Toward a People's History of the University of Maryland: AFSCME Local 1072

by

Emily Fox

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Introduction

Sally Davies grew up in an anti-union family. Born in rural Pennsylvania to a family of Protestant Welsh immigrants, her uncles worked in anthracite coal mines where religious antagonism festered. Protestants from Wales tended to come from an area where anthracite coal was prevalent, and they generally came across the Atlantic with skills in hand. That meant mining supervisors were mainly Protestant while workers were mostly Catholic. The Catholics were the ones who joined the union. Sally's family hated the Catholics.

When she was young, Sally's parents moved the family to Philadelphia, a city marked by the racial and political strife of the 1960s. Her parents taught her to fear the Black Panthers and to respect Frank Rizzo, the segregationist mayor of Philadelphia.[1] They supported the law-and-order mayor even when he authorized the arrest and public humiliation of Black Panthers. Young Black activists were made to undress and their photos were published across Philadelphia newspapers. The young Sally felt disturbed. She began to have doubts about her parents' beliefs.

She went to a college for a year, but a lack of funding left her no choice but to drop out and start working. She found a job as a secretary for Boeing Corporation. While her employer was making bombs and helicopters to send to Vietnam, Sally began to attend anti-war protests with her boyfriend, a Vietnam War veteran. Many of her friends were drafted to war. At one of the first demonstrations she attended, she was arrested alongside onlookers. She remembers it as, "a huge awakening - that you could actually be arrested for doing nothing."[2]

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[1] Timothy J. Lombardo, *Blue-Collar Conservatism: Frank Rizzo's Philadelphia and Populist Politics* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).
[2] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 7, 2022.

Sally was laid off from Boeing and in the early 1970s, she began a new clerk typist job at the University of Maryland. She worked alongside women who listened to their male supervisors and typed down their ideas.

As Sally worked in her campus office, the students were rioting against the Vietnam War. In 1971 the Governor of Maryland sent in 500 National Guard troops and 620 police to campus to tear-gas students who were protesting the invasion of Cambodia. Students set fire to the administration building and bombed the Armory building. The student government president gave his commencement speech wearing a Viet Cong flag.[3] Tumultuous protests continued in the years that followed, and though Sally wasn't a student, she would often attend demonstrations on her lunch breaks, coming down from the office where she worked.

When she first started at the University, Sally didn't even consider becoming a member of the newly formed campus labor union, which was called AFSCME Local 1072. She heard about it from Mickey Greene, the custodian in the hall where she worked. Even after a year of conversations with Mickey, she still believed that unions were mainly for blue-collar male workers, not women clerical workers like herself, who worked in an office and didn't get their hands dirty.[4] But Mickey persisted in trying to get her to join, and when he took her to a union meeting, where mostly Black dining workers, housekeepers, and maintenance workers met, she was impressed by how welcoming they were towards all kinds of workers. Soon, she began to realize that the disrespect male supervisors displayed toward their clerical staff was just another version of the disrespect housekeepers received on the job. Union members were able to assert their dignity by joining an organization with leverage, demanding better conditions of employment.

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[3] George H. Callcott, *The University of Maryland at College Park: A History*, 2005, page 108-109.
[4] "Steward Spotlite: Sally Grieb," *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 8, no. 2, June 1978, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

In 1974, Sally became a union member— a "windfall" for the union as the *AFSCME in Action* newsletter later reflected.[5] She would go on to dedicate the next fifty years of her life to organizing with AFSCME 1072. She was the president of the union when it won collective bargaining rights in 2001, and even after she retired from the University, she continued helping 1072 organize.

The story of how the staff at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) unionized is emblematic of what was playing out across the state of Maryland. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, public employees across the country, including in Maryland, were part of a wave of activism and organizing, especially through the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME.)

One of the main challenges for AFSCME across the state, including at the University of Maryland, was racial division. Widely viewed as a union for Black workers, the main obstacle for UMCP workers who wanted to unionize was getting white office staff members to identify with their cause. The Maryland Classified Employees Association (MCEA), which had existed on campus since the 1950s as a social club and advocacy organization for higher status staff members and supervisors, strongly opposed AFSCME, and used its influence with the University administration and the General Assembly to throw a wrench in plans for collective bargaining. AFSCME 1072 members' use of new strategies associated with the 9-to-5 working women's movement helped them siphon off support from MCEA and gain a base of women clerical workers. It was a long process however; and it wasn't until 2001 — more than thirty years after AFSCME began organizing on campus — that higher education staff in Maryland won collective bargaining rights.

