



IAAS Walks of Life 2008
John T. Kilbane

John T. Kilbane looms large in Cleveland organized labor, credited with transforming a 3,000-member-strong union from a "pick-and-shovel" mentality into an educated workforce prepared for the challenges of a global economy. He has introduced apprenticeship programs that teach laborers to do things they never did before.

Raised in Achill Island,, Co. Mayo, by thoughtful Irish parents who were both teachers, Kilbane emigrated to the United States in 1974, joined the Laborers Union in Cleveland, and went to work at the Ford plant. In 1995, having managed projects all over the country for a west coast-based company, he was appointed Secretary Treasurer of Local #310. In 2004, Kilbane was elected Business Manager of Laborers International Union of North America Local 310, and reelected to that position in 2007. He is also Treasurer of the North Shore Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) and Chairman of Local 310/Construction Employers Association Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee.

In 1998, Kilbane was instrumental in establishing the first Construction Craft Laborers Apprenticeship Program in Ohio. He was also responsible for the construction of Local 310's new Training Center, which welcomed its first class in 2005.

An innovative leader on other fronts as well, Kilbane is Labor Co-Chair of the Union Construction Industry's Safety Incentive Program as well as of the Union Construction Industry's Drug-Free Workplace program. In addition, he serves on the boards of the Ohio Industrial Training Program, the Cleveland Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Midtown Cleveland, Inc.

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