



Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

John Samuelson
International President

Alex Garcia
International Executive
Vice President

Jerome Lafragola
International
Secretary-Treasurer

Curtis Tate
International Administrative
Vice President

Mike Mayes
International Administrative
Vice President

"AMERICA'S FIGHTING DEMOCRATIC UNION"

VICE PRESIDENTS

Delisa Brown
Willie Brown
Dale Danker
John Feltz
Debra Hagan
Tom Lenane
Thom McDaniel
Benyoel Morgan
Gary Peterson
Andre Sutton
Tony Utano
James Whalen

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

John Chiarello
LaTonya Crisp
Richard Davis
Derick Echevarria
Tim Hughes
Horace Marves
J.P. Patafio
Nelson Rivera
Kevin Smith

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Bedennia Barnes
Carlos Bernabel
Richard Boehm
Constance Bradley
Dino Centrone
Greg Cosey
Brian DeLucia
Grigoriy Dunichev
Cassandra Gilbert
Victor Gonzalez
Amy Griffin
Patrick Howard
Theotis James
Vanessa Jones
Shirley Martin
Michael Massoni
Jeffrey Mitchell
Gus Mohgrabi
Lyn Montgomery
Paul Navarro
Emmanuel Paragios
John Parrott
Earl Phillips
Brian Pollitt
Dan Rivera
Richard Rocco
Peter Rosconi
Gary Schaible
Jenny Schar
Christina Scott
Armando Serrano
Robert Taylor III
Donald Yates

July 10, 2020

Dear IEC&B, Local Presidents and TWU Staff,

We write with heavy hearts to announce the passing of John Bland. It is said the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice. Mr. Bland stood on the precipice of that arc to demand justice for all.

John Bland was TWU's Administrative Vice President until his retirement in 2017 and the Director of the Human and Civil Rights Department until late last year. Mr. Bland joined the TWU when he began working as a bus operator at HouTran, now known as Houston Metro. During his career with our union, he served as a Local Steward, Local Vice President, Local Secretary-Treasurer, Local 260 President and Deputy Director of the TUUS division. Mr. Bland organized transportation workers in the Houston, El Paso, Aldine, North Forest, Dayton, Lufkin, Humble, Conroe, and Spring School Districts. He was a Vice President of the Texas State AFL-CIO, a Vice President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and President of the Houston chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

John Bland always fought for justice. On March 4, 1960, he helped lead Houston's first sit-in at Weingarten's grocery store lunch counter. He was one of 13 students from Texas Southern University who marched from campus to stage a nonviolent protest to end segregation. He was also a founding member of the Progressive Youth Association, which was instrumental in integrating Houston.

"As long as God gives me breath, I will keep fighting for the rights and the privileges of the underprivileged to get what we so richly deserve."

-John Bland

John Bland leaves behind a loving wife, Betty, of almost 60 years, two beloved daughters, Dr. Debbie Bland-Nicholson and Fayette Bland, and one grandchild, Jordan Nicholson. We lift his family up in our prayers and thank God for John Bland.

In Solidarity,

John Samuelson

Alex Garcia

Jerome Lafragola

Curtis Tate

Mike Mayes

501 3rd St, NW, 9th Floor • Washington, DC 20001 • 202.719.3900 • www.twu.org