[5] "Steward Spotlite: Sally Grieb," *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 8, no. 2, June 1978, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

This story has not been told. The most well-regarded history of the University, George Callcott's 2005 book *The University of Maryland at College Park, A History,* includes nothing about union activity on campus. The book leaves the impression that the University was comprised solely of students, professors, and administrators. Although the University System of Maryland is one of the largest employers in the state — a huge economic force especially for the College Park area — workers keeping the University running are nowhere to be found in Callcott's narrative, aside from professors.[6] Callcott's story of UMCP is one of contentment, filled with flowery passages describing the honorable UMCP Presidents, happy students, and a beautifully landscaped campus, presumably maintained by invisible people.[7] The one blip on the timeline is the student protests of the early 1970s, when "three years in a row, armed forces were necessary to protect the University from the insurrection of the students, often supported by faculty."[8] Aside from that glitch, according to Calcott, somehow every decade was a "golden age" for the University.[9]

What Callcott failed to notice was that at the same time, University of Maryland workers were dramatically organizing to fight what they saw as unfair treatment, including gender and racial discrimination by their employer. This research paper seeks to shine a light on the experiences of thousands of University of Maryland staff members who kept the campus running, including housekeepers, bus drivers, clerical workers, maintenance workers, construction workers, librarians, and dining staff. To put it earnestly, I wish to contribute toward a "people's history" of the University of Maryland, in contrast to Calcott's adoration of the University president and the establishment. Many of the staff whose stories I share in the

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[6] "Maryland - Major Employer Lists," Office of Workforce Information and Performance (OWIP), accessed 2022, http://www.dllr.maryland.gov/lmi/emplists/maryland.shtml.
[7] George H. Callcott, *The University of Maryland at College Park: A History*, 2005, page 128
[8] ibid, page 110.
[9] ibid, 123, 141.

sections that follow spent almost their entire lives helping the campus run, but never received either dignified compensation or a place in the history books. The story of their ongoing organizing for better treatment is one that deserves to be told.

Aside from its important place in University of Maryland history, the dynamics that played out during the unionization of AFSCME Local 1072 are characteristic of what played out across the state of Maryland for public employees. The field of public employee history is one that has only recently received attention from scholars such as Joseph McCartin, Lane Windham, and Jane Berger.[10] Diverging from the widespread myth that labor organizing reached a peak in the 1950s and died down subsequently, public employee scholars emphasize that the organizing of public workers followed a different trajectory. In fact, state, county, and municipal workers did not experience a wave of activism until the late 1960s and 1970s.[11] The organizing drive at UMD was part of this chronology in a sense. The workers at UMCP began to organize in 1968, when a group of housekeeping staff came together to form a preliminary organizing committee with AFSCME. However, AFSCME Local 1072 also did much of its organizing during the '80s and '90s, and did not win collective bargaining until 2001. As I will argue, the strategies adopted by the 9-to-5 movement were key to 1072's success in an atmosphere that most scholars generally believe was hostile to labor organizing. This corroborates historian Lane Windham's argument that workers have continued to organize throughout the twentieth century, even when they didn't have collective bargaining rights.[12]

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[10] Joseph A. McCartin, "Bringing the State's Workers in: Time to Rectify an Imbalanced US Labor Historiography," *Labor History* 47, no. 1 (February 2006): 73–94, https://doi.org/10.1080/00236560500385934; Jane Berger, *A New Working Class: The Legacies of Public-Sector Employment in the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021); Lane Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* (UNC Press Books, 2017).

[11] Joseph A. McCartin, "Bringing the State's Workers in: Time to Rectify an Imbalanced US Labor Historiography," *Labor History* 47, no. 1 (February 2006): 73–94, https://doi.org/10.1080/00236560500385934.

[12] Lane Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* (UNC Press Books, 2017).

Background: Public Employees in the United States and Maryland

Part of the reason for the historical divergence between public and private employees is that public employees were left out of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935.[13] The law provided basic rights to private employees, including collective bargaining, the right to strike, and binding arbitration under the National Labor Relations Board. Because public employee rights were not included in this federal protection, the standard for most public employees in the United States was that they needed to change state laws before they could have a union election. This was the case for University of Maryland, College Park staff; not only did workers have to win their union election, but they also had to get a law passed by the state legislature allowing collective bargaining rights for higher education employees in the first place.

Beginning in the late-1950s, civil rights groups in Maryland were pressuring politicians to integrate their workforces by hiring Black workers. In 1956, Black leaders in Baltimore advocated for the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), which provided for anti-discrimination protections in Maryland public sector employment. As a result, the number of African Americans in public sector employment increased dramatically.[14] Public unions, especially the American Federation of County, State, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which were mainly made up of these Black workers, worked together with organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) to advance their campaigns for dignified working conditions. The most famous example of this collaboration was the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike which Dr. Martin Luther King joined.[15] Racially charged labor actions like these

[13] Joseph McCartin, "'A Wagner Act for Public Employees': Labor's Deferred Dream and the Rise of Conservatism, 1970-1976," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 1 (June 1, 2008): 123–48, https://doi.org/10.2307/25095467.
[14] Jane Berger, "'There Is Tragedy on Both Sides of the Layoffs:' Privatization and the Urban Crisis in Baltimore," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 71, no. 1 (2007): 29–49, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0147547907000324.
[15] Michael K. Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

were taking place all across the country, including in Maryland, where — only a few months after Dr. King's assassination — Baltimore municipal sanitation and sewer workers in AFSCME Local 44 went on strike. Civil rights leaders were present at the negotiations between the Mayor of Baltimore and AFSCME, and they helped to deliver the crucial win for the mostly Black workers who were on strike.[16]

