

Women's Conference 2016

Phoenix, Arizona June 21 – 24

Darcey Hood's Delegate Report

Thank you Executive Board and President Steve Hayes for giving me the opportunity to attend the 2016 Women's Conference! It was a wonderful experience I think all Union Sister should have the chance to attend. I am not a person who goes outside of my comfort zone often and am not the first one to raise my hand to join in on an experience with hundreds of strangers. I have to say there may have been 450+ people at the conference but each Sister I met made me feel welcome and spoke to me like we knew one another from previous times.

I ran into many different people all with different stories, all from different places across North American. I have troubles remembering all the names of the ladies I met but we became familiar with one another's faces that it was enough to strike a conversation or sit with one another a table.

Tuesday

My week started with a workshop called traveling the Pathways of the IBEW; this workshop had two parts. Some of this workshop was a bit of review for me but I still received clarity on things that I may have been unsure of and gained new knowledge on things I didn't know. This was a great workshop for a Union Brother or Sister and someone who is new to the union or been with the union for years. For instance, watch where you use that IBEW emblem/logo – Secretary/Treasurer Sam Chilia provides the permission in order to use the IBEW Logo. Sam's position use to be two separate positions till 1997 it was merged and became one.

Later that day I attended Lobbying Works! Canadian Version with Kate Walsh. Politics are not something that catches my interest but lobbying isn't always about politics we can lobby for anything. Lobbying is making your voice heard, views are seeing. As a union member we need to make sure our desires are heard because "If you're not at the table you're on the menu and you can be easily crossed off" with lobbying we want to build relationships and educate our leaders but remember to do your research of the topics your lobbying you want to make sure you're providing the person your lobbying the correct information.

Wednesday

We had our Canadian caucus (First District) at this event we had the chance to meet our fellow sisters across Canada. Bill Daniels spoke with us on a few topics and President Lonnie Stephenson came by for local 213 in Vancouver, BC to present him with a gift from their Women's Committee. Local 213 had a hard time getting a committee at their local. They eventually got the committee established and many other locals in BC established one as well. They now have local women's committees and a provincial committee. They have put a lot back into their communities with their women's committees by volunteering their time at various events and an example would be upgrading the electrical wiring in the women's shelter.

Later that evening we had our reception. Business Manager, Ross Galbraith introduced me to Lonnie Stephenson. Lonnie is a great President and easily to chat with very personable guy.

Thursday

On the last evening we had with everyone (Thursday) we had a Plenary and the theme of the conference was “Herstory.” That evening they had us tell another person sitting at our table things they might not see or know about us we each had ten minutes to talk about just us! It was difficult to jabber that long about just me – not my dog, not my cat, not my husband or my baby on the way just me! We each got the chance to tell our “Herstory” and find out how we each made it in the IBEW. That same evening, they asked us to write 6 words or a phrase that describes our “Herstory” – mine was “WE ARE STRONG NO MATTER WHAT.” Once everyone had a chance to write 6 words we were then asked to read our stories out loud into the microphone. After we read our story we stayed standing up – a way to show our support to each sister in the room. Again another experience I would have never wanted to do but I did and survived, I had butterflies and my heart was pound but I felt comfortable in my surrounds to speak my 6 words.

Friday

We had our last workshop and closing plenary. It was a nice last day they wrapped up with great speakers and very neat skit/music display. All about historical women that made it and put a mark in history.

I want to thank you again for providing me the chance to attend the Women’s Conference. It is a conference that is held every two years – maybe in 2018 we can send 4 Union Sisters? 😊 Everyone needs a chance to experience a conference designed for us. Not all unions are lucky enough to be like ours – progressive.