



About Our Honoree

John J. Sweeney



The Peggy Browning Fund is particularly grateful to Mr. Sweeney for the decade of support we have received from the AFL-CIO during his leadership. By becoming one of our earliest supporters, the AFL-CIO helped give the Fund the necessary credibility to recruit other supporters as well as outstanding candidates for our Advisory Board. Throughout the following years, Mr. Sweeney has lent his organization's support to us both financially and programmatically and has been an essential part of our success.

John J. Sweeney was elected to a fourth term as president of the AFL-CIO at the federation's constitutional convention in July 2005. He was first elected president in 1995 on a platform of revitalizing the federation, which has 53 affiliated unions and nearly 9 million members, as well as 1 million members in Working America, its new community affiliate. The 1995 election was the first contested election in AFL-CIO history.

At the time of his election, Mr. Sweeney was serving as president of the Service Employees International Union, which grew from 625,000 to 1.1 million members during the 15 years of his leadership. He was a vice president of the AFL-CIO and chair of the AFL-CIO Executive Council committees on Health Care and Organizing and Field Services. He was elected SEIU president in 1980.

In May 2000, Mr. Sweeney was also elected president of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), an international organization with consultative status at the Organization for



Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). TUAC's affiliates represent some 70 million workers and include over 55 national trade union centers in the 29 countries in the OECD. TUAC coordinates worker and union input to the G8 economic summits.

Mr. Sweeney's first job in the labor movement was with the International Ladies' Garment Workers, which later merged with the Clothing and Textile Workers Union. He joined SEIU Local 32B in New York City in 1961 as a union representative. Mr. Sweeney was elected president of Local 32B in 1976 and led two citywide strikes of apartment maintenance workers during the 1970's.

In 1996 he authored *America Needs A Raise, Fighting for Economic Security and Social Justice*, published by Houghton-Mifflin. He co-authored *Solutions for the New Work Force* in 1989 and co-edited the UNA-USA Economic Policy Council's *Family and Work: Bridging the Gap* in 1987.

John J. Sweeney was born May 5, 1934 in the Bronx. He graduated from Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y. with a degree in economics. Sweeney holds honorary degrees from Oberlin College, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the University of Baltimore, Catholic University Law School and the University of Toledo's College of Law. He lives in Washington with his wife Maureen, a former New York City school teacher. They have two grown children, John and Patricia.