

IN CELEBRATION OF



Excerpts from the Br. 343 Centennial Edition and 50th Anniversary Issue of the Mound City Carrier

THE MOUND CITY CARRIER

The story of the *Mound City Carrier* began with the inaugural issue in June of 1950. For nearly 60 years prior to its inception, Branch 343's success as a labor union continued to evolve and expand. Deriving its strength from a deep sense of promoting and nurturing a fraternal spirit, the branch continued to pursue its goal of advancing the cause of pertinent issues relevant to its membership.

Following World War II, with the parameters of the city limits being pushed deeper and deeper into the suburbs; it was imperative that the branch continue to widen its contact with a progressively expanding membership. The *Mound City Carrier* was created to meet those needs.

The origin of the name *Mound City Carrier* comes from the striking and remarkable ancient Indian mounds that dominated the landscape in and around St. Louis. Impressing early visitors to the city, these distinguishing features caused St. Louis to be known as the "Mound City."

Under the direction of its first editor, Eugene A. Thomas, the policy of the *Mound City Carrier* was to print **"the unadulterated truth as briefly, yet as enlightening as possible."** The intention of the paper was committed to establishing and fostering a "fraternal spirit" within the ranks and, at the same time, sought to encourage its members to become increasingly active on the political and legislative fronts.

To fortify that fraternal bond, the early issues printed personal letters from branch members who were serving in the Korean conflict. Thomas understood that a union brotherhood could not be breached by distance. To that end, the paper and Thomas encouraged writing campaigns by the membership of the branch to those GIs advising them of the latest happenings on the home front.

The tenor of the articles by the branch officers was extremely political by design. They were directed to keep the membership apprised of all pertinent political issues directly affecting their jobs. Most importantly, of course, was the issue of salary increases. In those days salary was never an issue adjudicated between labor and management, but rather congressional pay bills. Carriers were constantly petitioning and soliciting the support of their elected officials to present such legislation each session. The branch membership was constantly advised to keep pressure on their legislators to pass salary increases.

In the early 1950s it wasn't just salary issues carriers had to fight for. We were still petitioning Congress to provide carriers with uniform allowances, an appropriate amount of annual leave and sick leave and increases in annuities for our retired brothers who always bore the brunt of federal cutbacks. Still in its infancy, the *Mound City Carrier* would become the voice of Branch 343.

In our *Mound City Carrier* 50th Anniversary edition, former Branch 343 President Keith Gentry wrote, "The *MCC* has been a staple of the reading habits of the letter carriers in the St. Louis area and across the United States. It always had a unique style in which not only the officers of the branch wrote articles, but so did writers at various stations throughout the city. This unconventional method of providing articles for the paper provided the membership an interesting perspective from both the leadership level as well as the carrier on the workroom floor."