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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

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Charles Wowkanech to be Honored by American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark

Haledon, New Jersey – The American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark today announced that New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech will be honored at its 27th Annual Sol Stetin Awards Gala on November 19, 2009.

“We’re so pleased to honor Charles Wowkanech this year,” said OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin, who serves as President of the Botto House National Landmark. “We couldn’t find a more deserving person than him, whose career represents the same values and goals of the American Labor Museum – protecting and ensuring a better life for America’s working families.”

“It is a great honor to receive this recognition from the American Labor Museum,” said Wowkanech. “My years of experience as a member of the New Jersey labor movement have taught me that there is no limit to how much we can accomplish by working together. Beyond legislative victories, union members have built a culture that respects all people and promotes a family bond between us. It continues to be my life’s ambition to uphold, protect, and promote the working family values that we all share.”

Wowkanech was first elected president of the million-member statewide New Jersey AFL-CIO on January 5, 1997. He previously served two years as secretary-treasurer and six years as assistant to the president. A second-generation member of Local 68 of the Operating Engineers, by age 21 he was the youngest member ever appointed to the local’s Executive Board in its more than 100-year history.

The Awards Gala will also honor Representative Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-NJ), who, in addition to his support in Congress of working families, played a key role in establishing the Great Falls of the Passaic River as a National Historic Park, dedicated to preserving workers' history.

In addition, special recognition awards will be presented to Irwin Nack, former president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 1796 and American Labor Museum Trustee, and Bennet D. Zurofsky, Esq., labor and civil rights lawyer and director of the New Jersey Industrial Union Council (IUC) "Solidarity Singers." Professor Nack, associate professor of history at William Paterson University, retired, has dedicated his expertise as a labor historian and unionist for educating the public about the role of organized labor in society. As director of the Solidarity Singers, Mr. Zurofsky has enriched, buoyed and built the labor movement through song.

The Sol Stetin Awards are named for Mr. Stetin, a former president of the Textile Workers Union and a founder of the American Labor Museum.

The 27th Annual Sol Stetin Awards Gala will be held November 19 at 6:30 p.m. at The Tides Estates, 1245 Belmont Ave., North Haledon, New Jersey.

The American Labor Museum is housed within the Botto House National Landmark in Haledon, N.J. The Botto House was the scene of rallies held during the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913. It was declared a United States National Historic Landmark in recognition of its role in the effort to end child labor and secure improved working conditions.

ABOUT OPEIU

The Office and Professional Employees International Union represents more than 125,000 members in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. OPEIU represents employees and independent contractors in banking and credit unions, insurance, higher education, shipping, hospitals, medical clinics, utilities, transportation, hotels, administrative offices and more.

Professional organizations and Guilds affiliated with OPEIU are a diverse group that includes physicians, pharmacists, chiropractors, appraisers, podiatrists, clinical social workers, hypnotists, teachers and helicopter pilots.