Collaboration with racial justice groups proved to be very effective for AFSCME during the late 1960s, when governors and mayors worried that growing Black constituencies would vote them out of office for firing African-Americans on strike. However, by the late 1970s, the civil rights movement had lost much of its momentum and political strength. AFSCME's association with Black workers now made them a target during this period of conservative backlash.[17] As the historian Jane Berger has discussed in her analysis of Baltimore civil rights history, the conservative attitude toward public employees in the mid to late 1970s was racially charged in ways similar to the demonization of welfare recipients. After all, public employees were the ones distributing the public services that so-called "welfare queens" relied on, and they were demanding more funding.[18] The dominant narrative employed by conservatives was that public unions were far too powerful. By demanding higher wages, conservatives charged, public unions were responsible for the high taxation, high inflation, and the financial crisis. Even worse, they wanted to take taxpayer dollars to advance a socialist agenda.[19] Jerry Wurf, who was the

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[16] John O'Donnell, "Union Leaders, City Hold Talks On Sanitation Strike," *Baltimore Sun*, September 9, 1968, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/88530390/.

[17] Joseph McCartin, "'Fire the Hell out of Them': Sanitation Workers' Struggles and the Normalization of the Striker Replacement Strategy in the 1970s," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 2, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 67–92, https://doi.org/10.1215/15476715-2-3-67.

[18] Jane Berger, *A New Working Class: The Legacies of Public-Sector Employment in the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), page 5.

[19] Ralph DeToledano, "Let Our Cities Burn - Part III: The Police Were Shouting 'Scab.,'" *Daily News, Bowling Green, KY*, October 29, 1975, https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=S78dAAAAIBAJ&sjid=yUYEAAAAIBAJ&pg=4787%2C5085492.

President of AFSCME International at the time, was especially targeted for opposing the Vietnam War and being openly sympathetic to socialist ideas.[20]

The context of rising conservatism in state and national politics resulted in setbacks for public employee organizing. Historian Joseph McCartin has connected this period of backlash against public unions to AFSCME's failure to pass the National Public Employee Relations Act (NPERA), which intended to grant public employees similar levels of protection that the NLRA gave to private ones.[21] If this law had passed, public employees across the country, including those at University of Maryland, would have had immediate access to collective bargaining rights. State workers in Maryland felt the consequences of the backlash against public employees acutely. Across the state, the union effort seemed to be faltering. In 1974, a series of public employee strikes in Baltimore failed when striking workers were fired and their unions decertified. This failure stood in stark contrast to the Baltimore sanitation workers' strike of 1968, which had led to higher pay and collective bargaining rights for Baltimore municipal employees.[22]

This was the hostile atmosphere in which University of Maryland staff were trying to organize. While the union had been established in the late 1960s, coinciding with the national rush of public employee organizing, Local 1072 only got its feet off the ground later. Membership did not begin to increase significantly until the later period of the 1970s. It wasn't until 2001, a time generally perceived as stagnant at best for unions, that AFSCME Local 1072 officially won union recognition and collective bargaining rights.

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[20]Joseph McCartin, "'A Wagner Act for Public Employees': Labor's Deferred Dream and the Rise of Conservatism, 1970-1976," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 1 (June 1, 2008): 123–48, https://doi.org/10.2307/25095467.
[21] ibid.
[22]"Strikers Win Sanitation Pact in Baltimore," *AFL-CIO News*, September 14, 1968, https://archive.org/details/mdu-labor-026273/page/n345/mode/2up, John O'Donnell, "Union Leaders, City Hold Talks On Sanitation Strike," *Baltimore Sun*, September 9, 1968, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/88530390/.

AFSCME Local 1072: Origins and Early History

AFSCME 1072's founder and first union president, Gladys Jefferson, was a housekeeper who began working at the University in 1965. Housekeeping staff, who were almost entirely Black women at the time, had to work on Saturdays, and received compensatory time instead of overtime pay for their work. In 1966, housekeepers decided to come together and invite organizers from AFSCME to investigate labor conditions on campus.[23] For about 18 months, union activity was low, with just 20 members, but in December of 1967, that number had risen to 100, and by 1970, there were 400 union members.[24] According to Gladys Jefferson, housekeepers were the first to join AFSCME, and very quickly membership density reached almost 100% among their ranks.[25] The departments which were most organized in AFSCME's early years included housekeeping, food service, grounds, libraries, physical plant (maintenance workers), and the Center for Adult Education.[26]

In 1973, union members published their first newsletter, called *AFSCME in Action*.[27] The newsletter was created by and for University of Maryland employees, and union members were invited to submit articles, illustrations, and photos about their workplace conditions and organizing strategies. The newsletter raised consciousness across campus both about labor issues

