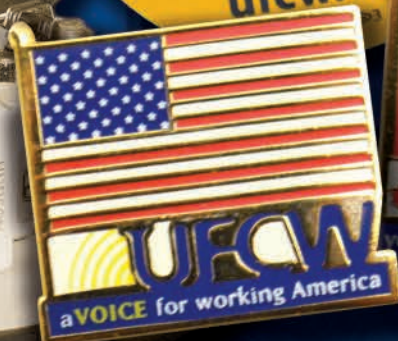


# BUILDING **OUR** UNION

The History of the United Food  
& Commercial Workers International Union



# FOR RESPECT

OUR Walmart  
Organization United for Respect at Walmart



# 1800-1900

## THE BEGINNING of Organized Labor in North America

**1804** First Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers (Shoemakers) strike in Philadelphia

**1835** National Association of Journeymen Cordwainers formed

**1850** Clothing Cutters' and Trimmers' Union established



**1867** Knights of St. Crispin formed to regulate machinery

**1869** Daughters of St. Crispin formed the first women's labor union in the U.S.

**1870** First craft unions formed

**1881** First Knights of Labor assembly convenes in Hamilton, Ontario

**1886** Journeymen Barbers Protective Union present at founding convention of American Federation of Labor (AFL), an amalgamation of dozens of separate craft unions



**1887** Journeymen Barbers International Union of America founded

**1888** Clothing, Gents Furnishings and Shoe Store Workers receive AFL charter

Mary Burke elected first female Vice President of the Retail Clerks National Protective Association

**1890** Establishment of Clothing Cutters' Progressive Union

Retail Clerks National Protective Association gets AFL charter

**1891** United Garment Workers of America chartered by AFL

**1895** Boot and Shoe Workers Union (BSWU) chartered by AFL

**1897** Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America (AMCBW) chartered by AFL



**1899** First Canadian local of Retail Clerks founded in Vancouver, British Columbia



**1901** United Textile Workers of America chartered by AFL

First Canadian local of Amalgamated Meat Cutters founded in Stratford, Ontario

**1902** Catherine Schultz dubbed “Joan of Arc of Retail Clerks” in Chicago strike

**1904** International Fur Workers Union (IFWU) formed

**1910** Mary Anderson of the Boot and Shoe Workers Union (BSWU) named Director of AFL’s Women in Industry Service

**1913** Major strikes secure minimum wage standards

**1920** Mary Anderson (BSWU) named first head of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Women’s Bureau



**1937** Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) charts the National Leather Workers Association (NLWA)

United Retail Employees of America receives CIO charter, name later changed to Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)

**1938** Fur and Leather Workers of America created by IFWU and NLWA merger

**1940** Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) begins organizing meat industry plants across Canada



**1942** Patrick Gorman elected to top office of Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America (AMCBW); Known as “Mr. Amalgamated” for more than half a century, he strongly supported a merger with Retail Clerks that later created UFCW

**1943** PWOC becomes

United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA), union dedicates itself to ending racial discrimination in meat packing plants, working against segregation, and achieving workplace equality for women



**THE GROWTH** of Organized Labor

**1901-1944**



# 1945-1978

## THE GROWTH of Organized Labor

**1947** James Suffridge elected to top leadership position at the Retail Clerks International Association (RCIA), which he holds for 21 years

