

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

P.O. BOX 843, TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47808-0843



SPRING 2001

DEBS FOUNDATION: 1962-2002 Forty Fruitful Years New Signs, New Designations



New Ownership Sign, 1963.

*L to R: Ned Bush, Robert Constantine,
Marguerite Debs-Cooper.*



*New Indiana Historic Landmark Sign,
1992. Noel Beasley on left.*

Printed elsewhere in this special edition of the newsletter is J. Robert Constantine's account of the Foundation's formative years (1962-1987), based on existing documents and on his personal observations as a key player. This essay attempts to put all forty years in perspective, including especially events since 1987. As regards all these forty years, Woody Creason has observed to me that the story of the Debs Foundation is one of the truly great success stories of "town-gown" relations involving ISU faculty and the Terre Haute Community. There is plenty of support for this assessment. Woody, a faculty member, was one of the early key players who has continued his involvement til this day. Constantine observed that "it seems unlikely that the foundation could have grown as it has without Ned's (Bush) services," and valuable "town" or community support came also from other local labor leaders who were charter members. That list includes Curtis Culver (see his "I Remember

When" remarks elsewhere in this issue) and later his brother, Pete, William Coakley, John McDaniel, Virgil Morris, and others. The "gown" or academic cohort of charter members and key players included Constantine (History) and Creason (Economics), as well as Howard Hamilton (Political Science), and Earl Stephanson (Economics), and others who put up the initial seed money. Howard typed literally scores of solicitation letters to colleagues in academia and in labor and socialist circles. Stephanson did likewise and, in Constantine's account, is credited as instrumental in getting Patrick Gorman

...continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Debs Foundation 1962-2002.....	1
National Park Service.....	1
You See Dust.....	2
No Longer True.....	2
Tail Buildings, Small Dogs.....	2
I Remember When.....	5
Financial Statement.....	5
Forty Fruitful Years.....	6
Debs Foundation 1962-87.....	10
The 2001 Banquet.....	12

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ASSESSMENT

Late last fall a National Park Service (NPS) sponsored assessment of the physical condition of the Debs Home was undertaken. Annual site visits are done by NPS officials operating out of the Vincennes, Indiana office, which itself is responsible to the Midwest Region Office in Omaha, Nebraska. We have readily consented to this condition assessment of a National Historical Landmark. The actual assessment was done by a team of four architects, electrical engineers, etc. who specialize in historical architecture. These experts went over every nook and crannie with the figurative fine-tooth comb. Their report overall is encouraging; the Home is fairly solid and well preserved, but there are a few areas of concern which need to be addressed and which will carry a price tag.

There for instance is priority to the need for tuck pointing of the two chimneys. Important also is that there is a moisture problem on the north side, especially at foundation level. Water drains toward rather than away from the house - always a no-no. Another important item is the recommendation for an improved smoke detector-sprinkler system. A dependable sprinkler system would be a valuable addition to our present security system which is primarily an alarm system only for burglary as well as fire.

Several other items of moderate priority in the assessment we can accept as "good to keep in mind" and consider

...continued on page 2

**SPRING BUSINESS
MEETING
APRIL 27, 2002**

You See Dust?

The following excerpt which is "From the President" of the Association of Indiana Museums caught my imagination:

"I have a friend who is vertically challenged (she's short). Her brother is vertically enhanced (he's tall). The brother, a compulsively neat person, visits her in Indiana twice a year. During the visits, he would notice all the dust on the top of her refrigerator. He would fret for days about telling her -- could he offend? Finally he just dusted up there. She caught him. Now when he visits, she hands him a rag upon entering. They both feel better. It is amazing what perspective does to your outlook...

Like my vertically challenged friend, I need to make sure that I listen to others with a different perspective. They may see dust that I do not. Or they might just think there is dust. If they think there is dust, and there really is not, it is important to know why. The perception is the real key."

Source: *IAM Bulletin*, Vol. 27:2

An organization that has survived forty years can take pride in the evidence that a lot of right things have been done for the organization to stay "on track" for that long. With the passage of time, however, there is danger that dust collect, that the organization become formalized and rigidified, and suffer the loss of imagination and energy. Leaders need to be supported, but also to be inspired and sometimes nudged into new efforts, new ideas and methods. The Debs Foundation tries to be a fairly democratic, egalitarian organization, so you should not consider yourself "vertically challenged" when you would like to approach the leadership about something you'd like to see done or done better. If you as a member think you see dust collecting around or on the Debs Foundation, let us know about it. Write, or show up at a business meeting and let us know what's on your mind. We'll listen, and your input might make a big difference.

National Park Service *Continued from page 1*

for future action. We have submitted comments for inclusion in the final document by the architectural firm Bahr-VermeerHaeckler which conducted the assessment for NPS. The condition assessment process is designed "to assist property owners with an analysis of their property that points out deficiencies, provides a method to correct those deficiencies, and lists estimated repair costs." This procedure, which came at no cost to the foundation, can serve as a benchmark for the direction of our preservation efforts, and is an important step in opening up possibilities for outside financial assistance -grants, matching funds, etc. -- in carrying forward some of these important projects. This report, coming as it does to coincide with the foundation's 40th anniversary, can be interpreted as an endorsement of forty years of stewardship of the Debs Home, a National Historic Landmark, and a challenge to keep up the good work.

DEBS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2002

Published by

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Box 843

Terre Haute, IN 47808

Website: www.eugenevdebs.com

Foundation Officers:

Jack Sheinkman, *President*

Noel Beasley, *Executive Vice President*

Charles King, *Secretary*

Woodrow Creason, *Treasurer*

The Debs Foundation Newsletter is published twice yearly for distribution to members and friends of the Foundation. The Eugene v. Debs Foundation is a non-profit, private organization which maintains the home of Eugene and Kate Debs as a museum and shrine to labor, and carries on educational and informational programs which aim to honor and promote the goals for which Debs struggled: industrial unionism, social justice, and peace. For those wishing to become members, an application form is provided elsewhere in this issue.

