



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

SHAWN FAIN, *PRESIDENT* • MARGARET MOCK, *SECRETARY-TREASURER*
VICE-PRESIDENTS: CHUCK BROWNING • MIKE BOOTH • RICH BOYER

February 7, 2024

To: All UAW General Motors, GMCH, Salary, Brownstown and Ultium Cells Local Union Presidents, Shop Chairpersons, Vice Presidents, Financial Secretaries and Recording Secretaries

RE: **NATIONAL WHITE SHIRT DAY**

Greetings:

National White Shirt Day commemorates the day a historic auto worker strike was resolved on February 11, 1937. Manufacturing provided a large part of our workforce in the early part of the 20th century. When the 1929 stock market crash triggered the Great Depression, auto manufacturers laid off workers and cut costs. General Motors did as well, eliminating their more expensive models. They stripped down their remaining models and sped up production to a grueling pace. As they hired workers back, they did so at lower pay and didn't consider seniority.

In 1935 the Wagner Act allowed workers to legally organize and join labor unions. By 1936, conditions reached a dangerous and fierce pace. Workers had organized before standing in picket lines that put not only their jobs at risk but their lives, too.

Sit-ins, though, created an opportunity to shut down the plant entirely without any replacement workers crossing picket lines. On December 30, 1936, GM workers took up residence in the Flint, Michigan Body Plant Number 1, after a plan to walk out was derailed. Their sit-in lasted 44 days and brought production to a halt and impacted not just GM but the entire auto industry.

The strike helped The United Auto Workers (UAW) Union become the sole bargaining agent for General Motors autoworkers. We fought to develop insurance, payroll, and health and safety regulations. The United Automobile Workers Union had only existed since 1935 during that time and helped bring automobile workers together.

So why is it called White Shirt Day? At the time of the GM strike, only foremen and supervisors were allowed to wear white shirts. The thought was if all the workers wore white shirts, it would show that they were all equals. Bert Christenson, a member of UAW Local 598, initiated National White Shirt Day on February 11, 1948, showing equality among **ALL** hourly workers as well as management.

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In honor of White Shirt Day, it is asked of you to wear a white shirt on Friday, February 9, 2024. This day is in conjunction with UAW Region 1D Director Steve Dawes' events that are being held at UAW Local 651 in Flint, Michigan. Show your pride as a proud UAW Member! Take pictures of yourself, co-workers, and group photos. Let the world know a little piece of our history!!

Please share your video clip(s) and picture(s) with:

WhiteShirtDay@uaw.net

sdawes@uaw.net

mgriggs@uaw.net

I want to thank you for your continued support.

As always, In solidarity,



Mike Booth

Vice President and Director

UAW General Motors Department

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