

## MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNITED FARMWORKERS OF AMERICA 1973-1978

By Marcia Aronson

Fall, 1973

I was a high school English teacher in the Bronx, NY. A colleague, Eleanor Koffler, asked me to join a picket line in front of an A&P supermarket. Though I was socially conscious in terms of the Civil Rights struggle and aware of societies inequities and injustices, I had never heard of the UFW or Cesar Chavez and had no clue as to how fruits and vegetables were harvested or by whom. They could have fallen from heaven in plastic bags onto supermarket shelves as far as I was concerned.

I did join that picket line after a brief explanation as to "WHY" grapes and lettuce were being boycotted. Then I read the literature and my social conscience was piqued so much so that I was drawn in to volunteer as much as I could. I joined UFW picket lines all over the Bronx. When Dolores Huerta came to NY to have a big demonstration in Hunts Point Market where the produce came in, I participated, bringing a friend or two. We got a head of lettuce thrown at us but that had no effect on my desire to continue my support.

Most passers by and shoppers were supportive of the struggle, but there was an occasional antagonistic person: One Saturday morning a man emerged from the supermarket eating a bunch of grapes and as a response to our chants about farmworker exploitation, he raged, "How do you know? Are you a farmworker? That led me to muse, "Indeed I don't know. I've lived in the urban Bronx all my life." I decided to go to California and observe and experience for myself.

July, 1973

Someone at the UFW told me to connect with Father John Bank in Delano. I called Father Bank from Los Angeles, CA. relating my particulars which were that I was a supporter of the Boycott in NYC and wanted to learn more about the struggle in the fields and support the strikers on the picket line there. He told me that it was too dangerous at that moment to wait a week and then call back. A week later I phoned again. He told us to come. (I was with a friend, Monnie Callan.)

When we arrived he was on the phone. There was an urgent tone in his voice. He put the receiver down and uttered, "I have to go. A worker was just killed." It was Nagi Daifullah, a Yemeni brother.

Monnie and I connected with other staff people at The Forty Acres expressing our desire to join the picket line. We slept on the floor of the clinic and were on the picket line in the morning i.e. the madrugada! The atmosphere was tense. Rocks were thrown from passing cars. I did not want to be a martyr so when cars passed I ducked behind my parked car.

The next day Cesar called off picketing. He didn't want our side to respond with violence. And he certainly didn't want any more striker fatalities.

We were among thousands in the sad procession behind the coffin. Cesar spoke; Joan Baez sang. It was hot out there on Garces. I could only imagine what it was like to work in the fields around there.

Two days later, another striker was killed. Juan de la Cruz....shot through the heart while on the

picket line. Another heartbreaking funeral procession down Garces. Such sadness, the kind that that stirs deep resolve to change things.

The Yemeni workers/strikers we met were renting a small house and sleeping on a floor of wall-to-wall mattresses. They offered us some space because we were sleeping in our car. We actually did so one night; but we learned that this necessitated their sleeping in their car and we certainly didn't want that. They were so kind and generous to us. We learned that the growers had the power and influence to fly plane loads of Yemeni young men, not families, "farm hands" to work in the fields. At first we were surprised to encounter the Arab workers. But it made sense from their point of view: slave labor and add another language to Spanish and Tagalog and it's easier to "divide and conquer." However, the UFW printed leaflets in all three languages!

Monnie and I made it known to the UFW staff that we were there to help. The AFL-CIO had just voted to give some financial support to the striking workers. They sent us to La Paz to get the checkbooks.

One evening we noticed a construction project on the Forty Acres. A volunteer crew was beginning the project of building Agbayani Village. We spent the rest of the summer helping: digging ditches for plumbing among other tasks.

September, 1973.

I returned to my life in New York and continued to get more involved in supporting the Boycott. I worked closely with the organizer, Marie Ledoux, planning strategy, hosting and the supporter meetings and holding parties and fundraisers. We had a huge flea market which included food. I don't remember how much money we raised though.

Of course, I continued participating in the actions: picket lines, meeting with supermarket owners to get them to remove the grapes and lettuce from the shelves and with liquor store owners to do the same with Gallo Wine.

July, 1974.

