

# Workers Memorial Day



**Manuel L. Peralta Jr.**

**“No one should have to sacrifice their life for their livelihood, because a nation built on the dignity of work must provide safe working conditions for its people.”** —Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez

On Dec. 29, 1970, Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The text of the law begins with:

An Act: To assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women; by authorizing enforcement of the standards developed under the Act; by assisting and encouraging the States in their efforts to assure safe and healthful working conditions; by providing for research, information, education, and training in the field of occupational safety and health; and for other purposes.

Article 34 of the Act established that the new law would take effect 120 days after the date of its enactment, making it effective April 28, 1971. Years later, April 28 was selected as Workers Memorial Day.

**I have been in Washington, DC, since December 2010.**

The following list represents NALC members who have died from injuries (or consequential injuries) suffered in the line of duty. Take a moment to remember each of them on Workers Memorial Day.

- Dec. 6, 2010: Bruce Parton of Miami, FL  
*Shooting victim*
- March 4, 2011: Nancy Schafer of Dundee, MI  
*Porch collapsed on her after delivery*
- Feb. 29, 2012: Anthony Dunn of Los Angeles, CA  
*Park point accident*
- March 4, 2012: Dianna Johnson of Escondido, CA  
*Dog attack*
- July 24, 2012: John Watzlawick of Independence, MO  
*Heat exposure*
- Oct. 17, 2012: Robert Rochester of Wilmington, DE  
*Dog attack*
- Jan. 2, 2013: Ken Carrano of Brick, NJ  
*Eye struck by tree branch*
- Jan. 20, 2013: Lawrence Pierce of Wichita, KS  
*Falling accident*

- March 7, 2013: Juan Carlos Riestra of Port St. Lucie, FL  
*Vehicle accident*

We all mourn the loss of our fallen brothers and sisters. What can we all do to stop adding names to this list? Find out how you can get involved in making your workplace safer for all.

Article 14 of the National Agreement begins with the words:

It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force...

Keep an eye on your work environment and report all hazards. If management fails to correct the hazards we report, see your steward and, if necessary, process a grievance to enforce the contract.

**In closing, I wish to take a moment to send out a special thank-you to Bakersfield, CA Branch 782 cartoonist Fred Acedo.** Fred has been contributing his artwork to the E.A. Baker *Union Update* since 1993. In preparing this month's column, I reached out to Fred and asked if he could draw an appropriate piece of artwork for the occasion of Workers Memorial Day. Thank you, Fred.

## OUT THERE



N.A.L.C. BR. 782 - BAKERSFIELD, CA.