotiating contracts. Elected USW international vice president for human affairs in 2006, Redmond oversaw the Civil and Human Rights Department, as well as the union’s shipbuilding, health care and public-sector bargaining, and he worked with USW allies across the country in responding to attacks

on voting rights and in combating economic inequality. Redmond has a long history of leadership on various boards, including at the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

Speaking at NALC’s 2018 National Convention in Detroit, Redmond reminded the delegates of the labor movement’s central role, from its earliest years on, in promoting social and economic justice and opposing racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. Our united action in service of our values, he said, prepares us for the struggles that face us today.

“These are tough times,” Redmond said. “But in the labor movement, tough is what we do. We fight every day for working families, because in this labor movement, we pride ourselves on the morality of our core values and our mission of being a collective voice for the voiceless.”

The terms of the president and secretary-treasurer run through June 2022, when delegates to the AFL-CIO convention in Philadelphia will elect leaders for new four-year terms. **PR**

## CO letter carrier appointed to NALC Headquarters

**T**amara Twinn of Centennial, CO Branch 5996 has been appointed to a letter carrier staff position at NALC Headquarters.

Twinn began carrying mail in Albuquerque, NM, in 2006, joining Albuquerque Branch 504. She served as steward, Formal A representative, legislative coordinator and Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) coordinator for the branch. She also was vice president of the New Mexico State Association.

Twinn transferred to Englewood, CO,

in 2020 and joined Centennial Branch 5996, where she served as recording secretary, shop steward, Formal A representative and LCPF coordinator. She was a member of the Colorado State Association executive board and a letter carrier congressional liaison. She also served on the executive board for the Colorado AFL-CIO.

Twinn was an arbitration advocate and was named Activist of the Year at the Region 10 Spring Training School in 2020. She graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2017. **PR**



Tamara Twinn