No Paid Officers: No Longer True

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation was started by the considerable efforts of a group of dedicated and competent volunteers, and for forty years it was correct to claim: "No Paid Officials." There has been a benefit to the museum curators of free lodging in return for being tour guides and caretakers. Things have changed over the years, and there increasingly is the felt need to elevate the museum's educational functions and to enhance the curatorial role. A paid, professional museum director can be instrumental in making these things happen. Karen Brown has been a curator at the Debs Home for five years while a student at Indiana State University. Rather than to lose her skills and experience when she graduated in December, 2001, it was decided to make the move to professionalize the position now. So, in January, this year, Karen Brown assumed the paid position of Museum Director and Administrative Assistant to the Debs Foundation. The salary is \$15,000 annually (plus free lodging, including utilities).

This important step has been long in coming, and now we have to make the new position work. The payoff has to be mainly in increased museum activities -- museum visits, use of the website, press coverage, preservation measures, etc. -- which enhance the educational mission of the Debs Home. There also is the fact that the cost of this paid position adds considerably to the foundation's operating budget. We have financial reserves, fortunately, but we must avoid dipping regularly into the Endowment Fund in order to meet operating expenses. Thus, the foundation faces a challenge to move income to a new level - from dues payments, contributions, and banquet proceeds - if income is to stay even with expenditures. We feel confident that the foundation's loyal supporters will step up to the challenge. And, by the way, Karen and all the executive officers want you to know that this is not the end of the need for dedicated volunteers to help do the foundation's work.

On Tall Buildings, Small Dogs, and Missiles

In his acceptance speech at the Debs Award Banquet in 1995, Jim Hightower's parting words of wisdom, couched in classic Hightower style, were to this effect: "Just remember, there was

to serve as first President of the Foundation.

There are key or defining moments in any history, and one of these, without which neither the foundation or the Debs Home might exist today, was when Creason, Stephanson, Constantine, and Tilford Dudley (AFL, labor) walked from campus to the Debs Home and, along with Bush and Culver from local labor, talked to the owner, Mr. Heck, who was intent on further dividing the building into apartments. Heck was by no means hostile to the idea of historic preservation, but said: "Look, I'm in business. Show me the money." So, this small group of inspired activists grew rapidly to a list of \$100 contributors to put up the required down payment, and the tedious work had begun of buying the property and undertaking extensive restoration and renovation. Tilford used his legal training to draw up articles of incorporation, and was helpful in soliciting money from his acquaintances at the national level of union leadership, and at state level similar fundraising was undertaken by such key labor leaders as Raymond Berndt (UAW-Region 3). It no doubt is due largely to the historic progressivism of the UAW, but also to the credit of such Indiana UAW leaders as Berndt, Dallas Sells Jr, and Elmer Blankenship, that the UAW has been one of the most faithful supporters of the Debs Foundation til this day. As Culver mentions, support did come from local labor, but sometimes grudgingly, and certainly not encouraged by a negative local press and business community.

Thus began forty years of growth and consolidation, the first 25 of which were celebrated in 1987. The Foundation had two presidents during that quarter century: Patrick Gorman (1965-79), and Murray Findley (1980-1987), three Executive Vice Presidents: Ned Bush (1962-1979), Curtis Culver (1979-1983), and Noel Beasley (1983-present), three Secretary's J. Robert Constantine (1962-1983), Timothy Kelly (1983-1984), and Charles King (1985-present), and as Treasurer, after brief stints by two others, Woodrow Creason (1965-present).

The past fifteen years have been years of further consolidation and growth in many ways. In terms of leadership, Jack Sheinkman became President in 1987, and has been involved in constructive ways in increasing awareness and support from Progressives both in and outside organized labor. Noel Beasley has continued to use his leadership skills and his contacts in organized labor and in other progressive groups to build support for the foundation and its programs. This writer, as Secretary, has applied whatever skills in organizational leadership and human relations he could muster to attend to numerous details of correspondence and other forms of communication, supervision of the Debs Home property and the curators, and just seeing that things get done even down to spring flower plantings. And as Treasurer, Creason, the only charter member still in official position, has become like the proverbial Energizer Bunny, he just keeps going and going. He has done what a Treasurer is supposed to do in keeping accurate financial records and spending money responsibly, but more than that, he has been close friend and confidant to foundation secretaries these 40 years. It by the way was Creason and Constantine who invited the current secretary out and actually gave him a free lunch when persuading him to assume office.

Much of what the Foundation has done the past fifteen

years has been to continue and improve what had been done, including initiatives undertaken near the end of the first quarter century. The Newsletter had been initiated in 1986, and has continued to promote member awareness of foundation activities and programs, to promote awareness of Debs' contributions to history, and to agitate a bit for Progressive ideas and causes. It has helped to build the base of involved, dues paying members. The commemorative dinner program, with its "Greetings Section," was initiated in 1987, and has become our single biggest source of funds. It has become an appropriate and dignified means by which to show respect for Debs Award recipients as well as to openly support the foundation financially. The greetings section listings have enabled us to hold at \$25 the cost of a dinner ticket, as we no longer have to rely solely on profits from ticket sales to make a banquet a financial success.

The historical impact of the museum collection has been considerably strengthened by the past fifteen years. Most significant have been the donation of original Debs furniture by descendants of Kate Debs. As the result of these donations, the home's dining room and parlor are furnished with original pieces, and bedroom pieces were donated as well.