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[23]"AFSCME Local 1072: The Union for Campus Employees," 1981, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD; Rob Wishart. "AFSCME here 18 months."*The Diamondback,* 19 May 1967, https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/88888218-f3c4-4cd1-9908-6e84b523444a?query=AFSCME%201072; "Exclusive Interview: Gladys Jefferson Speaks" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 2, no. 6, Nov 1974, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

[24] Rob Wishart. "AFSCME here 18 months."*The Diamondback,* 19 May 1967, https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/88888218-f3c4-4cd1-9908-6e84b523444a?query=AFSCME%201072 , Bob Korn. "MU to deal with union." *The Diamondback,* 6 Dec 1967, https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/c46286c5-74f1-48f5-be3d-75b76871fa69?relpath=pcdm&query=AFSCME%201072, Chad Neighbor. "Service worker union enjoys steady growth," *The Diamondback,* 22 May 1970, https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/4a10a63e-3c95-456b-a91a-8a7fe46651b7?relpath=pcdm&query=AFSCME%201072.

[25]"Exclusive Interview: Gladys Jefferson Speaks" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 2, no. 6, Nov 1974, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

[26]*AFSCME in Action,* UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD; "AFSCME Local 1072: The Union for Campus Employees," University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

[27]*AFSCME in Action,* vol 1, no 1, 1973, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD; "AFSCME Local 1072: The Union for Campus Employees," 1981, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

and about the fact that there was a union on campus that members could become a part of.[28] Many of the newsletters, included an attached petition sheet, which members could sign onto and submit to their steward if they wanted to support a particular issue. Readers also found AFSCME membership sign-up cards in each newsletter. The AFSCME newsletter was one of the main ways union members could communicate with one another across a vast campus with thousands of employees. It was a very helpful resource in discovering how UMCP staff were organizing and a key tool in reaching potential new members.

Some of the main issues on the job that UMCP staff in the union discussed in the newsletter were racial discrimination, gender inequity, low pay, long working hours, contracting out jobs, and leave policies. It was clear that a huge part of what the workers in AFSCME wanted was dignity for the lowest paid staff, especially Black and/or women workers. For example, a newsletter from 1977 included a blurb created by a union member Johnnie Johnson titled "Men Work Here, Not Boys." The graphic asked the reader to ponder whether their managers call Black or non-white employees "boys," despite the fact that many of the workers were over thirty years old and were working to feed a family. Johnson encouraged those who felt concerned about such language to post in their worksites a sign saying "Men Work Here, Not Boys."[29] In 1976 a similar graphic was created called "Women Work Here, Not Girls," that women could put up at their workplaces.[30] The newsletters were filled with content of this sort, raising the idea that UMCP workers, especially minorities and women, were not being treated with dignity, but offering the potential that, if they could organize collectively, they could change conditions on campus.

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[28]"AFSCME Local 1072: The Union for Campus Employees," 1981, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[29]Johnnie Johnson, "Men Work Here, Not Boys," *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 7, no. 4, Apr 1977, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[30]"Women Work Here, Not Girls!"*AFSCME in Action,* vol 4 , no 3, Mar 1976, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

Because public employees did not enjoy the same labor rights that private employees did, AFSCME Local 1072 needed to pass a bill through the Maryland state government before it would be able to have a union election. These efforts proved fruitless for decades. Despite these setbacks, Local 1072 continued to function as a member-run union for more than 30 years, without recognition from either the state of Maryland or the University as an exclusive bargaining representative. Without the ability to negotiate a union contract, Local 1072 instead relied on a network of shop stewards who could represent their coworkers in meetings with management. Though they didn't have a contract, shop stewards could help workers confront administrative leaders when policies had been violated. Such policies were shared across campus in a handbook created by the University.[31]

One of the union's earliest legislative wins came in 1978, when the state passed a law formalizing the University's grievance procedure. Instead of the buck stopping at the University President, now UMCP staff could bring their concerns about violations of University policy to the state government. With this new law, UMCP administrators could not change the grievance system on a whim, unless they got a bill passed in the General Assembly.[32] At times, when an issue affected a large number of workers, they could bring it up through a collective grievance — pooling people together to all raise their voices about a specific issue.[33] Sometimes, hundreds of workers, or even a thousand, would sign onto the same grievance when an issue was important enough. This process seemed to be successful in resolving some issues for workers; almost every *AFSCME in Action* newsletter featured a story of a successful grievance being carried out by union members and stewards in support of an individual or policy. For example, in November

[31] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 7, 2022.
[32] "Grievance Procedure Bill for University" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 8, no. 3, Mar 1978, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[33] Saul Schnidermann, "What is a Grievance?" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 3, no. 1, Mar 1975, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

