



65 Years of Solidarity

On May 3, 1952, Local 237 received its charter as a Local of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Henry Feinstein had broken away from DC 37, where he was their first president, to form a new public employee union, Local 237. There are some who say that the number 237 represented the “second 37,” a public employee union that has now become the largest Teamsters Local in the nation (including Puerto Rico) and Canada.

Testing continued on the atomic bomb and the first hydrogen bomb was detonated. It was also the time of Joseph McCarthy and the “red baiting” that came with McCarthyism. Early Local 237 members were accused of being “communists” for joining a union. They struggled for safe workplaces and decent salaries. They persevered and membership in Local 237 brought them into the middle class.

Our president, Gregory Floyd, recently said, “When you think about it, 65 years is a long time to keep anything going, let alone, going strong. Across our nation, labor unions have seen a dramatic decline in membership — to only 11% today. Union bashing and union busting are rampant, with public sector members often portrayed as greedy, incompetent workers who abuse the system. Somehow, many have forgotten that unions fought for working families so that they could enjoy a better quality of life. Unions built the middle class in America. And, it is public employees who help to run and maintain services and facilities upon which millions rely — our schools, hospitals, the Housing Authority and homeless shelters — to name only a few. But, throughout 237’s history we’ve had to fight many battles on behalf of our members and retirees. We’ve had many accomplishments, among them: lobbying for legislation to protect our members; providing health and pension benefits for active members and retirees; and ending gender based discrimination. Today, we are still faced with many challenges, but we are well-prepared to fight with the vigor and commitment that has become synonymous with Local 237 throughout our history. We are proud and should be, because at 65 we’re still going strong.”

Happy 65th Birthday, Local 237. We are Teamsters and we are proud. ■

THEN AND NOW



Henry Feinstein, the first President of Teamsters Local 237.



The current President of Teamsters Local 237, Gregory Floyd (center) with members of the Executive Board: Trustees, Curtis Scott and Jeanette Taveras; Vice President, Richard Hendershot; Secretary-Treasurer, Ruben Torres; Recording Secretary, Patricia Stryker and Trustee, Edmund Kane.



The original building of the headquarters of Local 237.



The current building of the headquarters of Local 237.

Early members of the union included maintenance workers and water use inspectors. Between 1952 and the present, Local 237 has grown to represent over 250 job titles — at municipal agencies such as the New York City Housing Authority, Health and Hospitals Corporation, the Department of Health and the Department of Corrections, the NYPD, the TLC, HRA and many more city agencies, as well as municipal workers in several towns on Long Island. Currently, our diverse membership of nearly 24,000 includes maintenance workers, managers, school safety agents, x-ray technicians, cooks, roofers, plasterers, elevator mechanics, photographers, attorneys, hospital police and more. Over 10,000 retirees enjoy the benefits of retirement from Local 237 in the City of New York and on Long Island.

In 1952, a new car cost \$1700 and gas was .20 a gallon. Chopped meat was .53 per pound.



Shop Stewards conference at the NY Sheraton.



Bill Lewis, second Local 237 President with members



Maintenance Workers, Bronx Community College.



Members heading off to Albany.

Retired members share their thoughts:

“Yo, Angel L. Morciglio Ramos, retirado del Local 237, me uno mis sentimientos sobre la ocasión, del 65o aniversario del Local 237. Yo me siento muy agradecido por todas las atenciones recibidas por el Local 237. Gracias por todo. Las Bendiciones para todos. ”

Angel L. Morciglio Ramos

Retired NYCHA Caretaker, Now living in Puerto Rico

“Congrats to Local 237. Wishing you 65 more years. Don’t know where I’d be without you. You’ve done so much for so many. Carry on. ”

Jesse Taylor, Retired Campus Peace Officer, Lives in NYC

“Congratulations on your 65th anniversary Teamsters Local 237!!! Thank you Union representatives for your continued commitment in maintaining Teamsters Local 237 to its full potential. How fortunate we members are to have unions (especially ours) who fight for better salaries, safe work environments, better health care and retirement with great benefits. Thank you President Gregory Floyd, Nancy B. True and all others for a great job making union members feel better at their workplace and for the retired members to have a better life. ”

Iris Beltran

Retired Maintenance Control Planner, Woodhull Hospital, HHC. Now living in Puerto Rico

