

Minnesota Nurses Association's Linda Hamilton honored at National AFL-CIO Convention

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At its quadrennial convention September 14 - 16, AFL-CIO honored the work of MNA's Linda Hamilton, RN, and other union activists whose election season volunteer work helped make workers' voices heard.

Building on a lifetime of political activism that began when she was a teenager, Hamilton volunteered prior to the 2008 elections to promote labor candidates including Barack Obama, Al Franken, Keith Ellison and her own son Shawn Hamilton, who ran for state representative. She is an RN at the Children's Hospital and Clinics in Minneapolis, where she also cares for patients who require extended heart and lung bypass in the neonatal and pediatric ICU.

"UAN members are proud to have Linda represent us and staff nurses everywhere as an outstanding example of what union members can accomplish in the political arena," said UAN President Ann Converso, RN. "From her work on the UAN RN PAC Board to her local involvement in many elections and the presidential campaign, Linda shows us all why union work and civic activism go hand in hand," said Converso.

Hamilton has served in numerous capacities of leadership in MNA, most recently as Treasurer of the Association. She was honored in 2004 with MNA's Geraldine Wedel/Audrey Logsdon Economic and General Welfare Award. Hamilton also serves as a director on UAN's Executive Council and interim director on the proposed national mega union, tentatively named National Nurses United.

Hamilton is quick to emphasize the connection between her work as a nurse, union activism and political influence. "I work for political change because I see waste in our hospitals every day," said Hamilton upon learning of the national recognition. "Health care reform is NOW. It is US. Because government is US - and we've had enough talk. We all need to be political heroes and act now."

Political and union work has been a priority for the Hamilton family. Son Shawn, in his nomination speech, noted that he was active in promoting political and social issues from his stroller and thought it was perfectly normal to have their representative on the family's speed dial--at the number 4, because they stood "for us," he says.