Monnie and I returned to Delano to assist the Agbayani building crew and to add our support to the grape workers still on strike. The strike continued but the atmosphere had changed. The air of immediate danger was gone. Some of the striking workers played guitars. I remember some great moments when the singing strikers connected with the "scabs" (esquiroles) by bellowing out to them, "If you like the music, and want it to continue, throw a bunch of grapes in the air!" And as far as the eye could see, hundreds of bunches of grapes were in the air.

Also, many of the women strikers knelt down at the edge of the fields appealing to the workers who were scabbing, "For your children, for your families for you futures, join the strike." Growers did bring busloads of workers across the border in buses that had curtains on the windows.....to hide the fact of the strike.

Back on the Agbayani front I helped by putting support plates on the wood frame, putting vents in on the ceilings, sanding and varnishing the doors. There was still some danger around Forty Acres, particularly at night. We all took turns standing guard. We heard that a bullet had been fired from a

passing car.

We were welcomed by the Filipino brothers, the Manongs who had given their lives to slaving in the fields. They were staying in a camp, (Shenley, I think), until the completion of Agbayani.. they were so friendly, generous, authentic, sincere and loving and excellent cooks...using fresh vegetables from their garden. Among those I remember were Fred Abad, "Chairman," Philip Veracruz, and Sebastian. And they had stories of struggle....Also, there was a young brother, Rudy Reyes, there to rest. His motto was "Boycott grapes of rats!"

September, 1974

I was back in New York teaching and continuing my involvement in and support of the New York boycott.

July, 1975 found me back in Delano. The Filipino brothers were living in Agbayani Village! I slept on the floor of a room I had worked on! I drove up to Sacramento to attend a UFW convention. I don't remember anything of note from the convention.

September, 1975 found me back in New York, of course teaching, and still strongly supporting the Boycott. The Union was reaching out for more staff. Marie Ledoux, the organizer strongly urged me to join and I did! I believed strongly that the UFW was attempting to push for changes in society that would improve the lives of the workers. And I wanted to be part of it. I must note here that as a United Federation of Teachers member, I was working under an excellent contract which allowed me to do this without losing my seniority upon my return to the job.

July, 1976 I joined the UFW staff thinking I'd be on the boycott. But within weeks I was in a caravan of cars headed for California to work on "Proposition 14." I worked in "East Los" doing what I call "street work." We went to parking lots and streets to explain why it was important to vote, "YES" on "14." We distributed leaflets, bumper stickers and got petitions signed. I lived in Pasadena...worked long hours...I was happy to do it....but it was very stressful.However, I was not a stranger to street work the Boycott entailed lots of it!!

After Proposition 14 was over, most of the boycott staff was sent to La Paz. The Union was looking for Spanish speaking staff to work in California. Artie Rodriguez and Larry Tramut interviewed me. Artie asked me if I speak Spanish. I replied with, "Puedo decir lo que quiero expresar." He said, "You're in!"

I was assigned to the Service Centers and was supposed to get training in La Paz BUT there was an emergency at a ranch near Arvin-Lamont. The company was Phelan and Taylor...It was December, 1976 the company petitioned for an election because all of the workers except the company puppets were back in Mexico for the Christmas holidays. I listened and watched as the organizer, Angel Garcia tried to talk to the "mayordomo"..who was sporting a rifle in the back window of his pick-up truck. Amy Shubitz was there too. I'm not sure if we staved off the election. (I think we did.) What I do remember vividly is the inhumane, filthy bathroom there. It was just one big room...one big "communal outhouse." A long ledge with holes in it that rimmed the room...and disgustingly dirty and smelly.

My education re: conditions for farmworkers had commenced thanks to Phelan and Taylor: the sneaky election, the intimidation of the rifle, and the bathroom!!!!

My first Service Center assignment was in Santa Maria, which, I was told, was a difficult place to work because the Teamsters were in competition with the UFW there. I think that affected the organizers' work more directly than mine.

I have some notes from those days, so I'll write from them and comment occasionally. I'll use quotation marks for the text from the notes.

“En general

Santa Maria Service Center has been trying to choreograph and coordinate clean-up and reorganization of materials. I'm getting familiar with the various areas of substance, all the while trying to live in Spanish.”

“Frank had been hurt on the job, spraying in the lemons. He came to us with a confused state of affairs in ?....But he changed to our lawyers. Though he was using a crutch to walk, he helped around the office and built a huge bulletin board and bookcase which we absolutely needed!” I remember the artistry and caring he put into the building of the bulletin board and bookcase. I thought it reflected his love and caring for the Union. It was taking care of him, in a certain way. And he wanted to take care of it.