“Un cordial saludo a mis hermanos y hermanas del Local 237. Al cumplirse los 65 años de la fundación del Local 237 quiero compartir con todos los afiliados este momento tan importante. La ocasión sobre el 65º aniversario del Local 237 nos da la oportunidad de tener grandes recuerdos que fue un pilar de sus luchas, la defensa de la dignidad de los trabajadores. Como afiliado del Local 237, me siento muy orgulloso de pertenecer a tan importante sindicato que ha hecho historia. Felicidades al Local 237 en su 65º aniversario. ¡Gracias! ”

José A. Melendez Vazquez

Retired NYCHA Caretaker, Coordinator of Retiree Group in Puerto Rico. Currently living in Puerto Rico

“Felicidades en su 65 años que sean muchos más! ”

Ferdinand Rivera Rosado

Retired Caretaker X, NYCHA. Currently living in Puerto Rico

“Felicitación a la unión por sus 65º Aniversario del Local 237 y al Presidente Gregory Floyd y sus delegados Richard Hendershot, Ruben Torres, Patricia Stryker, Nancy True. Gracias es una unión que ayuda mucho a los trabajadores y familias. ”

William Rosado

Retired Caretaker J, NYCHA. Currently residing in Puerto Rico.



a message from the president

Vote 'NO' to the CON CON con

by **Gregory Floyd**

President, Teamsters Local 237
and Vice President-at-Large on the
General Board of the International
Brotherhood of Teamsters

On November 7, 2017, when voters go to the polls to cast their ballot for candidates of various elective offices, including Governor and Mayor, there's another part of that ballot—toward the end—that may affect them as much, if not more.

It's a question on the ballot which comes up every 20 years and which seems innocent enough: "Should there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?"

The wrong answer can prove deadly for union members, and in particular, public sector union members. We need to vote "NO", and here's why:

Our benefits — the envy of so many — are protected by the current state constitution. In today's political climate, where union bashing and union busting is rampant, when union membership has fallen to an all-time low (nationwide it is only 11%) and with 28 states having already passed so-called "Right to Work" laws which, contrary to its name, allows "freeloader" employees in unionized workplaces to receive the same advantages as union members without paying dues — we DO NOT want

to create a mechanism for wholesale alterations to the New York State Constitution.

We need to vote "NO" to the Constitutional Convention!

Union members are not the only ones who would be negatively affected by a Constitutional Convention. Many others are too.

According to a recent Siena College poll, 89% of New Yorkers have heard little or nothing about the upcoming convention. But the political insiders and lobbyists are well aware of it and view the Convention as a great opportunity to rewrite the current Constitution to their own benefit, while making a huge profit in the process. The Constitutional Convention takes place over several years—while the taxpayers, you and I, are footing the bill for the Delegates' election and salary—at an estimated cost of \$200 million. To make things even worse, there is no time limit for how long the process can take. The vote to have a Convention (or, hopefully, not) takes place in 2017; in 2018, there will be the election of Delegates to the Convention and in 2019, the Convention will convene. Any approved amendments will not take effect until at least 2020 and beyond. Delegates will be paid a salary of \$80,000 a year (in addition to their other income). Since Delegates are elected to their position, many will be elected officials or politically savvy insiders who are familiar with the techniques and demands of the political

process, such as fundraising and campaigning. The argument that the Convention provides an opportunity for "fresh eyes" and "outsiders" to participate in government is not the reality. Instead, the reality is that a Constitutional Convention would be controlled by well-funded special interests, like the Koch brothers, and career politicians, and will put the "foxes in the hen house."

New Yorkers from all sectors of employment and socio-economic backgrounds have rejected the call for a Constitutional Convention—which takes place every 20 years—since 1967. And with good reason. Then and especially now in this politically-charged climate, there is concern that long-standing guarantees will be destroyed. Among them, clean air and water, preserving recreational parkland, caring for the needy, mentally ill, and elderly, and providing free public schools — just some of the mandates protected by the current Constitution. Along with worker rights, issues like pensions, prevailing wage rates, collective bargaining and workers' compensation could all be on the chopping block, if we allow a Constitutional Convention.