1977 housekeepers won a grievance they filed to receive administrative leave. Management had given confusing information about whether to report to work one day a couple months before. Eighty housekeepers did not show up to work, but at first were forced to use their own leave to cover the university's mistake. Fifty housekeepers signed the grievance demanding they be granted administrative leave and they succeeded.[34] However, the grievance model had limits. If the University violated their own policies, the union could challenge them on this and win, but when AFSCME members tried to file grievances to change policy altogether it was less successful. For instance, in 1976 1,103 workers signed onto a grievance protesting the University's cut of sick leave frequencies. It was clearly an issue many workers cared about; they hosted a rally on campus and created a song with the lyrics, "If you get a broken leg/Come to work anyway/You can make it in, you know, if you really try. / Don't tell the boss that you're in pain…"[35] It took over a year to get a response from Wilson Elkins, the University president, who claimed that while he sympathized with workers' desire for more sick leave, the problem was simply "not a grievable issue."[36] Elkins rejected AFSCME's grievance on the grounds that administrators had the right to change sick leave frequencies whenever they wanted.[37] Workers continued to be bound by University policy which they had no say over, and this was what motivated them to want collective bargaining rights.

Aside from filing grievances, the union would often hold more militant actions to pressure the university to take action. One of the earliest protests the union held on campus intended to draw attention to the layoffs of Stamp bookstore workers in 1973. Three permanent

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[34] *AFSCME in Action,* vol 7, no 10, October 1977, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[35] *AFSCME in Action,* "AFSCME Fights Frequency Cuts: 1,103 Sign Grievance!" vol 6, no 8, August 1976, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[36] *AFSCME in Action,* "Frequency Grievance Goes to Step Five," vol 7, no 6, June 1977, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[37] *AFSCME in Action,* "Sick Leave Case Denied: Union to Continue Fight," vol 7, no 9, September 1977, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

workers, and all the student workers had lost their jobs. The bookstore manager warned that unless the store broke even, he would have to lay off even more staff and have a private company take over.[38] The workers picketed outside the administration building with signs and banners reading "Save our Jobs, Don't Contract them Out," and "AFSCME Local 1072."[39] In addition to drawing attention to workers' complaints, the union also organized "sick outs" to put pressure on the administration. Lacking the legal right to strike, union members in a particular department would all use their sick leave on the same day, leaving their workplace unable to function. Workers used this tactic multiple times in different departments. One example took place in 1980, when a majority of the maintenance workers (known as physical plant workers back then) called out sick on the same two days to protest delays in pay upgrades they had been promised for years.[40] Hundreds of other union members rallied to support them in front of the campus administration building, and the workers' demands were broadcasted in local news, including the Baltimore Sun.[41] Days later, the Director of the Physical Plant met with workers and finally agreed that two hundred maintenance workers would receive a pay upgrade in a month.[42]

Local 1072 members also used the legal system to try to advance their goals. In 1984, the union filed a sex discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). AFSCME had carried out a study showing that women were consistently placed by the University System in lower-paying jobs compared to men. When the administration admitted in 1981 to paying women faculty members less than men and adjusted its compensation structure,

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[38] *AFSCME in Action,* vol 1, no 1, 1973, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[39] "AFSCME Local 1072: The Union for Campus Employees," 1981, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[40] "Laborers Continue sick-in at UM." *Baltimore Sun,* 9 Feb 1980, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/95520584/sick-in/. , https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/5052e1ec-2958-451a-bdab-49b8901dc244?relpath=pcdm&query=sick-out
[41] "Laborers Continue sick-in at UM." *Baltimore Sun,* 9 Feb 1980, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/95520584/sick-in/.
[42] "Workers fight for dignity and fair pay," *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 10, no. 6, Jun 1980, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

AFSCME demanded that female workers in lower-level positions also be considered.[43] Local 1072 used this technique multiple times both for racial and gender discrimination; for example, 1974 they had also filed a complaint with the EEOC against UMCP libraries for racial discrimination.[44]

Union members adopted one last tactic to win redress for workers on campus. During the General Assembly season in Annapolis, members would usually testify in favor of various goals, especially higher wages for state and higher education employees. The legal legitimization of the University's grievance procedure was one of the union's early legislative successes; it was something they won by lobbying the state government. For over thirty years, the agenda in Annapolis included collective bargaining rights for state and higher education employees. Despite such consistent pressure from union members, the failure of the State Assembly to recognize the employees' collective bargaining rights was a key reason AFSCME 1072 workers did not win them until 2001. But just as important was the division caused by the presence of another workers' association on campus: the Maryland Classified Employees Association (MCEA.)

A Challenge: The Maryland Classified Employees Association.

