



Here's to Mom

Having written at least 125 monthly columns in the 13 years I have been privileged to serve this union as a resident officer, I've decided that most fit into two categories—either “union information” or “big think” topics.

Only on rare occasions have I reached, uneasily, I admit, into a third arena—the personal.

This is one of those occasions, since Kathryn Joy Thatcher, my mother, died unexpectedly in early November.

Possibly I would not have thought to write about my wonderful mother if I had not read an article by Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 Vice President Susan Lewis about *her* mother: “I Miss My Mom.” Sister Lewis eloquently described how her mother stood up for what was right and organized a public employees union, the Frontier Central Employees Association, and in so doing, shaped Sister Lewis’ desire to represent letter carriers.

As I wrote Sister Lewis, my mother was not a union activist. But she was a strong, independent woman who stood up for herself and her family, and instilled in those who knew her the will to “do right.” She also fulfilled a dream that Sister Lewis’ mother had—she became a truck driver when I was a kid, and drove for about 15 years, most of the time with my dad, but on occasion alone. When she started driving with him, he’d have to stand in front of the men’s shower in truck stops because there were so few women drivers in those days that most truck stops didn’t provide shower facilities for women. More troublesome, men occasionally tried to prevent my mother from doing her job by attempting to keep her off the docks.

I can’t say, as Sister Lewis did, that it was because of my mother’s work that I became a committed union activist. The cause and effect for me is not as clear. But my



Kathryn Joy Thatcher

mother’s independence and courage taught me to stand up for myself—and, as it turned out, for letter carriers when I began to represent them in Davenport, IA, as a steward in Branch 506. My mother inspired me to stand tall, not to back down, and by her example, convinced me that I could do whatever I set my mind to. She was very proud of

me and this union, and I am very proud of her. And, like Sister Lewis and tens of thousands of my NALC sisters *and* brothers, many of whom are union activists because of a mother’s example, “I miss my mom.”

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Unless your branch has no annual income or financial activity, you *must* file with the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) one of three types of financial reports, depending upon the total annual receipts of the branch. The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) requires unions to file the report within 90 days after the branch’s (or state association’s) fiscal year. Most branches have fiscal years ending Dec. 31, so most should be filing by March 30 each year. Branch presidents and secretary-treasurers are responsible for ensuring that required reports are filed timely and accurately. The LMRDA does not provide for or permit an extension of time for filing for any reason.

The filing requirements are:

- **Form LM-2**—Lengthy report filed electronically by branches with \$250,000 or more in annual receipts.
- **Form LM-3**—Four-page report filed by branches with total annual receipts of at least \$10,000 but less than \$250,000. It can be filed on paper or electronically.
- **Form LM-4**—Two-page report filed by branches with annual financial receipts of less than \$10,000.

The officers required to file annual financial reports are responsible for maintaining records that will provide in sufficient detail the information and data necessary to verify the accuracy and completeness of the report. The records must be kept for at least five years after the date the report is filed. Any record necessary to verify, explain or clarify the report must be retained, including, but not limited to, vouchers, worksheets, receipts and applicable resolutions.

Willfully failing to file a report or to keep required records can lead to criminal penalties—specifically a fine of not more than \$100,000, imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Knowingly making a false statement or representation of a material fact or knowingly failing to disclose a material fact in a report or other required document; and/or willfully making a false entry in, or withholding, concealing or destroying documents required to be kept may result in the same penalties listed above.

More information can be found at dol.gov under “Compliance Assistance,” “Unions and Union Members” and “Financial Reporting and Fiscal Controls.” ☒