It is important to note that there is a path for beneficial change. If there are changes that can improve our lives and livelihoods, the legislature can amend the Constitution at any time with specific proposals. In fact, there have been 222 amendments to the 120 year-old documents, changes achieved through legislation. And, as the Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie cautions: "My concern is there can be a lot of outside money influencing what would be the election of 180 or so temporary legislators... I think we should be very, very careful in exposing the constitution to the whims of someone from outside the state who can decide to spend millions to put forward their position."

In other words: just vote "NO" to the Constitutional Convention and avoid the Con Con con. ■



Winston A. George: Farewell, but not goodbye

by **Nancy B. True**
Director of the
Retiree Division

Winston George has joined the ranks of retired members of Local 237. As he heads into this new phase in life, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done for the union and its members — both working and retired — and for the friendship he has shared with me and with the entire Retiree Division staff.

In the nearly 24 years that Winston George was a part of the Retiree Division, he made an indelible mark on the lives of thousands of union members and re-

tires. His ability to connect with people — in multiple languages and with the warmth of a caring and professional social worker — was extraordinary. His talents were legion. At holiday parties, he could always be found on the dance floor. At parades, he would be leading an exuberant group of retirees — while marching on Fifth Avenue. In community meetings and retirement planning seminars, he touched people's lives. A wise friend and colleague, he was always willing to extend a helping hand.

So, on June 9th, at Founders Day, "We are Family/Somos Familia" was a fitting theme for the day. It was a day of celebrating milestones — the 65th Birthday of Local 237 — and the retirement of the Retiree Division's longtime deputy director. In families everywhere, milestones are acknowledged and cherished. Our Local 237 family is no different.

At Founders Day, Sarah Frierson (retired SSA, Level III) and Trustee Ed Kane (retired NYCHA Mgr.) shared their pride and thoughts on the union's milestone and retired members feted Winston George with dance, poetry, music and proclamations as he prepared to become a retiree. Messages came from as far away as Puerto Rico and as nearby as Brooklyn. Staten Island Borough President James Oddo proclaimed June 9th "Winston A. George Day" on Staten Island. City Council Member Rafael Espinal did the same for the district in Brooklyn where Winston resides. Public Advocate



Tish James honored Winston with a proclamation. Winston's family, traveling from California, Florida, Pennsylvania and Brooklyn joined in the festivities.

The union's anniversary and Winston's retirement served as an opportunity for staff, retirees and even a few elected officials to reflect upon the importance of unions and the individuals who devote their work lives to ensuring that union membership is lifelong. It reaffirmed the connection that we all feel as brothers and sisters in the Local 237 family. It also provided an opportunity to tell a beloved staff member, in no uncertain terms, that he is extraordinary and a treasure to all. As Winston enters retirement — we know that this new phase of his life will be filled with excitement, family, travel and reflection. We send him off with the gift of friendship and a reminder that "You may retire from work, but NOT from the union." Take a little while to spread your wings — but remember to come home to your union family, every now and then. Best wishes. ■

RETIREE news & views

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WE ARE FAMILY! SOMOS FAMILIA!

Founders Day means so much to so many. It is a time not only to commemorate our union's rich history and our union leaders who helped us meet the challenges of the times, but it gives retirees a chance to talk with long-time friends who share a bond. It is our union that connects us. It makes us family.

This year, Founders Day had an extra special meaning. Local 237 is celebrating its 65th anniversary and Winston George, the Deputy Director of the Retiree Division, was celebrated in honor of his retirement in June. Winston, with his family proudly looking on, was bestowed with several awards including Proclamations from the Public Advocate, Letitia James — who was also the luncheon, keynote speaker, and the City Council, an Excelsior Medal of Honor presented by the Retiree Division staff and presentations from El Comité Latino, the Italian Heritage Committee, the Black History Committee, as well as a special message on behalf of retirees in Puerto Rico.

The program also included Jazz Activist Marjorie Eliot, who delighted the audience with a musical medley, and the Retiree Salsa Dance Ensemble, who thrilled them with a lively dance performance. Sarah Frierson, Retired School Safety Agent Level III and Edmund Kane, Trustee on Local 237's Executive Board, offered their thoughts on the union's 65th anniversary. In her remarks, Sarah told the audience of how proud she is to be a Local 237 member. She described the union as a strong and consistent presence in the lives of the members. As a retired school safety agent, she had praise for Local 237's resolution of its historic gender based pay discrimination lawsuit on behalf of School safety agents. Ed spoke about the significant role Local 237 plays in improving our lives, noting: "Training, promotions, salary, benefits...on and on, are all linked to the union's work on our behalf. The union gives its members a voice for the things we need."