“Felisima had been falsely accused of shoplifting and had been found guilty by trial....before I got there. When she came to my office, she was frightened that the judge was going to give her 30 days in jail. (She had kids!) Working with the Public Defender we rounded up 10 people to vouch for her honesty and good character. We changed the judge's feeling from “guilty” to “error.” She got no jail time.”

I spoke at a church in Lompoc: La Purisima Lompoc. These were my remarks:

“Gracias por esta oportunidad a hablar con ustedes. Estoy con la Union de los Campesinos. Campesinos son un grupo de trabajadores mas pobres en todo el país. Reciben sueldos muy bajos. No tienen proteccion de pesticidas. No tienen agua limpia y fresca. Campesinos pisan la comeda por todos en este pais y muchas veces no tienen bastante comida por sus familias, sus niños.

Muchos hombres siempre tuvieron la esperanza a cambiar la situación, a organizar a los trabajadores del campo. Todo el mundo dijo que sería una cosa buena, y importante pero no es posible, NO SE PUEDE! Pero hay un hombre que ha tenido el poder a cambiar la situación: Cesar Chavez. El siempre dijo, 'SI SE PUEDE.' Es la razón estoy aqui. ....porque sabemos que la lucha que tenemos no esta solamente en los files..... -esta en los cortes.....-esta en las oficinas de seguridad -esta en las oficinas de desempleo.....-esta en los hospitales -esta en las oficinas de los doctores y -esta en las oficinas de welfare. Si tiene un problema, en cualquier oficina, venga a mi oficina y juntos vamos a luchar por sus derechos. El Centro de Servicio estuvo establecido por ayudar a la gente con sus problemas.”

“ One day, a thankful worker said to me, 'Before Cesar, no bathroom; if a worker had to go to the

bathroom, he watered the crops!”

A worker came to my office in great distress because he was not able to collect the BACK WAGES the company owed him. I investigated, made calls and got him the owed money. He was so grateful to ME. Though I played a part, I told him that it was the power of the UFW that made the difference. I actually felt it to be true.

I started to feel isolated in Santa Maria and began to think that I had made a mistake in joining staff. The work was gratifying, but as a “newcomer,” I needed more community. Well, Fate responded to my need in the form of a phone call from Anne McGregor who asked if I would be “flexible enough” to go to work in the Coachella Service Center. I said, “Yes.”

The Union was initiating an organizing campaign in the grapes there. Coachella had a clinic and offices for legal and Service Center, in essence a big staff.....with a lot happening. I worked with Olivia Nieto, Ellen Starbird and others whose names I can't remember. I had a community....and my work and education continued!

I worked with scores of individuals and families in the time I was in Coachella. (more than a year, I think). I'll give an overview of the types of problems that besieged the workers and the write of a few specific situations. I contacted the Labor Commissioner scores of times for back wages and other labor violations. The growers tried to get out of paying “Workers Compensation” for those injured on the job. Instead, they tried to trick the worker into using his/her own disability money for all expenses associated with the injury. I worked on that scenario frequently. I was an advocate and translator in the unemployment office, the welfare and food stamp office. I connected with churches for emergency food, clothing and blankets. I worked on immigration issues: green cards, citizenship and myriads of problems to do with “legal status” or the lack there of. Here's an example of the hoops that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service forced some workers to jump through: A worker was denied a green card because they said he hadn't earned enough money considering the size of his family. So he got a job in construction which paid considerably more. He returned to the INS office with proof of his higher salary and THEY DENIED HIM THE GREEN CARD....TELLING HIM THAT THE SALARY REPORTED WAS TOO HIGH THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE IT!!!

A worker who had been a patient in Indio Community Hospital and discharged came to my office for help because he was still in severe pain. In consultation with our clinic I took him to Loma Linda Medical Center. The diagnosis was “infection of the spinal fluid.” They kept him. Some time later he leaped into my office exclaiming, “I'm back from the dead.” And, needless to say, most thankful. That's one example of the inferior care and treatment offered to the workers by the Indio “Community” Hospital! The “lucha” was not only in the fields...

A family came for help because the crew manager, Ron Jeffredo, was menacing them: he pulled a gun on them, literally pushed them around, and in the excruciating heat of summer turned off the air-conditioning which could have meant death for their newborn. This scenario entailed going to the police as well as the Labor Commissioner. Ron Jeffredo, some time later, was elected as president of the School Board in Coachella!