**1948** Holford Harris becomes the first African American elevated to Executive Board of AMCBW

RCIA begins organizing workers in health care and non-profit hospital field

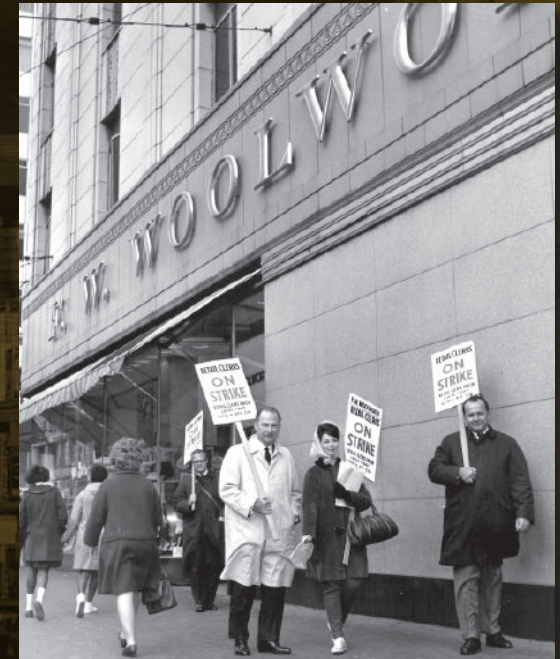


**1968** United Packinghouse Workers Union merges with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters

James Housewright elected International President of the RCIA

**1970** Canadian Region of Retail Clerks established

**1972** Retail Clerks Minority Coalition created during the RCIA Convention to promote diversity and inclusion within the labor movement; name changed to UFCW Minority Coalition when RCIU and AMCBW merge



**1976** Addie Wyatt elected first woman Vice President of Amalgamated Meat Cutters

**1977** RCIA changes name to Retail Clerks International Union (RCIU), and is 5<sup>th</sup> largest AFL-CIO affiliate

BSWU merges with RCIU

William Wynn elected International President of RCIU

Richard Perry is first African-American elected Vice President of RCIU





# 1979-1993

## THE BIRTH of the UFCW

**1979** Merger of the RCIU and AMCBW creates the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW); William Wynn elected International President and Samuel J. Talarico elected International Secretary-Treasurer of the UFCW at the founding convention in Washington, D.C.



**1980** Barbers, Beauticians and Allied Industries merges with the UFCW



First UFCW Women's Affairs, Civil Rights and Political Action Conference held in Washington, D.C., and the UFCW Women's Network is launched

**1981** UFCW begins national safety and health programs to identify job hazards and create training

The United Retail Workers Union (URWU) merges with the UFCW



**1983** UFCW's first regular convention held in Montréal, Québec

The Insurance Workers International Union (IWIU) votes to merge with the UFCW

UFCW begins its affiliation with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

After 25 years with predecessor unions—UPWA and AMCBW—former UFCW Vice President Charles Hayes becomes the first trade unionist to be elected to Congress, and serves five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives (Illinois)

Ricardo Icaza becomes first Latino elected UFCW Vice President





**1984** Norma Steill, elected International Vice President of the Retail Clerks in 1978, is elected the first woman UFCW Region Director

**1986** Canadian Union of United Brewery, Flour, Cereal, Soft Drink and Distillery Workers merges with the UFCW

**1987** Due to UFCW pressure, OSHA expands hazard communication standards to provide information and training to hair care and retail workers

Huguette Plamondon elected UFCW Vice President Canada Region

United Hispanics founded: now known as United Latinos of the UFCW

Lenore Miller, President of the RWDSU, becomes the first woman union President elected to the AFL-CIO Executive Council



**1988** UFCW Canadian regions consolidate under name "UFCW Canada"

UFCW, Iowa Beef Processors and OSHA sign safety and health agreement with three-year program to reduce trauma injuries for packinghouse workers

**1991** Independent Foodhandlers and Warehouse Employees Union (IFWE) affiliates with UFCW

**1992** Local 1, Leather Goods, Plastics, Handbags and Novelty Workers Union merges with the UFCW

**1993** International Union of Life Insurance Agents (IULIA) of Ohio, Wisconsin and Minnesota merges with the UFCW

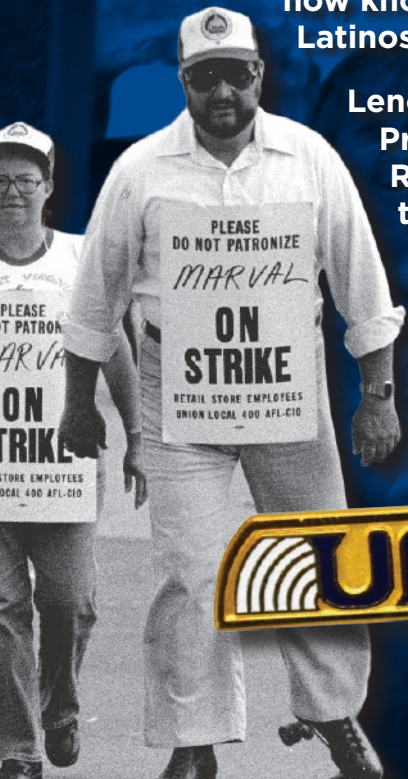
RWDSU merges with the UFCW and becomes RWDSU District Council of the UFCW

