

Gina Walsh

Tradeswomen Heroes Award

Winner - June 2021



Level of Experience: Journeyworker

Years in Trade: 32

Union: Insulators

Local: 1

Bio

I first really got to know Gina when she was in her mid-teens and a lifeguard at Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 562 Complex in North Saint Louis County, MO. Even though our families were friends we had an age gap between us.

My father owned a bar and restaurant in the "Village of Riverview Gardens" where Gina's father Willie tended bar. Numerous trades people and politicians frequented my father's establishment and that was how our families' friendship got started as I remember it.

I remember Willie telling me that his daughter Gina was an applicant to be the first woman in Insulators LU 1 which Business Manager Larry Walsh made happen. Larry definitely had an eye for talent.

Gina became an Insulator Mechanic after serving her four year apprenticeship. Gina had the skills to work both commercial and industrial which made her very easy to employ. I remember telling my colleagues that I wish we had fifty Gina Walshes when I was the BA/BM before going to the International. The contractors loved her!!

From there Gina started her political career as a Trustee for the Village of Riverview Gardens Fire Board and things took off after that: Missouri State Representative, Missouri State



Senator, President Missouri State BTC, and Deputy Director of the Insulators International LMCT

Gina Walsh. I have a daughter who is a journey woman insulator and we attended the TWBN in Minneapolis and I was just amazed how all the insulator women looked to Gina for advice and leadership. When we left there I told my daughter Gina was like "Mama Bear" over all the insulator ladies.

Why Gina Was Nominated

There are many reasons why Gina Walsh should be nominated for this award but the ones that stick out in my mind are:

Empathy: I was always taught that fifty one percent of leadership is empathy. Gina has always shown that from the time that she got in the Local till this current day. You do not rise up through the ranks the way Gina did if you do not have empathy.

Right to Work: If it wasn't for Gina efforts Missouri would be a right to work state today. Gina worked tirelessly on the floor and behind the scenes of the Missouri State Senate to defeat this union busting legislation. She also helped coordinate the local unions to get the message out and the people to vote against this law.

During this whole time in the Missouri Congress, Gina sacrificed salary and benefits that she would have been making as a journeyman insulator and never complained.

When Tradeswomen Build Nations got started, who was at the forefront for the insulators?