The Maryland Classified Employees Association (MCEA) UMCP chapter had existed on the University of Maryland's campus as far back as the 1950s and maybe even before.[45] As AFSCME sought to expand its influence representing state employees in the early 1960s, MCEA

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[43] Thomas, Kevin. "UM sex bias is charged in complaint." *Baltimore Sun,* 14 Jun 1984. https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/94963146/.
[44] "AFSCME Fights Discrimination" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 2, no. 5, Aug 1974, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[45]"Gordon Named MCEA Head," *Baltimore Sun*, October 4, 1950, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/image/373417632/?terms=MCEA&match=1.

was the reigning organization for Maryland staff.[46] The battle between MCEA and AFSCME that played out at the University of Maryland, College Park also took place across the state of Maryland.[47]

Rejecting the label of "union," MCEA was rather an "association," and operated as part social club and part advocacy organization. According to the UMCP MCEA chapter 21 bylaws from 1953, its number one goal was "the improvement of morale," followed then by protecting members' rights, and finally improving the social welfare of UMCP staff. The MCEA specified in its bylaws that these goals would be achieved solely through "cooperation between the University administration and members of chapter 21" and lobbying the state government.[48] The association shied away from the kinds of militant actions that AFSCME members participated in; its strategy was instead to cooperate as much as possible with leadership.[49]

The makeup of MCEA differed from AFSCME in that members were of higher status. First of all, MCEA allowed supervisory staff to become members of the organization. This led to a dynamic where management would encourage workers to join MCEA, rather than AFSCME. MCEA pamphlets advised the UMD staff to "Save 100% on Dues a Year: Don't join the Union!"[50] For this reason, many of the AFSCME members would cheekily refer to MCEA as the "Management Controlled Employees Association." And although it was not made explicit in MCEA's own documents, lower status workers and workers of color were not welcome in the association. According to an AFSCME newsletter from 1974, MCEA technically had two

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[46]"A State Union?," *Evening Sun*, January 17, 1961, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99560167/, Helen Winternitz, "Two Unions Fight Over State Workers," *Baltimore Sun*, February 18, 1980, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99560408/.
[47] Richard Sia, "AFSCME Files Formal Petitions," *Baltimore Sun*, October 1, 1980, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99560476/.
[48]"Constitution and Bylaws, University of Maryland College-Park Chapter No. 21 Maryland Classified Employees Association," June 3, 1953, UPUB M11 - Maryland Classified Employees Association, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[49] "Union On Move Into State Jobs," *Baltimore Sun*, January 17, 1961, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99560610/.
[50]Letter from MCEA to members, June 21 1974, UPUB M11 - Maryland Classified Employees Association, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

separate chapters on campus — one for Black workers and another for white workers.[51] Even still, it's unclear whether MCEA's Black chapter on campus ever had members; as Sally Davies remembers, the association did not welcome housekeepers' participation, viewing them as "lowlife" workers.[52] According to Davies, the housekeepers in AFSCME had even created satirical songs about MCEA to protest their exclusion.

This elitist viewpoint was evident on some of MCEA's pamphlets. For example, when discussing the effects of inflation on state employees, a 1973 MCEA Legislative Committee pamphlet suggested that the first point of concern should be "1) Welfare recipients — the Governor desires to improve *their* situation. What about the Maryland State Employee whose tax dollars will help pay this 5-6 million dollar benefit?"[53] Only after trampling on welfare recipients did MCEA bring up the direct costs to state employees such as increased food prices, housing prices, and clothing prices. Most ironically, many of the lowest paid staff at the University themselves had to rely on food stamps or other government assistance to get by — and continue to do so to this day.[54] This language revealed that MCEA's audience of members was likely composed of managers and staff on the upper bands of the pay scale who were sympathetic to the kinds of demonizing racial appeals which were prominent during the 1970s.

The MCEA was not the only organization of its kind in Maryland. As AFSCME began to organize county, municipal, and state employees, the union confronted similar associations across the state. For example, the Classified Municipal Employees Association (CMEA) was the lobbying organization for Maryland city workers. In 1973, MCEA formed a mutual assistance

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[51]"The Time Has Come For One Campus Union!" *AFSCME in Action,* vol. 2, no 5. august 1974, , UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[52] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 7, 2022.
[53] MCEA Chapter #21 Legislative Committee, Sept. 20, 1973, UPUB M11 - Maryland Classified Employees Association, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.
[54] Elliot Jaspin, "Meet the Food Stamp Firms of Maryland," *Maryland Matters*, January 16, 2020, https://www.marylandmatters.org/2020/01/16/meet-the-food-stamp-firms-of-maryland/.

pact with CMEA.[55] Both the associations mostly represented white-collar staff, and in 1960 CMEA resisted an attempt by the EEOC to force them to admit Black workers to their association.[56] When AFSCME organized strikes among mostly Black sanitation and sewer workers in 1969, the CMEA refused to participate, urging their members to break the strikes by continuing to report to work.[57]

Across the state, including at the University of Maryland, one of the main barriers to winning collective bargaining was getting white-collar staff to leave MCEA and join AFSCME. In 1979, MCEA had a larger presence on campus than AFSCME, claiming a membership of eight hundred workers, while AFSCME had only six hundred workers.[58] The Maryland General Assembly preferred MCEA to the union because of its history of cooperation with political leadership. MCEA didn't support AFSCME's campaign for collective bargaining.[59] The association would often introduce its own collective bargaining bills in the legislature which allowed supervisors and managers to be included. As long as there were two different collective bargaining bills introduced each session, the legislature could ignore the issue of workers' rights by claiming that division between workers had to be resolved before collective bargaining would become a reality.[60] This conflict also meant that AFSCME International did not want to commit

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[55]Norman Wilson, "Two Classified Employes Unions Sign Mutual Assistance Pact," *Baltimore Sun*, September 15, 1973, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99562293/.