A relationship which may be described as informal but supportive has prevailed between the foundation and Indiana State University these forty years. Throughout, two of the four executive offices -- secretary and treasurer -- have been filled by ISU faculty. The academic freedom granted by this institution of higher learning has allowed freedom of expression and freedom to conduct research and write without fear of reprisal or of becoming targets of some witchhunt. A few faculty members have been able to direct the service component of their professorial positions to leadership duties in the Debs Foundation. Without the contribution of countless hours of work from ISU faculty, it appears unlikely that the foundation could have thrived and could have carried on with no paid leaders. Given the location of the Debs Home in relation to the expanded campus, many people not in possession of the facts assume that the Home is university property. If this fallacy is embarrassing to ISU officials it has not been apparent in working relations between the two organizations. No better example of the truly cooperative relationship can be found than when ISU decided to close a street north of the Debs Home, including also a small parking lot which bumped (sometimes literally) into foundation property on its north side. The university did beautiful landscaping where previously there had been traffic and a bit of an eye sore, and entered into an easement agreement for a property swap whereby we granted the university use of an area outside the east wall, to be landscaped and to include a walk between ISU parking and ISU academic buildings to the north, and in return the University granted the Foundation use of parking space on the south side of the property, a location far more convenient for our visitors.

Mention should be made also of the collection of Debs materials in the Rare Books and Special Collections section of ISU's Cunningham Memorial Library. Being housed here gives these numerous documents a secure, controlled environment, and where they are accessible through the loan services of a modern university library.

Also important in the university-foundation relationship has been the fact that, due to the involvement of ISU professors,

continued on page 4

conveniently located lecture halls and auditoriums on campus has been available free of charge. The advantage for the university is that foundation sponsored lectures and events have been available to the academic community as well as to foundation members. Speakers brought here under foundation sponsorship have included Tony Benn, Robert Coles, Cesar Chavez, and of course all the award banquet honorees, not in rent free facilities, but reasonably priced, convenient and attractive. Additionally, ISU professors have had access to an enriching field experience by taking their classes to a museum right on campus.

EUGENE V. DEBS AWARD RECIPIENTS

1965	John L. Lewis	1984	William H. Wynn
1966	Norman Thomas	1985	Jack Sheinkrnan
1967	A. Philip Randolph	1986	Joseph L. Rauh, Jr.
1968	Walter Reuther	1987	Edward Asner
1969	H.E. Gilbert	1988	Joyce Miller
1970	Patrick E. Gorman	1989	Morton Bahr
1971	No Award	1990	Lynn R. Williams
1972	Dorothy Day	1991	John Sayles
1973	Michael Harrington	1992	Ralph Nader
1974	Arthur Schlesinger	1993	Dolores Huerta
1975	Ruben Levin	1994	Richard Trumka
1976	Martin H. Miller	1995	Jim Hightower
1977	Frank Zeidler	1996	Victor Navasky
1978	Jesse Jackson	1997	John J. Sweeney
1979	Pete Seeger	1998	Howard Zinn
1980	William Winpisinger	1999	Gloria Johnson
1981	Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.	2000	Michael J. Sullivan
1982	Coretta Scott King	2001	Al H. Chesser
1983	Studs Terkel		

And what of the award recipients. The list speaks for itself as

regards the stature and the contributions to society of those who have been honored. The recipients have been gracious and appreciative, have said their piece, each in his or her own way, and have inspired and challenged us all. The banquets are a dignified but also entertaining way of honoring those who have contributed to society significantly in ways which carry on the Debs tradition. The banquet program is kept as "clean" or uncluttered as possible in order to keep the focus where it belongs: on the tradition of Eugene Debs and on those who have carried on. For many, the annual banquets have become a spiritual retreat and a pump-primer for those of us who wear the label, Progressives.

In 2000, the foundation stepped into the hi-tech era by developing a webpage to communicate more effectively to a worldwide audience. The web site (www.eugenevdebs.com) is intended mainly as educational, providing useful information both on the life of Debs and on the foundation. It is designed for aol ages, but particularly those in middle and high school social studies classes.

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation was started 40 years ago in an almost hostile political climate locally and nationally. To many in the Terre Haute community, those persons trying to start a Debs Foundation were a bunch of "commies" up at the university.

McCarthyism definitely was not dead in the conservative Terre Haute community and in Indiana. This was the George Meany era of Communism bashing in organized labor nationally and internationally, and Terre Haute labor was not immune to these sentiments. Looking back, it is amazing that there were enough men and women of sufficient awareness of history and of Debs' considerable contributions to society, and sufficiently Progressive in their personal commitments, that they could come together, found a society for historical preservation and education, and could succeed these 40 years to preserve an unique historical site and a great legacy. WE CELEBRATE FORTY FRUITFUL YEARS!

On Tall Buildings, Small Dogs, and Missiles *Continued from page 2*

never a building so tall but that a small dog can piss on it!" The primary reference was to the seemingly intractable obstacles to social justice and quality of life which are so embedded in our economic and political systems, systems whereby the gap between the rich and powerful and the rest of us keep getting wider and wider, but it is not irrelevant also to think of such edifices of our nation's worldwide dominance economically and militarily as the World Trade Center Towers.

On September 11, 2001, the little dog did much more than lift a leg and relieve itself. So, what do we do to protect ourselves from future such destruction and humiliation from all the little dogs running loose in the world? There was no pause to question why so many people in the world hate this country. And no proposals for an effective dog leash, so to speak. The principal dog leash includes the proposed building of a 60 billion plus dollar anti-ballistic missile defense system, and spending billions blowing up caves, truck convoys, etc. in hopes of stamping out one particular dog and his supporters (and hoping to minimize the "collateral damage" to innocent men, women and children).

Membership Dues: The Eugene V. Debs Foundation

NAME _____
 STREET _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ \$ 5.00 Student Member _____ \$100.00 Sustaining Member
 _____ \$10.00 Regular Member _____ \$250.00 Life Members
 _____ \$25.00 Supporting Member _____ Other

Enclose remittance. Make checks payable to the Debs Foundation.

The Debs Foundation
 P.O. Box 843
 Terre Haute, IN 47808-0843

Your dues and contributions are tax deductible. The Foundation owns and maintains the Debs Home and offers several educational and cultural programs. We are a voluntary organization with no paid officers.

