

Martina Taite

Tradeswomen Heroes Award
Winner - April 2021



Level of Experience: Journeyworker

Years in Trade: 12

Union: Boilermakers

Local: 693

Bio

Martina Taite is the President of Boilermakers Local 693 at Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, leading over 1,800 members. She went to work for the shipyard and joined the union in 2008 because, as the mother of three young children, she wanted to make a better life for her family. She applied for the structural welding apprenticeship program and began her career.

Since 2008, Martina has risen as a leader—both formally and informally. After graduating the apprenticeship program, she served as a work leader; then, she went on to become a steward and lead crew assistant, then chief steward. She was elected to serve as Local 693's Recording Secretary, and at that time also got into organizing. As an organizer, she led the local into a growth spurt. She has also served on her local's Bylaws Committee and Apprenticeship Committee.

In addition to being elected this year as President of her local, Martina continues to hold the position of Assistant Chief Steward and Metal Trades Coordinator. She is part of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers' new Women's Caucus and was an active participant in the union's inaugural women's event in 2019.



Martina has two cousins who are Boilermakers at the shipyard. She is married, mother of two grown boys and a teen daughter, and she is the doting grandmother to grandson Kadarrius.

Why Martina Was Nominated

Martina Taité's role as a Tradeswoman Hero began somewhat timidly and in an unlikely place: in the bathroom at work. She is a great listener, and it seems her Boilermaker sisters were drawn to her to share their concerns and frustrations. In turn, Martina began seeking out Sister Erica Stewart, who also works at the shipyard, sharing the women's concerns with Stewart during bathroom breaks. "She wanted to make a change, and so she would bring up little issues she saw. Other women saw her as a sort of spokesperson. She is a very caring person and empathizes, but she also speaks the truth," says Erica.

Recognizing Martina's leadership skills, Sister Stewart encouraged her to get more involved with the union and represent her sisters' issues. Martina took her advice to heart and got active, stepping up whenever the local asked for volunteers and proving herself to be not only a leader but also a valuable team player.

And she found platforms to advocate for her sisters at the shipyard.

"That wasn't easy," says Erica. "She withstood a lot of hateful comments when she started getting involved, and especially when she started to take on leadership roles. But she proved she is a good leader—and a leader who is able to identify and cultivate other leaders. That's what we, as tradeswomen leaders need to do: When we, as women, achieve leadership roles, we need to reach our hands out to lift other women up with us—and that's what Martina does."

Martina was recently elected as President of Local 693 and has been active with the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers' new Women's Committee.