[56] "EEOC Eyeing Racial Bias Charge," *Baltimore Sun* , June 3, 1960, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99581213/the-evening-sun/; "Job Board Raps City," *Baltimore Sun*, March 29, 1960, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99581394/the-baltimore-sun/.

[57]Robert Erlandson. "Street, Sewer Workers Join Trash Strike," *Baltimore Sun,* September 6, 1968, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/88466953/the-baltimore-sun/.

[58] Dorreen Duffy, "Labor Force: Campus classified workers struggle against a system that they say ignores their plight," *The Diamondback,* 8 May 1979, https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/76e57c93-9bca-4177-887c-7e01d4c49063?relpath=pcdm&query=afscme%201072

[59] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 14, 2022.

[60] "Annapolis disregards workers" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 15, no. 4, Apr 1985, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

significant resources to organizing campus workers at UMCP. Until the membership of MCEA was diluted, a win for the union looked unlikely.[61]

As a result, union members had to think creatively about how to convince white office staff to join AFSCME. In a newsletter article from 1978, the President of the union, Lynda Clendening, a white woman, encouraged other white staff to join AFSCME. According to Clendening, many of the white workers viewed AFSCME as a "black local," and preferred to continue being part of MCEA, which they viewed as more prestigious. As she argued, unless white and Black workers came together, everyone would be kept down, unable to actually improve their working conditions. [62]

Victory

For thirty years, AFSCME and MCEA continued to battle over control of the workers on campus, and AFSCME successfully chipped away at MCEA. In 2001, AFSCME decisively won out. A bill was passed in the General Assembly granting higher education employees collective bargaining rights, and a few months later, University of Maryland staff voted for AFSCME as their exclusive bargaining agent, resulting in defeat for MCEA. This win for higher education employees followed the passage of collective bargaining for all other Maryland state employees in 1996. The union victory for UMCP staff was partly a result of changing political leadership in Maryland and partly due to the organizing strategies which AFSCME members used to build their organization's numbers.

Part of the reason for their win was politics: the new Governor of Maryland was sympathetic to their cause. Elected in 1995, Governor Parris Glendening was a former Professor

[61] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 14, 2022.
[62] Clendening, Lynda, "President's Column: Racism" *AFSCME in Action*, vol. 8, no. 10, Oct 1978, UPUB A46, University of Maryland Special Collections and University Archives at Hornbake Library, College Park, MD.

of Government and Politics at University of Maryland, College Park.[63] AFSCME Maryland had campaigned hard for his electoral win, and in return he delivered on his promise to champion collective bargaining rights for state employees. In 1996, he signed an executive order granting union rights to executive branch workers — to the outrage of both the business community and to General Assembly members who saw his move as an overreach of power.[64] As AFSCME continued to support Glendening, the momentum for collective bargaining continued. In 2001, Glendening convinced the University System of Maryland Board of Regents not to testify against the bill for collective bargaining for higher education employees, conveniently increasing state funding for universities at the same time. This was enough for the necessary number of General Assembly members to finally agree to pass collective bargaining.[65]

By that point, AFSCME had overtaken MCEA across the state in terms of number of members. This was important because once workers were legally allowed to collectively bargain, they still had to have a union election to determine who would be their exclusive bargaining agent. Both at the University of Maryland and generally statewide, AFSCME won these representation elections. They had successfully chipped away at MCEA. As a 1999 *Baltimore Sun* article entitled "Md. Workers Group Fights for Its Life" reported, MCEA had lost more than half its membership between 1992 and 1999. AFSCME, on the other hand, had only continued to grow.[66] In elections across Maryland for state employees, AFSCME won against MCEA. And at UMCP, by the time 2001 rolled around, MCEA did not even appear on the ballot, as the

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[63] George H. Callcott, *The University of Maryland at College Park: A History*, 2005, page 143.
[64]Michael Dresser, "Md. Workers Group Fights For Its Life," *Baltimore Sun*, February 21, 1999, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/image/172626258; Michael Dresser, "State Employees Union Set for Bargaining Push," *Baltimore Sun*, January 7, 1999.
[65]Howard Libit, "College Labor Bill Expected to Pass," *Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 2001, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/clip/99563982/
[66]Michael Dresser, "Md. Workers Group Fights For Its Life," *Baltimore Sun*, February 21, 1999, https://baltimoresun.newspapers.com/image/172626258.

association had not met the eligibility threshold for the number of staff signatures. In part, this was because the bill that had passed the legislature did not include supervisors as workers.[67]

One of the contributing factors to AFSCME winning the union election at UMCP was the rise of the 9-to-5 movement and its strategies. Started by clerical workers at Harvard University, 9-to-5 was part women's organization, part labor union. These women advocated for a form of feminism that centered raising the standards for women who worked in low-paying jobs, especially secretarial and clerk typist jobs — 97 percent of which were occupied by women. One-third of all women in the workforce were these sorts of office workers.[68] However, widespread stereotypes about who belonged in unions presented a challenge for women who wanted to organize. Some male union leaders didn't think women clerical workers could be organized at all.[69] And on the flip side, many clerical workers believed the labor movement was for men alone, having a caricatured idea of a man who does manual labor as the typical union member. Aside from the racist division between MCEA and AFSCME, this was another one of the factors preventing office workers from joining the union at UMCP.