Johnny Rodriguez elected Vice President of the UFCW and also serves as the President of United Latinos of the UFCW



# THE BIRTH of the UFCW

## 1979-1993





# 1994-2003

## A MODERN UNION

**1994** Douglas Dority elected UFCW International President

United Garment Workers of America (UGWA) merges with the UFCW



UFCW's Food Processing, Packing and Manufacturing Division establishes a Diversity Task Force aimed at addressing immigrant workers' concerns within the packing industry

**1995** Textile Workers of America (UTWA) merges with the UFCW and becomes UFCW Textile and Garment Council

Distillery, Wine and Allied Workers International Union merges with the UFCW to become the UFCW's Distillery, Wine and Allied Workers Division

**1996** International Chemical Workers Union merges with the UFCW and becomes the International Chemical Workers Union Council of the UFCW

**1997** Canadian Union of Restaurant and Related Employees merges with the UFCW

Mary Finger, UFCW Women's Network Chair, elected Vice President and named Director of UFCW's Civil Rights and Community Relations Department

**1998** Sarah Palmer Amos elected first woman UFCW Executive Vice President

Production Service and Sales District Council merges with the UFCW



UFCW members march on Walmart headquarters at Bentonville, Arkansas

International Vice President Pat Scarcelli becomes first woman appointed to head UFCW's Legislative and Political Affairs Department





**1999** Textile Processors, Service Trades, Health Care, Professional and Technical Employees International Union merges with the UFCW

UFCW Canada wins a Supreme Court of Canada decision for unions to communicate freely with the public about their disputes, including workplace locations where there is no union



**2002** UFCW launches a national Day of Action, involving workers, consumers, students and faith-based organizations, to challenge Walmart to become a positive force for workers, families and communities

**2003** One hundred thousand UFCW supermarket workers from Southern California and across the country hold the line in an historic 141-day fight to protect their health care benefits



**2000** Perdue chicken catchers join the UFCW to demand a voice on the job and a right to join a union

**2001** Joe Hansen elected President of Union Network International (UNI), an international labor organization representing 15 million workers, in 900 unions, in more than 100 countries



A **MODERN UNION**  
**1994-2003**





# 2004-2008

## A CHANGING UNION

**2004** Joe Hansen elected International President of the UFCW



International Committee on the Future of the UFCW formed to create strategies and directives for change within the UFCW

Hundreds of UFCW Canada members in Jonquière, Québec demand union certification at Walmart, which closes its store rather than submit to Québec's first contract arbitration law

**2005** UFCW and six other unions form Change to Win, a movement to raise living and working standards in core industries

Workers at Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta achieve union certifications with UFCW Canada, after a ten-year campaign

**2006** Wayne Hanley elected National Director of UFCW Canada



UFCW reorganizes its structure in the U.S., transitioning the organization into a growth-focused union

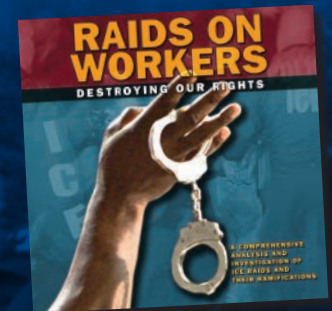
Grocery Workers United unity program created, bringing UFCW retail food members together for increased bargaining power through member support, information and communication via e-mail, video, and website



**2007** UFCW and AFL-CIO prevail in a lawsuit filed against OSHA; new rule will require employers to pay for personal protective equipment, preventing thousands of workplace injuries every year

A substantial restructuring of the UFCW Canada National Council is undertaken

**2008** UFCW convenes a new national commission to examine the policies and practices of enforcement actions by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and holds hearings across the nation



After a decade-long struggle, workers at the Smithfield meatpacking plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, choose union representation with the UFCW

More than 1,200 H&M workers in the U.S. ratify their first contract

Ontario Courts uphold UFCW Canada challenge that Ontario Farm Union Ban was unconstitutional







# 2009-2013

## THE UNITY AGENDA in Action

First UFCW Canada National Growth Summit

UFCW Canada launches Students Against Migrant Exploitation (S.A.M.E.)