5/23/77 My actual notes (Coachella)

Ignacio Guitierrez came back today because his worker's compensation checks from Travellers Insurance Company have stopped. The history of his involvement with the Campesino Center is worth recalling.

When he came to my office he had been hurt a Cal-Date. He was in one of those carts, his hands were up, ready to work, when the cart shook ramming his right side against the side of the cart. He reported the accident to the foreman, Laloo, 3/14/77. The foreman told him to work that day and he would take him to the doctor the next day. Laloo kept postponing taking him to the doctor----he even went so far as to say he'd wait for Ignacio at the camp leaving him to wait a few hours----in vain.. Finally, Tuesday, 4/19/77, Laloo took him to the doctor and left him there; Ignacio had to walk home. The doctor told him to go back to work. Ignacio was in pain, had no money coming in, and barely any food in the house when the organizer, David Tocino, brought him to my office.

We immediately got him in to see the doctor at the Clinic, who disabled him for at least a month, diagnosing a possible cracked rib. The next morning he returned. Since it was a Saturday, there was no getting emergency food stamps; so, I got him a big bag of food via the Catholic Social Services.

On Monday morning I called the insurance company and got Marge Madden to call Cal-Date to see why they haven't sent the first report. A short time later, Ignacio received a check for \$104.39, his first week of compensation.

Meanwhile, the foreman went to his house four times to tell him that the company would not pay him if he changed doctors and that the Union could not help him!

Now, to get back to today. His checks stopped. I called the company. Mrs, Estrada was not in; so, they had me speak to someone else. This person said it was the wrong department and that she would transfer me to the correct one. Instead, she cut me off. I called back COLLECT, and after much hassle, I spoke to Marge Madden who said she would go through the file and call me in the morning..

It is also worth noting that I had been in constant communication with the clinic and 5/18/77 a letter was sent by Dr. Pat Dowling to Travellers stating that Ignacio was still disabled. If they don't continue the checks, I'll file an adjudication immediately. Disability form has already been sent..

As if all this was not enough, he just found out that his 20 year old <sup>son</sup> in Mexico died.

Question: Are there any penalties for the delay in taking him to the doctor?

5/26/77

I went to the welfare office with Leticia Garibaldi. They DID terminate the AFDC, including medical and food stamps. They received a letter from Immigration stating that the children are illegal. The woman I spoke to refused to budge from the ironclad position that the case must be terminated. She gave Leticia an application for general relief.

Leticia also told me that as a result of her first court date dealing with the adoption of the children, she

was sent to welfare and the worker, Mr. Gutierrez said to her, " You don't have any money; you're not working; what do you want the children for?" With hurt, anger and amazement at his lack of understanding, she answered, "What shall I do with my brother's children? Throw them out of the house? They have nowhere to go. If you don't want to help me, don't. I came because the Judge sent me, saying you have to help me. I won't let them go hungry. I've been fighting since 1971 for them. I'll keep on fighting.

The Supervisor tells me that General Relief will supply \$75.00 a month for food for the 2 kids. This is taking care of them???

## BLYTHE CAMPESINO CENTER

I don't remember when I was first assigned to the Blythe Service Center. However, I have some writings from some of my work there. That's what follows.

June 22 to July 1, 1978.

"Well, I'm back in Blythe and as never fails to happen when I'm here I visited the fields with a 'compliance safety engineer' from CAL-OSHA. A trabajadora campesina came to my office to complain about the filthy bathroom conditions at Gilroy Foods, Inc.\* This complaining worker explained that there were about 75 workers on her night shift (5 onion machines) mostly women who had to compete for one filthy bathroom. Things were so bad she moaned, that the women were resorting to hunting for the nearest tree.....which, if you've ever been in the desert, you know is not anywhere to be found. This coupled with the absence of washing facilities and individual paper cups for drinking made an already difficult job a nightmare. Workers from the day crews brought similar complaints to my office. Larry Baca, the CAL-OSHA compliance safety engineer, usually assigned to this area, was on vacation, so I had to keep after Sam Morrocco to send an inspector BEFORE the end of the onion season. Finally, he sent Harold C. Smith, a jolly, hand-shaking, back slapping Santa Claus type whose manner, I guess was meant to cushion the surprise inspection (This inspection was a first for Gilroy.) so as to lower the company's resistance; but what it did in part was to ameliorate some of the seriousness of the situation. We had to wait for the general foreman, Frank Ramos, and while doing so, Mr. Smith engaged some of the workers in conversation. At first, they were extremely protective of the company, denying that anything was wrong. Then, little by little, the truth emerged. Even the foreman could not sensibly deny the filth of the toilets. Since the whiff hit us as we approached. It hit about 50 rows away. The Gilroy foods company was given a citation for "filthy" restrooms and "no drinking cups" on one machine. I wish to add that the workers we spoke to were taking a break because their machine broke down. Within minutes of the breakdown, mechanics were on the scene fixing the machine. I think I wrenched them out of their protect-the-company position by pointing out how quickly the company made an effort to repair the MACHINE and that it had the same ability to keep the services decent for the WORKERS.

