



Shock, Sadness over Death of AFL-CIO Leader Richard Trumka

The labor movement is stunned by the sudden passing of AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka who died on Thursday of an apparent heart attack at the age of 72. The Federation's Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler tweeted, "The labor movement, the AFL-CIO and the nation lost a legend today - and I lost a dear friend. Rich Trumka devoted his life to working people, from his early days as president of the UMWA to his unparalleled leadership as the voice of America's labor movement...Rich loved workers. And he knew there was nothing more powerful than workers standing together for a better life...He never forgot who he was working for. He never forgot who he was fighting for. America's working people were his guiding light for more than 50 years."

After 14 years as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer, Trumka succeeded John Sweeney as President in 2009. He had served as President of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) from 1982 to 1995. A third-generation coal miner, he began working the mines in 1968, before joining the UMWA structure in 1974 as a staff attorney.

An AFL-CIO statement said, "Rich was a relentless champion of workers' rights, and even as we mourn his passing today, we will stand on his shoulders to continue the fight for workers, and for the fair and just society he believed in so passionately. We will honor his legacy with action."

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac lionized Trumka as "a venerated labor champion who passionately poured himself into the fight for working families. Since the time he was a teenager digging coal in Pennsylvania mines, Rich understood the challenges workers face and proved to be an unyielding force for them. He believed in working men and women and the power of solidarity, and he never relented the battle on their behalf."