

# To U.P.S. Workers in Queens, Carey Remains a Regular Guy

By NORIMITSU ONISHI

In Queens, where Ron Carey began as a reform-minded United Parcel Service truck driver and rose to the teamsters' highest office, union leaders and the rank and file stood solidly behind him yesterday after a court-appointed monitor ruled that he could not run for re-election because he had improperly diverted members' dues to his campaign.

With Mr. Carey barred from re-election, local supporters said they were worried over the direction of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and of organized labor in general.

Most fiercely protective of Mr. Carey were union leaders who had long known and worked with him at Local 804, which represents U.P.S. workers in Long Island, Westchester County and all of New York City, except Staten Island. But support for Mr. Carey seemed to extend to most of the workers interviewed outside a company distribution center in Maspeth, Queens.

And much of that popular backing seemed based on the belief that Mr. Carey had risen through the ranks, unlike his chief rival, James P. Hoffa, a lawyer and the son of the legendary teamsters' leader who was a driver only while in college. Almost all said they doubted that Mr. Carey had been aware of the wrongdoing in his campaign, and attributed his predicament to his political enemies.

"He's done a lot to clean up the union, and so he's made a lot of enemies," said Donald Olskey, a driver outside the U.P.S. center in Maspeth. "He got rid of the multiple pensions and salaries of the teamster fat cats."



James Rexroad for The New York Times

Howard Redmond, secretary-treasurer of Local 804 of the teamsters union, said Ron Carey had long pushed for bettering the union.

"He's someone from the inside, who's done my job," Mr. Olskey, 38, added. "The fact that he was a package driver and that his father was a package driver, gave him so much more credibility. This is a step back for organized labor."

Those who know Mr. Carey intimately, like Howard Redmond, secretary-treasurer of Local 804, also described him as a regular guy who for many years lived in a two-family house with his family in the middle-class neighborhood of Briarwood, Queens.

After being elected president in 1991, Mr. Carey eschewed the lavish life style of former teamster leaders, selling off the union's two jets and putting an end to conferences in Hawaii, his supporters said.

As far back as the late 1960's, when he ran successfully for local president, Mr. Carey had talked about reforming the teamsters, said Mr. Redmond, 56, a former loader. In the 1980's, after several successful strikes to win better pensions and curtail the use of part-time workers, he began push for ridding the union

*A union leader still has widespread support, where he rose from the ranks.*

of its corrupt legacy and ties with the mob. Mr. Redmond added.

"He was a very idealistic person" who believed that working people were not being treated fairly, Mr. Redmond said. "He was always for the members. He was the type of guy that if you're running a wire and don't know how to do it, he'd come over and show you."

Mr. Carey became a shop steward with Local 804 in 1958 after two years as a driver. He became recording secretary in 1965, before winning an election for president in 1968.

Many U.P.S. workers in Maspeth, especially those who had worked for many years in New York, voiced strong support for Mr. Carey, who earned a reputation as a clean leader, as well as a tough bargainer, for Local 804.

"We'll back him 100 percent," said Hank Betancourt, 50, who was driving away from the Maspeth center yesterday afternoon. "I've known him for 28 years. He's a nice individual."

But Lancelot Williams, 23, who started working as a driver three years ago, said he was dissatisfied with Mr. Carey's bargaining in the recent strike and unimpressed with Mr. Hoffa.

"It doesn't matter who's the president," Mr. Williams said.