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Contact: Jess Kamm Broomell, 412-562-2444, jkamm@usw.org

USW Mourns Passing of International President Tom Conway

(PITTSBURGH) – It is with heavy hearts that the [United Steelworkers](#) (USW) union today announces the passing of [International President Tom Conway](#) at age 71.

Elected as the union’s president in 2019, Conway was known for his quick wit, formidable bargaining skills and unwavering devotion to workers and their families.

“From his earliest time making steel to his steady hand leading us through the darkest days of the pandemic, Tom followed two simple guiding principles: the dignity of work and the power of working people,” said David R. McCall, the USW’s International Vice President of Administration. “Tom was never afraid of a fight, and thanks to his ingenuity and determination, generations of workers can enjoy better jobs and brighter futures.”

Conway relished going toe to toe with top leaders of some of the biggest corporations where USW members work, and over the course of his career, he became one of the union’s most accomplished contract negotiators in steel, aluminum, oil and other major industries, often directing bargaining during crises.

As president, he also spearheaded innovative initiatives to organize more workers into the labor movement, extending the benefits of union representation to workers in a variety of fields from manufacturing to higher education. Under Conway’s leadership, USW members gained some of the movement’s most significant organizing victories.

“Solidarity wasn’t just a word to Tom; it was a way of life,” said USW International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn. “He understood that by working together, we will balance the scales against greedy corporations and the billionaire class.”

During his time in office, Conway relentlessly advocated for fair trade, demanding that the government enforce U.S. trade laws to prevent importation of illegally subsidized and dumped products that damage domestic industries and destroy good-paying jobs.

At the same time, Conway worked not just to save jobs but to create them, finding new ways to engage both companies and elected officials to expand manufacturing, secure domestic supply chains and invest in healthy, flourishing communities.

Conway first became an activist in USW Local 6787 in 1978 when he went to work at the Burns Harbor Works of Bethlehem Steel. While working as a millwright in the coke plant, Conway served as a grievor for plant-wide maintenance and was a member of the safety and contracting-out committees. He joined the union's International staff in 1987 and was elected as USW International Vice President in 2005.

“We will all miss Tom’s passion, his integrity, his gift for strategy and not least of all, his sense of humor,” said McCall. “His time as USW president was too short, but it’s clear he will leave an indelible impact on our union and beyond.”

The USW represents 850,000 workers in North America employed in many industries that include metals, mining, rubber, chemicals, paper, oil refining, the service, public and health care sectors and higher education. For more information: www.usw.org.

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