2011 H&M workers in New York and Toronto join UFCW

UFCW members hold solidarity rallies around the country in support of Wisconsin workers

The Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) is launched

The UFCW conducts the first ever data collection and analysis of the demographics and diversity of its membership

85,000 UFCW Canada members join electronic town hall to mobilize support for Jack Layton; UFCW Canada is the first union in Canada to use this technology to mobilize members politically

Founding of UFCW Canada Political Action Conference

**2009** Nearly 5,000 workers at a Smithfield meatpacking plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, ratify their first union contract

Launch of United Latinos of UFCW Canada

Workers in Manitoba ratify the first ever contract covering seasonal, migrant agriculture workers including the right to be recalled each season based on seniority

**2010** Over 8,000 Pilgrim's Pride workers win \$4.7 million in back pay and liquidated damages as part of a settlement against the company





## 2012 Warehouse workers at H&M join UFCW Canada

UFCW and Kroger announce an agreement to improve and secure pension funds or defined benefit pension plans for over 170,000 retired and active Kroger workers

After a 12-year legal battle, more than 12,000 Tyson poultry workers in 41 plants in 12 states receive payments from the largest settlement—\$32 million—against a major poultry company

Members of OUR Walmart in more than 100 cities go on strike to protest Walmart's illegal actions against its workers as part of the 1,000 actions in 46 states leading up to and on Black Friday



UFCW Canada certifies its ninth agriculture unit in Quebec

After long dispute between the UFCW and retail giant Tesco's Fresh & Easy stores, Tesco decides to pull out of U.S. market

UFCW announces its support for marriage equality

UFCW Canada launches Target Fairness campaign to keep good jobs for Zellers workers

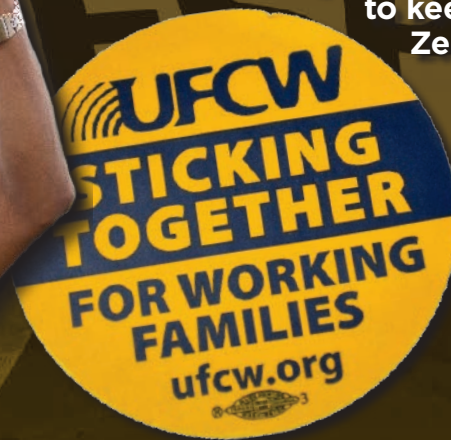
UFCW Canada launches Safety NOW for Alberta Farm Workers

UFCW Canada launches national OUR Sobeys campaign to help improve lives for workers in retail food industry

2013 The UFCW and CVS Caremark announce the signing of a cooperation agreement giving CVS/pharmacy employees at over 500 stores the opportunity to join the UFCW

The National Farm Workers' Confederation (CNC) and UFCW Canada sign agreement to ensure rights of migrant workers are protected

Over 80 UFCW leaders write President Obama in support of comprehensive immigration reform







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ForRespect.org

**OUR Walmart**   
Organization United for Respect at Walmart

**ON STRIKE**  
Meat Cutters  
& Food Clerks  
LOCAL 246, AFL-CIO

*This Story* **ON STRIKE**  
Tired of Working  
75 Hrs. Per Week  
I Was FIRED  
Joining The  
NOT P

**ON STRIKE**  
**Meat Cutters**  
Local 246, AFL-CIO

A yellow circular pin badge with a red band across the middle. The text "RETAIL CLERKS UNION" is printed in red on the yellow background, and "MAY 1966" is printed in black on the red band. A small logo is visible at the top of the badge.

**UFCW**

**SUPPORT  
WORKING  
FAMILIES**

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