I REMEMBER WHEN:

Charter Members Tell Their Stories

As a special feature for this issue of the Newsletter, all the surviving charter members were asked to prepare brief remarks on their recollections of significant activities and persons related to the founding and early days of the new organization. Four of the known survivors submitted "I Remember When" essays. They are independently arrived at recollections, each having something special to add to the picture of the persons and the activities which were vital steps in the organizing process, but they all mention the same names and activities. It clearly was a small group of activists who gave of their time and money to support a cause which they obviously believed in deeply. There is no submission for this section from Howard Hamilton, who was one of the hardest working of the solicitors of contributions in those early days. Howard has been in regular attendance at annual award banquets, and in many ways has shown his continued support for the foundation, so it is regrettable that his personal comments could not be included. As you read, keep in mind that these are the personal comments from the individuals who made it happen 40 years ago. We are greatly in their debt.

Bernard J. Brommel (Communications Professor)

In the beginning the beautiful old Debs home had been chopped up into a series of small one-bedroom apartments with flimsy walls of cheap dark paneling. Others arranged for the financing, including getting unions to remember their local hero, Eugene V. Debs, by preserving the home. Ned Bush, the Culver brothers, Tilford Dudley, Oscar Edelman, and Hilton Hanna were key figures in gaining union support. Howard Hamilton, Woody Creason, Robert Constantine and others prodded the Indiana State University community to become involved and contribute dollars needed to buy the home.

From the beginning my contribution was twofold: the cultivation of bringing Debs' last surviving heir and niece, Marguerite Debs Cooper, into active participation in the restoration project, and secondly, the locating of historical materials related to Debs career as a labor and socialist leader. Mrs. Cooper had closed her door to historians because she felt some of them had unfairly written about her beloved "Uncle Gene" and her father, Theodore, who served faithfully as his secretary, public relations agent, tour organizer, etc. Marguerite

Continued on page 8

Woodrow (Woody) Creason (Economics Professor)

From 1956 to the mid 1960's, I shared an office with Professor Earl Stephenson. Earl taught economics at ISU. His field of interest was labor history.

Tilford Dudley, Director of the Speakers Bureau of the AFLCIO also had an interest in labor history.

Earl and Tilford were great friends and Tilford frequently came to ISU to give a lecture, for which he received a small stipend. Earl would buy his lunch. At lunch and back in the office, the two would talk about Eugene V. Debs, a misfit for his social times.

In 1962, Tilford made one of his visits to ISU. He said, in effect, that it was time to stop the talking and start the walking. At that moment, J. Robert Constantine, a historian, walked into the office and into Earl's and Tilford's council. Earl and Tilford were to meet two other "misfits" from the local labor community, a Ned Bush and a Curtis Culver, at the Debs House. Tilford was armed with a constitution for a Eugene V. Debs Foundation and a contract to buy the Debs House. The two misfits and Constantine, who even his brothers and sister

Continued on page 8

2001 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Eugene V. Debs Foundation

Expenditures:

Indiana-American Water Co., Inc.	\$ 273.14
Verizon	518.92
Cinergy	895.94
Vectren	1865.72
AT&T	472.98
Terminex	417.00
ADT	297.75
City of Terre Haute (Sewage)	71.10
ISU Federal Credit Union	25,000.00
ISU Library (Rare Books)	2,000.00
Markle Insurance	1,136.00
Association of Indiana Museums	25.00
Flowers Plumbing	335.00
Springhill Heating & Air	3,003.00
Laughrey Bros	427.00
ISU Hulman Center	641.55
Cash Fund	743.09
US Postage	814.12
Secretary of State	10.00

Indiana Department of Revenue	26.58
All-American Sewer Drain.....	492.01
FA Debs #56304 (ISU)	700.00
John Hopkins Fulfillment	534.54
Union Penn	138.63
Ohio Historical	127.30
Society	20.00
Jennifer Stons	1,078.33
Anne Feeney	475.00
Tribune Star Heinel's Flower Shop	83.50
Marriott Service	4,260.75
Jewett Printing	4,069.81

Total Expenditures	\$ 52,089.76
Total income	\$ 36,746.0s
Balance as of Dec. 31, 2000	\$ 32,379.36
Total	\$ 69,125.41
Less Expenditures	\$ 52,089.76
Balance as of Dec. 31, 2001	\$ 17,035.65

FORTY FRUITFUL YEARS

The Debs Foundation Newsletter

P.O. BOX 843, TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47808

Vol. 1/1

SPRING, 1986

Robert Coles Set For Sebree Lecture

A Museum's Worth.

VOL. 2, NO. 1

CHAVEZ LECTURE APRIL 30



The Shubert Sebree I Cesar Chavez, fiery leader of the United Farm Workers Union, UFW-AFL-CIO, is organizing among ways are the most of Americans, but Chavez concerned now about the being exposed to the grape vineyards and on

Chavez' speech will be given at the Sebree Museum, Terre Haute, Ind.

VOL. 2, NO. 2

ACTOR, ACTIVIST TO RECEIVE DEBS AWARD



Ed Asner

Millions loved tough but kind Ed Asner, actor, and will like him as the principal of an inner city school. Asner, NBC's new host of the new hour-long series, "The Ed Asner Show," is a social and political activist and a source of extreme views of his critics and encourage to share his concern. National President

2

Sheinkman Takes Seat As Finley Retires

This has been the year for changing roles for Jack Sheinkman. The Debs Foundation was anticipating upcoming events this spring when it voted to make Sheinkman Foundation President upon Murray Finley's retirement. He was also elected to fill the vacancy on the AFL-CIO Executive Committee formerly held by Finley. Mr. Finley had indicated his interest also in stepping down as Debs Foundation president, and Sheinkman consented to assume this responsibility.



Jack Sheinkman



Murray Finley

Slate Shingles: The High Cost of Historic Preservation

The diagnosis was not good, coming from the workmen who had gone on the roof for emergency repairs. We knew that several chunks of shingle had fallen off over the years, and high winds last March tore off a section of the ridge cap. The report was that the missing shingles, visible to the eye from ground level, were not as serious a problem as the extensive deterioration of the metal on the roof's many ridge caps and valleys. To delay a replacement roof for another winter would be to endanger the structural integrity of the building.