Two different workers came to the office with possible labor commissioner complaints, each against a different labor contractor. Both had worked for a day and had searched without success for their

\*Gilroy is exclusively an onion and garlic company. They buy fields of onions and garlic from various growers and then harvest them for processing. Macdonald's onion rings are Gilroy processed treat.

respective labor contractors (Sylvester Sandoval and Francisco Cota) who owed them money for over a week. I called both contratistas and both paid the respective workers the same day. Cota came 'to our office,' summoned the worker to come outside, (Cota seemed too squirmy to stay for tea) and paid him the back wage. Considering the unresponsiveness of the Labor Commissioner's office, I was sure glad these contratistas came tripping to my office at first call. I took the opportunity to point out to the workers receiving the money that THE POWER OF THE UNION and not I got the contratistas to pay so quickly.

It seems clear much of the time that many of the commercial offices serving farmworkers are more interested in receiving their fee than they are in serving the worker properly. I processed two glaring examples of this abuse this week, one in immigration and one in taxes. The former concerned a Nish worker who wished to immigrate to his wife and who went to a service in Blythe to have the initial petition filled out. The only thing 'Lomeli's' did correctly was take his money. They used the wrong petition AND filled it out incorrectly. I filled out the proper petition then proceeded to inform the worker that it wasn't that I was so smart but that the UNION knew how workers get cheated in dealing with complex immigration laws and has put much time, effort and resources (through the Campesino Centers) into learning about the laws and how they can help the workers or how workers can accomplish their immigration aim with the most knowledge and the least friction. I think it important that workers are aware of this. The latter had his taxes done by a San Luis Notaria. The taxes were done incorrectly causing him to pay the U.S. Govt. \$87. which, unfortunately for him, the law did not require him to pay. He is married with wife and family living in Mexico. He lives here in the U.S. And works here in the U.S. all year. Under these circumstances, under the new tax laws for Mexican families, he is permitted to file 'married filing jointly' and get the same benefits as all other married couples. The Notaria did his taxes 'single head of household' which ended in a 'balance due' for him of \$87. This also 'screws' his immigration case which, right now, is hinging on whether he's married to the mother of his son. I KNOW he's married because I processed the documents for the immigration case. Again, I explained to the worker, that it's not that I'm an expert in taxes, but the UNION DE CAMPESINOS sent me to school (Vita) to learn the parts of the tax laws that apply to and help farmworkers. No one else is interested in doing this. I filled out an amended tax form and the worker will get his \$87. back. He agrees that part of the money should be donated to continue or help sustain the Centro de Servicios.

In addition to the above, I processed many routine 'asuntos' from lost telegraphic money orders, to social security, to taxes and back taxes, to immigration, to workers compensation, to car insurance.

There's one last case I need to report of in some depth and I think it should be forwarded to Cesar's office. It shows what is happening to farm workers in Arizona fields. What is happening there is not only a matter of the growers using the life out of the workers and then tossing them away like trash; but it is also a matter of ROBBING from workers the 'pinchi' benefits Arizona offers. The particular worker I speak of worked for Telles Ranch Inc. for eight years. Then, without warning, his paycheck for the last week of March of this year was based on \$3.90 per hour instead of the \$4.50 an hour he had been earning for a year now. He asked several supervisors of the company, 'Why the lower wages?'" He even wrote a letter asking, 'Why?' He got several interim answers to his question. (none that contained any concrete reasons) His final answer came with his last check in April: HE WAS FIRED.