In addition to the Public Advocate's remarks, the luncheon audience heard from Gregory Floyd, President of Local 237, who told the retirees: "65 years is a significant number. But because of the work of many of you here today, we did not just survive the many challenges public sector members face, we met them head-on." ■



President Gregory Floyd addresses retired members.



Hon. Letitia James, NYC Public Advocate, keynote speaker.



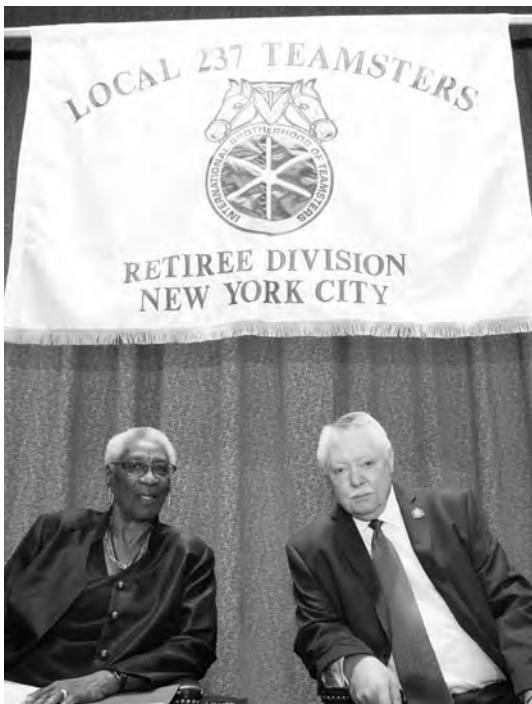
At the piano Marjorie Eliot and Sedic Choukroun.



Sunshine Club presentation to a representative of Coalition for the Homeless.



Salsero Franck Muhel leads the dance ensemble.



Sarah Frierson and Ed Kane.



Winston George dancing with the retiree Salsa Dance Ensemble.



Luz Carty, Retiree Assistance Coordinator staffs the Con Con table



Presentation of Excelsior Medal of Honor by the staff of the Retiree Division



Noelia Quinones and Shavon Banks Retiree Division Secretaries.



A presentation of the Italian Heritage Committee represented by Anthony Cottone.



Proclamation presented on behalf of City Council Member Hon. Rafael Espinal



Presentation of proclamation from Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate.



Speaking on behalf of El Comité Latino - Elsie Ortiz and Olga Perez Vasallo



Winston George and Nestor Murray-Irizarry - with messages from Puerto Rico



Winston George's family, wife Elisabeth second from the right.



Presentation of a proclamation from Staten Island Borough President James Oddo.

A Man of Honor

Who is a man of honor?
A man who is held in High Esteem.

One who is
Steadfast
Caring
And Strong.

This man is Winston George.

A man who has dedicated his life to 24 years of service to the members of Teamsters Local 237

A man who has had a positive influence on our lives.

You may have chosen us, but God has chosen you!

You are a shooting star, whose light has shined on so many lives.

May your light never dim.

Thank you for founding the first Black History Committee

Your retirement is much deserved

SO

Take your time to relax

Travel AND

Reflect.

You will always have a place in our hearts

You are a Man of Honor

Held in High Esteem

A collaborative poem by the Retiree Division's Black History Committee, with the guidance of Rhonda Brown. Committee Members: Carolyn Whitley, Cornis Crawford, Pernel Hepbourn, James Johnson, Melanie Ested, Ken Fox, Frank Holton, Nubia Imani Beazer, Carolyn Harrell, Robert Kearney, Kitty Taylor, Rhonda A. Brown.

To WINSTON GEORGE:

TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT FROM THE ITALIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE

I – Imagine the unimaginable

T – Time to spend with family

A – Always enjoy life

L – Live long and prosper

I – Insert fun into every day

A – Appreciate each day

N – Nothing's impossible with the love of your family

Italian Heritage Committee:

Frank Aiello	Vincent Aquilino
Rocco Brienza	Salvatore Conti
Anthony Cottone	Paul DeRosa
Vincenza Di Lella	Richard Fischetti
Rosario Lamberti	Sal Montalbano
Linda Tavolaro	Liborio Torregiano



Rhonda Brown after reciting "A Man of Honor"



El Comité Latino with Winston George



The George family with Gregory Floyd, Patricia Stryker and Nancy True.



