

Deanna Cain

Tradeswomen Heroes Award

Winner - July 2021



Level of Experience: Journeyworker

Years in Trade: 26

Union: Boilermakers

Local: 290

Bio

Deanna Cain is the Business Manager-Secretary Treasurer for Boilermakers Local 290 at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Washington. She started working for the shipyard in 1994 as an insulator—but she'd been trying to get a job there for over a decade. She knew the jobs there were good trades jobs. "I wanted to get in when I was 18 years old, and they wouldn't hire me!" she says. She had worked as a tailor and was hoping to get a shipyard job as a fabric worker helper. When she was finally offered a position as an insulator, she took it knowing it was a good job and a foot in the door.

As an insulator, she was a member of the Carpenters union, but when she changed to a metal trades job around 2011, she switched to the Boilermakers union. Deanna soon rose through the ranks as an alternate chief steward, chief steward, security specialist, secretary-treasurer of the Bremerton Metal Trades and on to become the Boilermakers first female Business Manager-Secretary Treasurer (now in her third uncontested term).

Throughout her career at the shipyard, Deanna has been especially involved in helping other women navigate filing sexual harassment complaints. She has also worked to



(successfully) advocate for PPE that fits women properly.

Deanna has been married for 14 years, and has three children (two daughters and a son) and a step-son, as well as two grandchildren. She and her husband enjoy riding their Indian motorcycles together and raising their five miniature dachshunds who are “a handful.”

Why Deanna Was Nominated

Deanna Cain has been an advocate for her sisters at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard since she first started working there as an insulator in 1994. It started with PPE—gloves that didn't fit right. “I was small and they were for men,” she says. “The PPE, from gloves to coveralls, didn't fit a lot of us women.” So, she advocated for what she and her shipyard sisters needed. Now, the PPE fits. But that wasn't all. She was concerned—and still is—about sexual harassment in the trades. Early in her career, it was something she faced but didn't do anything about—she didn't know where to turn, who to turn to, how to file a complaint or what her rights were. She doesn't want other women to be in the dark, so she's made a point of being available to help her sisters navigate sexual harassment complaints.

“I've had a lot of women come in and talk. I help them through the process of EEO and filing formal complaints—the big thing is getting people to come forward,” she says.

Besides helping and protecting her sisters in the trade, she has two very personal reasons for actively advocating for women and fighting against sexual harassment: Her two daughters, who work at the shipyard with her.

“Sexual harassment has been going on for many years, and we don't have to put up with it,” she says.

Deanna has also paved the way for tradeswomen in leadership. She was the first—and is currently the only—female business manager-secretary treasurer for the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers. She says there was no opposition from her Boilermaker brothers about her running for the office, and her local's president and other leaders support her.