

Friday 6 August 2021

Vale Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President and global union leader

The ACTU is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of the AFL-CIO President, Richard Trumka, who died unexpectedly, the AFL-CIO announced on Thursday. We extend our deepest sympathies to President Trumka's family, friends, the AFL-CIO and members of American unions.

Richard started his career working in coal mines in southwest Pennsylvania, before being elected as the youngest President of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), at age 33. In 1995 he became the youngest Secretary-Treasurer in AFL-CIO history and he held that post until 2009, when he was then elected President.

At AFL-CIO, Richard represented 56 unions representing 12.5 million USA Workers. He also made an enormous contribution as a leader in the global union movement.

Richard was a member of the General Council and Executive Bureau of the International Trade Union Confederation; the global voice of the world's working people.

Richard was also the President of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD since 2010. He was relentless in bringing the issues of economic and social inequality to the OECD and pushing for just economic policies to benefit working people.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Richard was a dear friend of the Australian union movement. He was an outspoken advocate for social justice and cared deeply about tackling economic and social inequality to improve the lives of American working people.

"We send out heartfelt condolences to Rich's family and friends, and the US union movement. Today our thoughts are with the millions of union members in the USA, who have lost a true leader and champion of workers' rights. We know he will be greatly missed, but his legacy will live on in the American union movement's fight for equality and justice to build a better future for working people in the US, and around the world.

"Rich will go down in history as a great leader of social and economic change. He worked tirelessly for the rights of workers and the union movement will forever be grateful."

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