The Debs Home circa 1890

Photo courtesy of Vigo County Historical Society

DEBS HOME IS BOTH



Historic moment—The dream of Marguerite Debs, daughter of Theodore Debs and niece of Eugene V. Debs, memorial to them would be established came to fulfillment Saturday, Sept. 23, 1967 when Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall stands with her beside the bronze plaque marking the site as a National Historic Landmark of the National Park Service.

NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE



Official Recognition—Secretary Udall, just after he gave a speech before several hundred persons gathered at the Debs Foundation, presenting the official certificate to President F. Gorman of the Debs Foundation. From left, Secretary of the Interior Philip Randolph, who later that night was presented Award in the field of labor; Gorman and U. S. Senator Bayh, who introduced Udall.



Prof. Woodrow Creason (left) and Louis Austin, who accepted Debs plaque on behalf of John L. Lewis, first recipient on Nov. 13, 1965. Lewis later received plaque in Washington, D. C.



From left, Piero Lazzeri, sculptor; Norman Thomas and Victor Beuther, Oct. 20, 1966.

FORTY FRUITFUL YEARS

Bryant Spann Memorial Prize Winners

This is the tenth anniversary of the Bryant Spann Memorial Prize for the best article or essay on a theme of Social Justice and of Social Criticism in the Debsian tradition. These are the winners of the 1989 Prize:

Robert Sherrill, "White-Collar Thuggery" (*The Nation*, November 28, 1988), a review-essay which discloses a wide-ranging and menacing pattern of abuse and criminal behavior by American business corporations.

Major Carlos Wilson, "America's Secret African War" (*On the Issues*, 1989), a review-essay which discloses a wide United States in Morocco's savage war against the people of the Western Sahara.

Lighthouse Chosen for Debs Award

This year's Debs award recipient is a person very much in the Debsian tradition of outspoken, hard hitting advocacy and populism which places him firmly "against the powers-that-be on behalf of the powers-that-ought-to-be." In recent years Ron has been hitting the airwaves with *Highway Radio*, which is just another chapter in what has been a life of activism.



The Debs Home as it appears today.

RALPH NADER

Social Critic, Political Activist

Ralph Nader has been called America's most famous and most effective

Historical Site Marker To Be Unveiled

A successful application has been made to have the Debs Home declared

Progressive Labor Leader To Receive Debs Award



JOHN SWEENEY

Local 32B in 1976, and citywide strikes of a maintenance workers, 1970s.

In 1996 he wrote *America Rising: Fighting for Economic and Social Justice*. He co-edited the *New World* 1989 and co-edited the *U.S. Economic Policy Council and Work: Bridging the Gap*. Born in 1934 in the Bronx, graduated from Iowa College degree in economics, and lives in Washington with his wife, Maureen, a

Debs Named To Labor Hall of Fame

Gene Debs, along with Reuther, Robert Wagner and H. Kaiser have been chosen for inclusion into the Labor Hall of Fame in Washington. The official sponsor of the hall is the Friends of the Labor (FDL), and it honors a kind of fancy word for work.

"On the same day I visited the Debs home, I visited with Larry Bird and spoke with John Wooden. So I may be the luckiest guy on earth!"

Bill Walton
Former NBA Player
Quoted in
Terre Haute Tribune Star

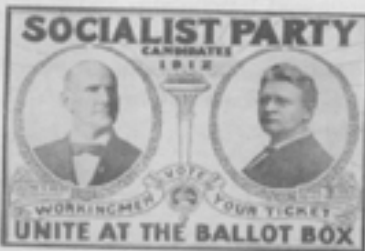
Trumka To Receive 1994 Debs Award

Appropriately referred to as a money lawyer, Richard L. Trumka rose through the ranks to become the 14th International president of the United Mine Workers of America in 1992, making him the youngest leader of a major union in North America. He has since been re-elected twice. Prior to becoming president, Trumka had served as a union staff attorney 1974-1977 and again from 1979 to 1980. In this position he participated in negotiating both a national contract



RICHARD L. TRUMKA
Award Recipient

KATHLEEN A. PETE, CULVER



A. Philip Randolph in Terre Haute with Debs award plaque, Sept. 23, 1967.



From Left, U. S. Senator Birch E. Bayh, Ned A. Bush, Sr., Walter Reuther 1968 recipient and Raymond M. Berndt in Terre Haute, Sept. 21, 1968.



had suffered from prank phone calls, false accusations that she belonged to a “Red” family, and a few far right conservatives had tried to get her removed from her teaching position as a home economics teacher in the MacLean Junior High School in Terre Haute.

Slowly over the years our friendship deepened and she began to trust me with insights into her family and began showing me important papers and documents she had saved. These manuscripts eventually became the collection of Debs papers in the Indiana State University Library. She was not so sure about the house project; she feared there would not be funds to sustain it and if she gave materials that they would be lost or stolen. Later she got excited about the house restoration and would call me over to look at pieces of furniture and pictures that would be appropriate. Sometimes I would help her with tasks about her home, especially gardening. Eventually, together, we dug up gravel behind the Debs home and made the first garden there. The plants came from either her yard or mine.

In 1959 I began my research that eventually led to my biography, Eugene V. Debs: Spokesman for Labor and Socialism. At the time the foundation was beginning, I was working on the some twenty-five years Debs spent first as a Democratic politician and labor organizer for the Brotherhood of Railway Firemen. I began interviews with local people who remembered Debs, including Schubert Seabee, Martin Miller, etc. Marguerite did give me leads of people Eugene and her dad trusted, even if they had not support them politically. Through Ned Bush I made other contacts, which led one day to my finding a large part of Debs’ personal library abandoned and deteriorating in the basement of an old union hall. These books today are back on the shelves in the Debs home library or in the university collection.