What Costs \$200 Million and Counting...

by Patricia Stryker

Director of Political Action and Legislation and the Recording Secretary of the Executive Board of Local 237

As you know, on Tuesday, November 7th, you will be asked to decide whether there should be a new Constitutional Convention whose charge would be to make major changes to the New York State Constitution. However, remember this approach is not the only way the change the Constitution. It can be done by the State Legislature, in two sessions, and put on the ballot for you to vote the following November. And, at no cost to you.

Constitutional Conventions are very expensive. This one could cost over \$200 million unnecessary dollars, which is an obscene amount of money for this endeavor.

To put this in perspective, it is good to revisit the history of Constitutional Conventions. While there have been numerous changes to individual items contained in the state constitution over the course of our history, the last Con-

You are correct — a Constitutional Convention!

stitutional Convention that produced changes was in 1938. The “automatic” question that is on the ballot every twenty years was defeated in 1957, 1977 and 1997.

Be aware that the New York State Constitution has been amended over two hundred times in the past and only six of these amendments were a result of a Convention. So, you have to ask yourself, “Is this really necessary?” **NO** You may also ask yourself, “Is this dangerous?” **YES**

You already know that the NYS Legislature can make changes that will appear on the ballot. The dangerous part of having a Constitution Convention is that the political mood at this time translates directly into the convention’s agenda.

At this time many of our fellow citizens feel “left out.” Their salaries and benefits have been diminished and they are not feeling too friendly toward those who have what they do not.

So, the likelihood of retaining our defined benefit pension is in doubt. Ask the people in Detroit and Rhode Island who saw their pensions reduced after they retired.

Ultimately, the ability to defeat this ballot question “Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend same?” is in your hands. You, your family members, friends and neighbors must vote **“NO.”** Even if you don’t regularly vote except every four years, think again and vote. ■



Can Bankruptcy Help?

by Mary E. Sheridan, Esq.

Director of Local 237- Legal Services Plan

Are you drowning in debt? Feeling anxious and stressed out from nasty creditor phone calls? Have you tried and tried to pay your credit card debt and the balance never seems to change? You are not alone. Although the number of bankruptcy filings in the United States has decreased since the highs of 2010, there were still close to 800,000 people seeking the protection of the bankruptcy courts in 2016.

The majority of individuals filing for bankruptcy file a Chapter 7 petition. People often refer to Chapter 7 filings as “liquidation” petitions. This is a bit of a misnomer, since bankruptcy laws protect certain assets such as some of the equity in your home and car, most personal belongings and household furnishings, and a certain amount of cash. In general, a Chapter 7 filing works to discharge most unsecured debt and secured debt, where you no longer have or want the security. Even income tax debt might be dischargeable in a Chapter 7 filing.

The Federal Bankruptcy laws require complete disclosure of all debt, income and other assets. The process involves gathering a lot of documents and then your attorney will advise you on whether or not you qualify for a Chapter 7 filing. Sometimes an individual’s income will be too high to qualify or the income versus expenses allows for a certain amount of money to go to creditors. If this is the case, a Chapter 13 bankruptcy filing might be appropriate. In a Chapter 13, the individual must submit a payment plan to the Court for approval, for a time period of up to 5 years. A Chapter 13 may also be appropriate where someone is trying to save a home from foreclosure and reinstate his or her mortgage.

Remember — your Legal Services Plan is available for advice and representation where appropriate. Call (212) 924-1220 ■



HIP/HMO Plan Changes

by Mitch Goldberg

Director of the Welfare Fund

As you probably know, your health insurance coverage is a negotiated benefit. The City’s municipal unions, represented by the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) and the NYC Office of Labor Relations (OLR) hold regular negotiations regarding city employee and retiree health insurance coverage. Recently, negotiations between these two groups resulted in a plan to control costs and to maintain benefits in health insurance coverage for you and your working brothers and sisters.

The reason for changes is because the MLC is opposed to having City employees and retirees pay a percentage of the health insurance premiums charged to the City of New York. New York City is the rare municipality where workers and retirees are not required to pay for a part of these premiums.