I've enclosed a copy of the letter he wrote to the company because I think it's worth reading. To add insult to injury, his back was injured on the job just after he received his first anemic check. He reported it to the company; they sent him to the doctor. He missed 10 days of work and received NOT ONE CENT OF TEMPORARY DISABILITY BENEFITS. I called the insurance company, the despotic Pan American underwriters. They informed me that the company reported "no lost work time." I angrily objected and they placated me with a "we'll check and call you back." They did call back singing a different tune: that the worker missed nine days of work entitling him to TWO days of workers compensation temporary disability benefits under Arizona law. No comment need be made on the horror of the above. However, I need to investigate the following:

Since Telles Ranch Inc. has its main offices in Firebaugh, California.

Does the ALRA apply re: his firing?

Does California workers compensation apply.....namely 10% for willful delay? And payment for all but the first 3 days of lost time.

Does Arizona law have such a penalty?

Can we apply California age discrimination laws in this case?

Also, in Arizona, are there ANY laws that apply?

The following is a copy of the letter he wrote to the company: (Capital letters his)

Dear Dick,

I AM WRITIN G THIS LETTER WHICH CONCERNS A PROBLEM I HAVE IN DECREASE IN MY SALARY. I HAVE WORKED FOR YOU COMPANY FOR OVER EIGHT YEARS AND FOR ALMOST A YEAR OF LAST YEAR I WAS PAID \$4.50 AN HOUR. NOW IT HAS BEEN LOWERED TO \$3.90 AN HOUR. I ASKED BENNY AND FRANK VINCENT AGAIN ABOUT THIS AND THEY TOLD ME THAT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO AND THAT IT WAS IN AN ORDER THAT YOU HAD SEND.

I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF THIS IS TRUE AND WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KNOW WHY? YOU KNOW THAT I COULD DO ANYTHING IN REGARDS TO FARMING. THERE ARE OTHERS THAT ARE GETTING PAID MORE THAN I AND CAN'T DO WHAT I CAN. AND ALSO THEY HAVENT BEEN WORKING FOR YOU AS LONG AS I HAVE.

I HAVE WANTED TO TALK TO YOU VERY MUCH ABOUT THIS MATTER BUT I CANNOT EXPRESS MYSELF PROPERLY. MY ENGLISH IS VERY POOR WHICH IS WHY I HAD THIS LETTER DRAWN UP FOR ME. I HOPE VERY MUCH THAT YOU WILL TAKE THIS LETTER INTO CONSIDERATION.

THANK YOU,

The Centro de Servicio in Salinas was my next assignment. In addition to working there, I trained a new volunteer, Stephen Matchett.

After Salinas, I was asked to go to La Paz to work on an English curriculum. The UFW had gotten a grant to teach English to the Campesinos. I started working on the curriculum with Pete ? and others; but I was not there at its completion.

There were many dynamics which contributed to my exit from La Paz and the Union. I think I had a different philosophy of teaching/learning than Cesar was looking for. Also, we were required to play "The Game" which felt unwholesome to me. I was gamed for not fitting in to the La Paz community and for being overweight. Since I was playing the game, I gamed Cesar for something I genuinely thought was wrong. A notice on the bulletin board from the President's Office stated that anyone going to Tehachapi or Bakersfield had to notify Cesar's office a month in advance. I understood that it was important to coordinate rides to save gas and therefore money. I also understood why it was important to know where staff is. But I thought that having to know that you're going A MONTH in advance was totally unrealistic. I was put in Cesar's group for the Game. So I gamed him on that policy. He immediately turned the game on me. But I was saved because he received an upsetting call from Governor Jerry Brown who seemed to want to extract a favor from him. He hung up and left uttering out loud, "I didn't make this world." When I continued gaming Cesar at the next session, I was supported by ALL, which IS the Game, including Gilbert Padilla.

Some days or weeks later Anne McGregor called me to say she wanted to appoint me as head of Service Centers. I didn't think I wanted the position and, frankly, I didn't think that Cesar would approve. I was summoned to Cesar's office for an interview, at which he was so sleepy he could barely keep his head up. I don't remember what was said. But not only didn't he approve, through Anne McGregor, he booted me out of the Union.

Did or do I have any regrets? ABSOLUTELY NOT!! Originally, I thought I'd volunteer for a year. I left after almost three years, returning to my passion, teaching, and to a great union contract! I continued to support the boycott for a number of years afterward.