When I told Marguerite in 1967, that I was leaving Indiana State after eight years to go to the University of North Dakota, we had a long visit. She spoke of burning many of the manuscripts and personal letters she had carefully stored in her basement in the same desks and furniture that had been in the Debs’ office when her father closed it. She still feared more of the Red witch-hunts and did not want any of “Uncle or Dad’s” letters to be used against them. I convinced her over several days that her Alma Mater, Indiana State, was a safe place to preserve them. Then we began a two-month daily process of going through her archives.

She wanted to reread every letter before releasing any of them to “the public.” We sat across her dining room table night after night sorting and filing. I would group letters or pamphlets by date, author or subject and she would then read them. Some letters that were personal about her own failed marriage and family disputes she did destroy, but all of the important letters were saved.

Together Marguerite and I arranged the materials in the first display cases in the Debs home. Some items I had begged from old socialists I interviewed, but most came from her collection. Every year she would slowly give up more items and when the house was opened on the second floor, she parted with most of the Debs furniture and pictures. Another behind the scenes role that I played was keeping Ned and Marguerite working amicably together. Both were strong personalities and no two people worked harder for the Foundation in the early years. Both had definite ideas about the house and the foundation that resulted in periods of their not speaking. In time both realized their dreams for the Debs home and foundation. She began to enjoy the yearly banquets. I often picked her up for these events or gave her a ride to board meetings. She did not go out after dark unless I accompanied her. Later after I left Bob Constantine and his wife filled this role.

considered a misfit, and myself walked across campus to the Debs House to meet the two labor misfits and the owner of the Debs Home.

The price was agreed to, the contract signed. The Eugene V. Debs House belonged to the Eugene V. Debs Foundation. That is, if the Foundation could raise the money. Howard Hamilton, a professor of Political Science and a Quaker, not only took money from the faculty, he even took two hundred dollars from Doyt and Connie, his two little daughters. Ned and Curtis went after local and state labor organizations and Tilford went after the national labor unions. The money was raised. The house paid for. It was just that simple.

I referred to Earl, Tilford, Ned, Curtis and Constantine as misfits. They were. They were concerned with injustice. They were concerned with discriminatory injustice against blacks, women, the poor, the convicts and the imprisoned. They were concerned with indiscriminate injustice, workplace hazards, corporate bad deeds, looting of the public purse and pollution of the information system, the mother of all types of pollution.


As the poet Billy Collins said, “But of course like autumn leaves, a gust of wind drove them from the place where they pranced and danced.”

They created a museum, The Eugene V. Debs Museum; a

museum dedicated to the great social misfit, created by some great social misfits.

Social change occurs when “we” come together to create a more just and democratic society.

I find it nice to have the longevity genes that allows me to look back over my shoulder and write a few words about some wonderful misfits.



Recycle your
Newsletter by
sharing it
with a friend.

I have a vivid recollection of when Ned Bush and I, as representatives of the Wabash Valley Labor Council, Committee for Debs, were waiting for a group of professors to arrive from I.S.U. As they approached us, Tilford Dudley with his craggy features and hearty laughter stood out and caught my attention, along with Bob Constantine, Woodrow Creason and Earl Stephenson.

We were meeting to inspect the Debs home which belonged to a Mr. Heck. He had rented it to a fraternity who had destroyed the interior and left it unlike anything that Katie Debs remembered.

Tilford Dudley was in charge in the attempt to purchase the home and, as always, money was in short supply. Each person gave \$100 to use as earnest money in order to give us time to raise the purchase money.

I was really naive at the time. I thought that labor would be happy to contribute and that the necessary money would be easy to raise. It proved more difficult than I thought. However, with perseverance and good leadership we accomplished our goal.

Marguerite Debs Cooper was always available for advice and direction about the interior and furnishings. She was able to provide information about where and from whom we might be able to acquire furniture.

Oscar Edelman was a tremendous supporter of the foundation. When I was the executive director he asked me not to tell anyone what he told me, but he said he would and did pay for the downstairs apartment which made comfortable living quarters for the curator. Ned Bush, city editor of the Tribune, and his wife were the first curators and occupants of the new apartment. Ned did a terrific job for the foundation.

I remember Pat Gorman, the first president, and his able assistant Hilton Hanna who did yeoman work as meat cutters and as vice-president of the foundation.

There were so many who ably assisted the Debs Foundation: Howard Hamilton, Dallas Sells, Max Wright, Bernie Brummel, Elmer Blankenship, U.A.W. Bill Coakley, President of 144 Teamsters, as I recall, provided \$25,000 at a critical time. John Laska, artist extraordinaire, devoted much time, talent and effort in the murals he painted on the walls of the Debs Home. I remember Shubert Sebree, an intimate friend of Eugene Debs, as well as Martin Miller. Pete Culver, along with Rick Kassel (grandson of Ned Bush) were helpful in soliciting funds locally.

At the time I was doing a lot of lobbying in Washington, D.C. and did my best to visit international labor leaders to enlist their support, but I was met with considerable resistance and not very successful in that effort.

The Tribune had some columnists who would give us bad press with respect to our efforts. This made it more difficult to promote the foundation.

There were many problems restoring the home and the university presidents were never happy that we were there. They wanted to move the house to some other location, but it never happened. Senator Birch Bayh provided the help needed to make it a national historic landmark in 1969 and made the moving argument mute.

I, and all other members, do appreciate the work that Secretary Bob Constantine, Charles King, and Treasurer Woodrow Creason have done over the years. They deserve a hearty thank-you for all their efforts.