One way to avoid premium cost sharing is to create incentives for employees and retirees to modify their usage of high cost healthcare options – such as using the Emergency Room and Urgent Care Centers for non-critical situations.

Effective July 1, 2017, Non-Medicare retirees who are enrolled in the HIP/HMO plan will see the following changes:

- \$0 for preventive services such as routine physicals, vaccinations, colonoscopies and mammograms.
- \$0 for birth control and other preventive medicines. Visit the EmblemHealth website @ www.emblemhealth.com for a complete list of prescription drugs in this category, which are

now covered by the health insurance and not the union Welfare Fund.

- \$50 co-pay to visit an Urgent Care Center
- \$150 co-pay for an Emergency Room visit. However, if you are admitted to the hospital there will not be a co-pay, only the hospital fee.
- Coverage for Opioid addiction treatment will also be covered.
- Emblem Health will also cover you for medicines used to treat substance-use disorders. A 30 day supply of Generic Opioid treatment drug will be \$5. Or \$15 for a preferred brand. Non-preferred brands will not be covered.

Non-Medicare retirees should have already received a new ID card from EmblemHealth and letters explaining these changes. If you have not received the letter or have additional questions, you may call EmblemHealth at 1-800 624-2414.

Medicare eligible retirees are not affected by any of the current changes to the health plans.

As a retired municipal worker and as a Local 237 member, you have some of the best benefits available in the country. Knowing how to maximize your benefits by avoiding high out of pocket expenses (ER and Urgent Care Centers, rather than seeing your primary physician – in non-emergency situations) makes you a partner in ensuring that our coverage remains affordable and comprehensive.

Controlling future costs will continue to be an important focus of the MLC’s work. Protecting retiree benefits is a key goal of your union. President Floyd is committed to the preservation of retiree benefits. The message of the MLC is that there will be NO “Premium Cost Share” for our working members and our retirees. ■

Join us

Labor Day Parade



Saturday, Sept. 9

New York City's Labor Day Parade will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9. Local 237 President Gregory Floyd and the Executive Board invite all members, retirees and families to join in the celebration to mark Teamster pride and solidarity. A float, live entertainment, free food and tee shirts are in store for 237 participants as they march along 5th Avenue.

237's kick-off time and location will be posted on our website: www.local237.org when finalized.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



On April 6, 2017 the Retiree Division celebrated Women's History Month. Pictured at the podium is Kellie Carter Jackson, Ph.D., who discussed "Ethel Phillips: Understanding the myth of the Good Boss in the World of Domestic Servants." Ethel Phillips was Dr. Jackson's grandmother.

RETIREE news & views

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MAY/JUNE 2017

PERIODICALS
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on a personal note...

Congratulations...

to retiree **Anton Galsim**, of the Inspection Unit in the Bronx, and proud father of Anthony Galsim, who recently earned his MBA.



to retiree **Anthony Cottone** on coordinating another wonderful retiree Spring Luncheon.

to retiree **Doris Welch**, who was recently honored with a prestigious service award from the Council of Municipal Retiree Organizations.



to **Hector Cotto**, who has assumed the role of Deputy Director of the Retiree Division upon the retirement of Winston George.

Condolences...

to the family of **Frank DeSalvo**, retired Plasterer working for the Housing Authority for 18 years, who leaves behind his loving wife of 67 years, Josephine, and 2 sons, 2 daughters, 11 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

to the family of retiree, **Patricia Herrmann**, an EMS worker at Bellevue Hospital for 28 years who died at the age of 67.

to the family of **Judith Chittick**, retired Housing Manager for NYCHA working for 20 years. She leaves behind nieces, nephews, grand nieces and nephews and great, great nieces and nephews.

to the family of **Michael A. Barbagallo**, retired NYCHA Superintendent. He leaves behind his wife Lillian and three children-Ann Marie, Joseph and Michael

Apologies to the family of **Paul Asaro**. We incorrectly listed his date of death. Paul died on March 7, 2017.

237's 65th ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE



On June 17, Local 237 hosted an **OPEN HOUSE** for members, retirees and their families, to mark our 65th Anniversary. To view all of the photos of the festivities and you can visit www.local237.org



Retiree picnic at Kruckers in Pomona NY July 6, 2017

RETIREE PICNIC



FIGHTING BACK RALLY

Local 237 members and retirees join forces to "fight back" at a rally hosted by Governor Andrew Cuomo