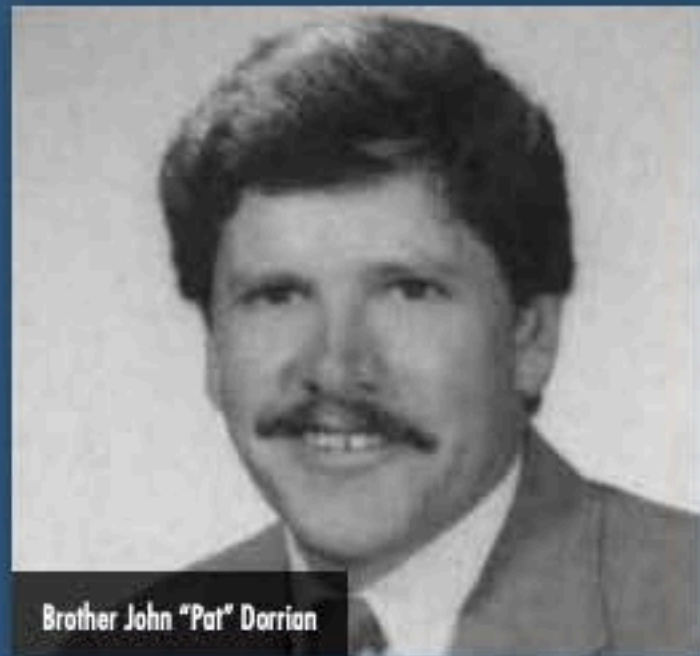


BROTHER JOHN DORRIAN PLUMBER SERVED AS CITY'S LONGEST-TENURED MAYOR

A member of Local 33 since being initiated into the United Association on April 15, 1959, Des Moines born-and-bred Brother John "Pat" Dorrian was elected mayor of the city on April 14, 1987, after former mayor Pete Crivaro passed away while in office. Brother Dorrian would go on to serve in the position for over eight years, becoming the longest-serving mayor of the city on record.



Brother John "Pat" Dorrian

Brother Dorrian won his initial bid to complete Mayor Crivaro's term in a landslide, carrying all but four of the city's 97 precincts and pulling 64 percent of the vote, and easily earned re-election the following November. At the time, he had been a business agent for the local since 1980 and chaired the Health and Welfare/Pension Board for Local 33.

Brother Dorrian came from a long line of union men; his father was a 36-year U.A. member, as are his two brothers and a nephew, and his son went through the U.A. apprenticeship program.

Before he finally ended his run as mayor (which was a part-time position), deciding not to seek re-election in 1995, he was elected business manager/financial secretary of the local on July 1, 1992, replacing longtime business manager Ray Sullivan. Brother Dorrian served as business manager until he retired in 1999.

EMPLOYING INNOVATIVE NEW MEASURES

By 1985, Local 33 had decided to fight back to regain its market share. In one particular endeavor that year, the local established a **Market Recovery Target Fund** with which it would help subsidize jobs being bid by its contractors in an effort to win the work – becoming the first U.A. local in the region and the first construction craft local in central Iowa to begin such an effort.

The fund had some effect, targeting and securing two jobs in Fort Dodge in 1986, for instance. Meanwhile, other U.A. locals from around the country were asking for information about the plan.

It was also during this time that the local, in response to continued debates with its contractors, shifted to a self-funded, self-insured and self administered Health and Welfare Plan.

The local further moved to improve its situation by literally moving – on November 1, 1986, Local 33 relocated from its longtime location on **124 Washington Avenue** to a new, more spacious and updated union office building and hall at **2501 Bell Avenue** in Des Moines. *(The local still resides there in 2016 as it marks its 125th anniversary.)*

In perhaps its most groundbreaking enterprise, Local 33 engaged in a TV advertising campaign beginning in 1984 – becoming the **first union local in central Iowa to advertise on television**. The local's membership voted in mid-1984 to begin the televised public-relations program and contribute 10 cents an hour in wages to finance it, generating about \$100,000 annually.

The initial, simple commercials featured a hard hat with a voiceover explaining the advantages of union labor, while subsequent



ads also promoted images of quality union workmanship, union service to the community and the benefits of union membership. After the spots were running for over a year, Business Manager Sullivan explained the campaign's overall goals in the January 26, 1986, *Register*:

"The reason we're doing the TV stuff is to project the true image of our membership to the public. I think the public gets a slanted image of our building-trades people in general, because most of the media coverage we get is normally of the negative nature. ... It's probably long overdue for unions to do these kinds of things."

Following the lead of Local 33, the **Central Iowa Building and Construction Trades Council** launched a \$6,000 advertising campaign in 1985 that also featured TV commercials. Themed "Don't Blame Us," the promotions charged that non-union workers were responsible for delays in completing construction of the new transit mall along Walnut Street in Des Moines.

But those attempts initially failed to substantially move the needle, and Local 33's employment situation did not improve dramatically into the

Local 33 Brother Frank Lynch receives a commendation for his 60 years of service to the local and the United Association in 1981.





Quality Work
Craftsmanship
Fair Wages
Health Care
Retirement Funds
Brotherhood

Clips from the Local 33 TV commercials that began airing in 1984.

second half of the decade. In fact, employment and overall union membership continued to decline – with the local’s roster dropping below 600 in early 1986 after peaking at 712 just six years earlier while Iowa State Building and Construction Trades Council membership continued to dwindle, as well.

Still, Local 33 not only continued marketing on television, it pushed the envelope on the productions, even featuring prominent business leaders beginning in late 1987. Three highly regarded area business leaders, James Hubble III, president of Hubble Realty Company; Jack Taylor, president of Ringland Johnson Crowley construction company; and Charles Stroh, chairman of Stroh Corporation mechanical contracting, appeared in Local 33 spots that first aired during the December 12, 1987, broadcast of the University of Iowa-Arizona University basketball game on KDSM-TV.

Two years later, the local produced a commercial starring Iowa’s two U.S. senators: Democrat Tom Harkin and Republican Chuck Grassley, a

conservative who was not known for his pro-union support. First aired during a Chicago Cubs-San Francisco Giants baseball game on October 4, 1989, Brother Sullivan explained that Grassley was included in the commercial because the local was “trying to make this non-political. ... It’s strictly business.”

Before the end of the 1980s, the local’s efforts were paying dividends, as work in its jurisdiction was excellent most times while contractors were consistently calling for manpower.

FORTIFYING IN THE WAKE OF DISASTER

“Pat Dorrian ... reported on the positive comments about our TV ads. Reported the local is in much better shape going into the ‘90s than we were going into the 80s.”

While Local 33 Business Representative Dorrian was giving the Business Manager’s report to the local’s January 3, 1990, regular general membership meeting, he also noted that work in the area was “very good” for wintertime – so much so that the local was finding work for U.A. traveling members.

Despite its vastly improved condition, during the 1990s, Local 33 continued to take on the challenges of recapturing and holding larger portions of the construction-market share, industry contractors, and union membership among plumbers and steamfitters. With those goals in its sights, the local became one of the first U.A. locals in the nation to undertake an aggressive organizing campaign before the International Office required its locals to do so through its **COMET (Construction**



Aftermath of the Des Moines Flood of 1993, which practically submerged the Local 33 union hall and training center on Bell Avenue.



Some of the Local 33 flood cleanup crew.