



# Wisconsin State AFL-CIO *...the voice for working families.*

David Newby, President • Sara J. Rogers, Exec. Vice President • Phillip L. Neuenfeldt, Secretary-Treasurer

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To Whom It May Concern:

At our Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention in September, we invited Gary Anderson to do his presentation of "Clarence Darrow: Our Unions and Justice" as part of the celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

I must tell you that there was some resistance to this on our Executive Board: too serious, boring, let's just have fun instead were the types of remarks made.

But we made absolutely the right choice. Gary's presentation was very well attended and the audience was responsive, attentive—and inspired.

Here are two typical comments from the Delegate evaluations of our Convention: "Clarence Darrow was a wonderful performance." and "I loved the special re-enactment of Darrow and I think every union member should hear him to understand how far we've come and how far we have yet to go."

I absolutely agree with these comments.

We ask a lot of our members. We ask them to pay attention to union and political issues. We urge them to volunteer their evenings and weekends for political work. We ask them to donate to a host of union causes. We ask them to join picket lines and demonstrations.

Yet we do so little to truly inspire them. Sure, we have some excellent union speakers who can move an audience, but so often speeches at our Conventions can be repetitive and less than stirring. We need in addition the kind of inspiration that comes from music and theatre and the sort of presentation Gary Anderson provides. As indicated by the responses from our Convention Delegates, they will remember the drama and emotion of "Clarence Darrow: Our Unions and Justice" long after they have forgotten our speeches about the importance of the 2008 elections and how high the stakes were for us (as absolutely critical and historic as those elections were).

The labor movement, after all, is about the struggle for social and economic justice. It has been a difficult struggle, but we have many victories to celebrate, many heroes and heroines to remember, many injustices that cannot be forgotten. We need to celebrate our victories and our heroes and heroines—and never forget the injustices of the past and the present. How better to do that than through theatre and song that inspires us for the struggles ahead?

I would urge every union organization to consider including a performance of "Clarence Darrow: Our Unions and Justice" at your Convention or conferences you may sponsor. Your members will be moved—and in many cases, I think, develop an emotional commitment to your union and the labor movement that they didn't have before.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further discussion of Gary Anderson's "Clarence Darrow: Our Unions and Justice".

In Solidarity,

David Newby  
President

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