My earliest memory of the events leading up to the purchase of the Debs home and the creation of the Debs Foundation is of a meeting in Woody Creason's office in the Economics department at Indiana State sometime in the winter of 1962. At that meeting, in addition to Woody and me, there were Howard Hamilton, a political scientist, Earl Stephenson, an economist, and a fellow we met for the first time, Tilford Dudley, who was at the time head of the Speakers Bureau at the AFL-CIO's national headquarters in Washington. Dudley had gotten interested in trying to preserve the Debs home during his frequent trips to Terre Haute on his way to his home town, Charleston, Illinois. At this meeting it was agreed that an attempt be made to raise the money for the purchase price of the home, which had gone through the ravages of housing one of the university's fraternities for 15 years and for a decade had been carved up into 4 or 5 "apartments" by an owner who was asking (as I recall) \$9500.00 for the badly damaged house. Dudley, who was an attorney, agreed to draw up articles of incorporation for the Debs Foundation and to seek financial support from the national and international unions, many of whose officers he knew well through his work at the AFL-CIO. In the months that followed funds for the purchase of the house and the beginning of its restoration were raised by asking friends and colleagues to become Charter members by paying \$100.00 fees and by the summer of 1962 the purchase price had been raised from an encouraging variety of people from the university, from Terre Haute friends, from the local, state and national levels of organized labor. Among local people who became interested in the Foundation none was more important than Ned Bush who worked on the local newspaper and would serve for many years as executive vice-president of the foundation. As funds were accumulated the restoration of the Debs home was completed - one room at a time, beginning with the living room and library and dining room on the first floor. In time much of the furniture which went into these rooms and the others as they were restored was given to the Foundation by Marguerite Debs Cooper, Eugene Debs' niece.

An index to the growth of the Foundation from those early days may be gotten by recalling the first of what became annual Debs Dinners. If my memory serves (and it may well not) the dinner was held in a basement room of the Deming Hotel and was attended by no more than a dozen people. Within a few years, however, 4-5- or 600 people turned out to honor men like A. Phillip Randolph, Norman Thomas and Walter Reuther at the Debs Award Dinners. Just as important, it seemed to me, was the Foundation's sponsorship of conferences on war, racism, poverty, the environment, and other issues of concern to "that Debs crowd", as a local historian rather huffily described us.

*There is something wrong in this country;
the judicial nets are so adjusted as to catch
the minnows and let the whales slip
through...*

Eugene V. Debs

THE EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION: 1962-1987

J. Robert Constantine

Reprinted from 1987 Debs Foundation Newsletter

An attempt to describe the launching of the Debs Foundation in 1962 suffers from a shortage of documentary evidence and from inevitable memory lapses, so at the outset a disclaimer and apology are in order. One useful document is a list of the Foundation's "charter members," i.e. the 58 men and women who contributed \$100.00 each toward the \$9500.00 purchase price of the Debs home in Terre Haute. This charter member list underscores an important fact: The Debs Foundation was begun by an alliance of Indiana State University faculty members, organized labor representatives, and a mixed group of men and women who shared "Debsian" ideals. The same alliance has made possible the growth of the Foundation during the past 25 years.

As I remember it, Tilford Dudley, who was at the time director of the AFL-CIO speakers' bureau in Washington, D.C. played the key role in getting the Foundation off the ground. Dudley steadily pushed the idea on ISU faculty members, drew up the articles of incorporation, and solicited essential "seed money" from his acquaintances at the national level of union leadership (Ted Dudley was, and is, a very persuasive man!). At the local labor level, clearly the most important "charter member" was Ned Bush, who served the Foundation as executive vice-president and as curator of the Debs home for many years before his death in 1979. Looking back on it, it seems unlikely that the Foundation could have grown as it has without Ned's services. Ned was helped, of course, by other local labor officials -- Curtis Culver, William Coakley, John McDaniel, Virgil Moms and others who were charter members.

Among the charter members from the faculty at Indiana State University, two of the most important were Howard Hamilton, in the political science department, and the late Earl Stephanson, in the economics department. Hamilton personally typed scores of letters to colleagues in academia and in labor and socialist circles, seeking and getting charter members for the Foundation from, among others. Roger Baldwin, head of the American Civil Liberties Union; Erich Fromm; Mary Donovan Hapgood, who served as secretary of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee; John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church in New York City; Clyde R. Miller, a journalist whose testimony helped convict Debs in 1918; John Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair and Irving Stone; Norman Thomas; and Albert Schweitzer. Earl Stephanson worked with Hamilton in securing charter membership, especially among labor officials, and was, I believe, instrumental in getting Patrick Gorman to serve as president of the Foundation. Among other ISU faculty members who were charter members of the Foundation, Woodrow Creason has served as treasurer of the Foundation for more than 20 years; this writer served as secretary from 1963 to 1983 and has since 1979 directed the Eugene V. Debs Project at the University; Bernard Brommel has published a respected biography of Debs; and Edward K. Spann has made possible the Foundation's Bryant Spann Memorial Prize, an increasingly coveted and prestigious writer's award. In countless ways, from keeping the Debs home open to the public on Sundays in the

early days to trimming the hedges and washing the windows at the home, these and other ISU faculty members -- Quentin Bone, Eugene Dyche, Ronald Elperin, and others -- helped launch the Foundation and kept it going.

In addition to the labor and ISU faculty representatives, the charter membership of the Foundation included men and women from a wonderful variety of backgrounds and interests. Terre Haute businessmen -- Clifford Shanks, Edward Whalen, Morris Blumberg, William Hillis, and others -- were joined by the New York political cartoonist, Mitchell Loeb, and the sculptor, Louis

CHARTER MEMBERS EUGENE V. DEBS FOUNDATION MARCH 17, 1962

H. A. Abramson	William J. Hillis
Donald Allen	John Haynes Hilmes
V. Dewey Annakin	Ruth LePrade
Roger Baldwin	Mitchell Loeb
Morris Blumberg	Dora Mayer
Quentin Bone	Louis Mayer
Bernard Brommel	John McDaniel
John P. Burke	Marjorie McDonald
Ned A. Bush, Sr.	Duncan McDonald
William Coakley	Brad & Lilly Miller
Robert Constantine	Clyde R. Miller
Marguerite Debs Cooper	Virgil Morris
Rolla Cowger	Thomas Mulvihill
Curtis Culver	Oscar K. Edelman
William Davey	James O'Connell
S. A. Dewitt	John Dos Passos
Tilford G. Dudley	Otto Pragan
Eugene Dyche	Albert Schweitzer
Ronald Elperin	Clifford Shanks
William Fox	Mulford Sibley
Ruth & Royal France	Upton Sinclair
Erich Fromm	Edward Spann
Adolph Germer	Karl Stark
John & Shirley Grinrod	Kate Steichmann
Robert Haageron	Earl Stephanson
Doyt & Connie Hamilton	Irving Stone
Howard & Leavitta Hamilton	Norman Thomas
Albert Frampton	Edward Whalen
Mary Donovan Hapgood	Woodrow Creason

Mayer, and the poet, Ruth LePrade, and the physician, John Grinrod, and the coal miner, Brad Miller (and his wife, Lilly), and the journalist, Ruth France (Norrick), and a score of other men and women whose only apparent common ground was their interest in keeping alive the Debs tradition.