The 9-to-5 movement was important because the women involved developed strategies to mobilize women office workers into the labor movement. One strategy that helped the women at Harvard University win a union was their use of one-on-one organizing. This meant that instead of getting the word out about the union through mass communications or simply rallying people around an issue, union members would make a plan to develop relationships with everyone in the workplace, regardless of their support for the union. The method of communicating about the union would be through one-on-one, in person meetings with workers over a long period of time.

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[67]Sally Davies, e-mail message to author, April 6, 2022.
[68] Lane Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* (UNC Press Books, 2017), page 153.
[69] Lane Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* (UNC Press Books, 2017), page 164.

In this way, people who joined the union would feel a sense of community, in contrast to the isolation many felt at their jobs.[70] This tactic proved to be more effective than mass communications or issue-based rallying, where people who were already sympathetic to the union would be the ones likely to show up to meetings. In one-on-one organizing, union members were able to correct assumptions about what a union was and make workers' concerns feel heard. Some scholars have argued that this sort of community based approach is more conducive to women workers.[71] While this was not a new strategy, surprisingly few unions during the 1980s used it.[72] In later years, one-on-one organizing was shown to be very effective.[73] The famous organizer and scholar Jane McAlevey has recently popularized it in her book, *No Shortcuts.*[74]

AFSCME leaders at UMCP were closely following these developments and worked alongside the founders of 9-to-5. Many of the issues they chose to fight back on were the same as those at Harvard University: pay equity (rather than "equality"), the health risks of VDT screens, and harassment by male supervisors. What helped them the most, though, were the organizing strategies they learned from 9-to-5. Sally Davies, who became the president of the AFSCME Local 1072 in 1985, remembers traveling to Harvard University to practice the 9-to-5 techniques and help the workers win their unionization with AFSCME in 1988. Davies learned the one-on-one organizing strategy from Kris Rondeau, the lead organizer for the Harvard women workers, and said she "came back with a more clear idea of what we needed to do moving forward. We started to implement that here."[75] The one-on-one method of organizing a union

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[70] John Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard* (Temple University Press, 1997), page 149.
[71] Richard W. Hurd, "Organizing and Representing Clerical Workers: The Harvard Model," January 1, 1993, https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/75922.
[72] John Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard* (Temple University Press, 1997), page 157, 154.
[73] Hoerr, page 157.
[74] Jane F. McAlevey, *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age* (Oxford University Press, 2016).
[75] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 14, 2022.

spread quickly across universities as AFSCME International began to realize its effectiveness. The strategy worked to organizers' benefit and helped AFSCME grow in strength. According to Davies, "it took more time, but it really paid off."[76] Ten years later, UMCP campus workers checked "yes" to AFSCME Local 1072 in a vote of 922 to 188.[77]

Conclusion

The history of public employee organizing in Maryland has largely been left untouched by scholars, and this paper seeks to contribute one part of that story. As state employees tried to unionize with AFSCME across Maryland, MCEA was their main competitor. For years, MCEA had functioned as a company union, creating racial divisions which AFSCME members and organizers had to work to chip away at. The main challenge for AFSCME at UMCP was getting white office workers to become members of a union they primarily associated with Black workers. The strategies developed by the women in the 9-to-5 movement were especially effective for University of Maryland, College Park staff in uniting staff across race and gender to fight discrimination and a low standard of living. Workers did this all during a time that was hostile to unions and ripe with racial resentment.

These workers are part of University of Maryland history, and their contributions should be remembered as such. Sally Davies, who was interviewed as part of the research process, began working at UMCP in the 1970s and only retired from organizing with AFSCME 1072 in 2021. Though she arrived on campus an anti-union office worker, through AFSCME 1072 she transformed into someone who ended up dedicating decades of her life to her coworkers and to the labor movement. Sally's transformation reflects the transformation of the campus labor

[76] Sally Davies, interview by author on Zoom, College Park, MD, March 14, 2022.
[77] Mark Davis, "Campus Workers Vote to Unionize," *The Diamondback*, December 13, 2001, https://digital.lib.umd.edu/student-newspapers/id/b1f4db3e-b91f-45f4-bc2b-7c382af6a3e2?relpath=pcdm&query=afscme.

climate that occurred from the reign of the segregated MCEA to AFSCME, which stressed class solidarity across racial and gender lines.

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