

AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement  
Washington, D.C.  
June 17, 2020

### **ON THE PASSING OF GEORGE KOURPIAS**

The AFL-CIO Executive Council mourns the passing of our brother and friend, George Kourpias.

Kourpias was a member of the Machinists (IAM) for an incredible 67 years. Born in Sioux City, Iowa, he joined IAM Local 1637 in 1952 and quickly became active in the central labor council and the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, before serving as president of IAM District 162. He then served 33 years on the IAM staff, becoming international president in 1989. He led his members through national strikes, fought back against relentless attacks on workers, and created more educational opportunities through the expansion of IAM's world-renowned William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center.

As chair of the AFL-CIO International Department, Kourpias recognized the importance of global labor solidarity and was instrumental in advocating for numerous human rights issues, including being a key ally in the anti-apartheid movement.

Kourpias' dedication to working people continued into retirement. He became the founding president of the Alliance for Retired Americans in 2001, leading the way to protect Social Security and Medicare from privatization schemes. No matter the role, Kourpias embodied his words to the Spring 1997 IAM Journal: "Union leadership is a gift."

George Kourpias made life better for so many across our country, and the AFL-CIO Executive Council sends our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all the members, leaders and staff of IAM.