



# The Western Kentucky Worker

Official Newsletter of the Western Kentucky Area Council, AFL-CIO

Prepared by Berry Craig, AFT Local 1360 and KEA-NEA

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## Gerald Watkins wants our support in his house race

Paducah City Commissioner Gerald Watkins is seeking the council's backing in his bid for the third district state house seat being vacated by Brent Housman, a Paducah Republican.

"You have always supported me and I sincerely appreciate that," Watkins told delegates at the January council meeting. "I hope I can count on you again."

So far, no other Democrat has filed to run against Watkins in the May primary. No Republican has filed in the GOP primary either.

The filing deadline was to have been Jan. 31. But lawmakers were expected to extend it to Feb. 7 because the Republican-majority senate and the Democratic-majority house had not agreed on a plan for redrawing Kentucky's congressional districts.

After addressing the delegates, Watkins filled out a candidate questionnaire on labor issues. He scored 100 percent.

Watkins is a professor of political science at West Kentucky Community and Technical College. A longtime local Democratic Party activist, he belongs to AFT Local 1360 and was a charter member of AFT Local 6010.

Watkins has earned the council's endorsement every time he has run for the commission. The Kentucky State AFL-CIO endorses candidates for the legislature based on recommendations from area councils.

## Donna Steele and Jim Key are W.C. Young nominees

Donna Steele and Jim Key have been nominated for the 2012 W.C. Young Award.

Steele is president and Key is vice president of USW Local 550. Steele was the council recording secretary for many years. At the January meeting, delegates unanimously elected Key to represent the council on the Kentucky State AFL-CIO Executive Board.

Delegates can make other nominations at Thursday's meeting. The executive board will select the recipient at the March meeting.

The award is named for the late W.C. Young, a national labor and civil rights leader from Paducah. He received the first award in 1994.

Last year's recipient was Ron Spann. He retired in 2009 as a staff representative for United Steelworkers District 8.

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YOU SAVE MIGHT BE YOUR OWN.**

## **Minutes of the Jan. 6, 2012, meeting of the Western Kentucky AFL-CIO Area Council**

**Compiled by Berry Craig, council recording secretary**

A quorum present, President Jeff Wiggins gaveled the Executive Board meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. Wiggins reviewed the correspondence he had received since the December meeting, including a Christmas card from President Barack Obama. Wiggins and COPE Director Howard Dawes discussed the ongoing session of the General Assembly and various local political races.

In other business, Wiggins reported that:

-- The council will send out a questionnaire on union issues to local and regional political candidates. The council will use the questionnaire in making endorsements or recommending endorsements.

-- The council hall roof was repaired for \$5,000 and money was left over to fix the siding and gutters.

-- The state AFL-CIO convention, held in Louisville in December, was a success. All constitutional officers were reelected and several members of the council attended the convention.

-- Nominations for the W.C. Young Award would be taken at the regular meeting.

The Executive Board meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Wiggins gaveled the regular meeting to order at 7 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and prayer followed.

Delegates agreed to suspend the regular order of business to hear from Gerald Watkins, a political science professor at West Kentucky Community and Technical College and a member of AFT Local 1360 who is running for the state legislature in the May Democratic primary.

In other business,

-- President Wiggins went over the correspondence he had received since the December meeting.

-- Craig read the minutes from the Executive Board meeting, which were approved.

-- Financial Secretary-Treasurer Brandon Duncan read the financial report while delegates waived reading of the minutes from the December meeting.

-- Wiggins outlined the Executive Board meeting, touching on the legislature, candidate questionnaire, politics, roof repair, the state AFL-CIO convention and the W.C. Young Award nomination process.

-- Duncan, who is also president of the Labor Day Committee, said he had nothing to report but he added that donations are always welcome.

-- Wiggins swore in Derrick Lloyd as a delegate from AFSCME Local 2956.

-- Dawes suggested sending a form to local unions asking them to list their delegates and alternates. Craig agreed to create the form and send out the letters.

-- Jim Key nominated Donna Steele for the W.C. Young Award. Wayne Chambers nominated Jim Key for the award. The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

## MSU College Dems hosting worker's rights panel discussion Monday

The Murray State College Democrats will host a panel discussion on worker's rights, labor in the news and related issues Monday at 6 p.m. in the Curris Center Theater.

"Following that, we'll be showing the movie 'Norma Rae,'" said Devin Griggs," College Democrats vice president of membership. "The event is slated to last from 6 to 9, but we might end up finishing before that or a tad later. It just depends on how good of a discussion we get and how many people show up."

Griggs, whose father is a Steelworker, urges union members from the area to attend. He is also seeking panelists who belong to unions.

"Jeff Wiggins did a great job last year [at an April Solidarity Day rally on campus for Wisconsin workers], and I think a repeat wouldn't be bad at all. If anyone is interested or knows someone with some expertise in this area who might want to be a part of it, please notify me."

Griggs is also looking for others to make short talks before the panel discussion. "It'd be especially good if someone would be willing to do a brief historical outline -- of course if you want to write one up and have me or someone else give it, that'd be fine too," he said.

Griggs is a junior at Murray State. The recipient of the 2011 Kentucky State AFL-CIO Youth Award, he is the son of Cliff Griggs, a member of USW local 9447-5.

Devin can be contacted by email at ([devin.griggs@murraystate.edu](mailto:devin.griggs@murraystate.edu)) or ([devingriggs@live.com](mailto:devingriggs@live.com)). He may be reached by phone or text message at 270-493-2746.

## Area candidates who have filed candidacy papers with the Kentucky secretary of state's office as of Jan. 29

### Congress

**Edward Whitfield**, R-Hopkinsville, (incumbent); Democrat, **James Buckman**, Henderson

### State Senate

District 1, Democrat, **Carroll Hubbard**, Mayfield

### State House

District 1, **Steven Rudy**, R-West Paducah, (incumbent); District 2, Democrats **Arthur Byrn**, Mayfield, and **Kelly Whitaker**, Hickory; Republicans **Patrick Fisher** and **Richard Heath**, both of Mayfield; District 3, Democrat **Gerald Watkins**, Paducah; District 4, Democrat **Raymond Giannini**, Princeton; Republican, **Lynn Belcher**, Marion; District 5, Democrat **Hal Kemp**, Murray; Republican **Kenneth Imes**, Murray; District 6, **Will Coursey**, D-Sharpe, (incumbent)

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