

- Women's History Month -

Cathie Parker (Journey Level Mechanic) – Gone But Not Forgotten

The contributions of women through the years have often gone unappreciated and forgotten but each year in March, Women's History Month is a time for reflection, appreciation, and celebration. One such person is/was **Cathie Parker** who recently passed away. Cathie was a former ATU Local 758-member, Union Officer and a ground breaker in what was considered then and to this date a male orientated role, Journey Level Diesel Mechanic.

Cathie was as unique to this agency as she was everything in her life. Prior to her career at Pierce Transit in the early – mid 1990's, Cathie worked as a marine mechanic on fishing boats in Alaska. A rarity in itself as I have neither heard nor read of any other female "ship mechanics" on fishing boats in Alaska, or the industry. She started her career at Pierce Transit as a Laborer moving from there to the apprenticeship program. Cathie was the "first" woman in the history of the agency and as an ATU Local 758 member, to both enroll and complete her apprenticeship. After her advancement to a Journey Level Mechanic (JLM) position, Cathie became the "first" female member of the Apprenticeship Committee and participated as a member of the Maintenance "Rodeo" teams on behalf of Pierce Transit, and as an ATU member.

As recalled by Executive Assistant Michelle McKendric, was the time Cathie saved the bus fleet from catastrophe. The agency was supposed to take a huge delivery of "anti-freeze" but the vendor delivered "ice skating rink fluid" instead. Cathie recognized it and saved the day before it was pumped into the overhead reels, and subsequently into the buses.

Cathie's efforts as an ATU Local 758 member and Journey Level Mechanic did not end there. As a Journey Level Mechanic Cathie then became the "first" and to this date in time the only Maintenance member/employee to hold an elected Union Officer position, becoming the Financial Secretary-Treasurer and a delegate to the International convention in Toronto in 2001. Cathie was quite the novelty among mechanics from all over the U.S. and Canada as she was as or more knowledgeable than many of her male counterparts, and possessed both a mastery of "salty language" and graciousness, and could "dish it out" as much as she could take it.

Cathie Parker a "trailblazer" will be missed.