No account of charter members of the Foundation would be complete without special reference to the roles played by

Marguerite Debs Cooper and Oscar Edelman. Cooper, who is Debs' niece (and will be celebrating her 93rd birthday on May 24, 1987; Meadows Manor, 3300 Poplar, Terre Haute, Indiana), generously donated much of the furniture and memorabilia which fills the Debs home, and for her gift to Indiana State University of some 7,000 Debs letters, scholars and others will be forever indebted. During the occasional financial crises of the Foundation, Oscar Edelman "of Dayton" was a reliable and generous supporter and one of his donations made possible the curator's apartment in the Debs home. In addition, Edelman donated his vast library of labor-socialist literature to the Foundation and Indiana State University.

I want to emphasize the point that the success of the Debs

Foundation over the past 25 years has been the result of contributions made by Charter members and by the hundreds of men and women who joined the Foundation at a later date. One thinks immediately of Hilton Hanna, Dallas Sells, Martin Miller, Noel Beasley, Charles King, Robert Clouse and so many others that it becomes impossible to mention all of them. Together the charter members and those who joined later have set in place an organization which has preserved a unique shrine in labor, socialist, and reform history and, at the same time, through its research and educational programs, contributed to the preservation and understanding of Debs' ideals.

Socially Relevant Citings

Profits Trump Patriotism

In response to President George W. Bush's call to all Americans to give service to our country, some are enlisting in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps or the armed services. Others have begun putting in their suggested 4,000 hours at a variety of charitable endeavors, through everything from the volunteer fire department to mentoring programs. And still other Americans are moving their companies to Bermuda and the Cayman islands to avoid paying taxes. Isn't that special?

The New York Times reports a "megatrend" among American companies to incorporate in Bermuda in order to sharply reduce their taxes. Assorted financial advisors are encouraging these "moves," which involve nothing more than setting up a mail drop and paying a few fees. It's not necessary to have an office or to hold meetings there. One tax partner with Ernst & Young did cite patriotism as "the only potentially troubling issue," according to the Times, but concluded that profits trump patriotism. "We are working through a lot of companies who feel that it is (the right time to move offshore), that just the improvement on earnings is powerful enough that maybe the patriotism issue needs to take a back seat to that," said the partner's memo quoted in the Times.

Molly Ivins, *Progressive Populist*
March 15, 2002

Profits and Paybacks

Energy interests donated \$2.9 million to George W. Bush's campaign for president—more than any other federal candidate received over the last decade. On January 29, 2001 President Bush created his National Energy Policy Task Force, chaired by Vice President Cheney, to shape the new administration's energy policy. The task force's known members represented a "Who's Who" of industry insiders, but the complete list of members, as well as the task force's work—all conducted behind closed doors—remains a closely guarded secret. NRDC's Freedom of information Act request, seeking more information about the identities of task force members and their deliberations, was rebuffed by the Energy Department. What is known is this: as a "thank you" to the energy executives who gave more than \$20 million to Bush and other Republicans last year, many industry officials were invited to draw up a wish list that Cheney passed on to his task force.

From the looks of the Bush-Cheney energy plan, many of those wishes were granted. Not surprisingly, 26 of the nation's leading energy companies reported overall net income of \$14.8 billion during the first quarter of 2001—a 75% increase over last year's profits.

Nature's Voice, Sept./Oct. 2001

Jobs Needed For A Billion-Plus Youth

They have grown up poor, surrounded by violence, disease, and stifling social customs. They have never gone to school, or have dropped out, or have finished without learning much of practical use. They are members of the largest-ever generation of youth—1 billion plus—living mainly in less developed countries. And too many of them lack the education, skills, and opportunities necessary to become economically productive and to avoid unwanted child-bearing that will restart a cycle of deprivation.

Allison Tammann
Population Today, Jan. 2002

On Solidarity

"Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free..."

Eugene Victor Debs

"Because they had learned to know the meaning of human solidarity, of brotherhood, because they had learned through the hard experience of struggle that when the employer can divide you and pit white against black, American-born against foreign-born, he can divide and rule and exploit everyone. And we learned a lesson that only in the solidarity of human brotherhood, only as you stand together with your fellow man can you solve your basic problems."

Walter P. Reuther

The 2001 BANQUET

A Record Setter

Last Fall's banquet was not a record setter in terms of attendance; it was a sell-out, but not a record attendance. One could hardly call any given banquet a record setter for enthusiasm and appreciative recognition of the honoree, because those are subjective factors not measurable by objective indicators. But a record setter this banquet was for the fact that a quarter century after a "young" sixtish Al Chesser was keynote speaker when the banquet honored Ruben Levin, a prominent labor news reporter, the same still "youngish" Al Chesser came back as year 2001 recipient of the Debs Award.

Chesser was honored for his contributions to labor over a distinguished career both as international President of UTU and as one of the best at the art of legislative representation. Not many legislative representatives (lobbyists) attain such stature as Mr. Chesser has done so that he is seen not merely as an effective advocate of a special interest (for him it was and is railroad workers), but beyond that as statesman, whose skills and dedicated hard work have contributed to the betterment of society. It was a record setter in a special way, and a great banquet.



Byron Boyd Jr., UTU President presents award.



Al Chesser makes a point