

THE CENTRAL SIX

Ernest Fuqua was one of the "Central 6" which established a historic precedence in airline labor relations and interpretation of the Railway Labor Act. He is the last to fly west.

The six Central Airlines aircraft mechanics refused to attend disciplinary hearings without a union rep and were fired by Central. The System Board of Adjustment gave them their jobs back with back pay.

Central refused to abide by the System Board decision and the subsequent lawsuit went to the Supreme Court which ruled in the mechanics' favor.

IAM had called a strike over the mess and Central fired dozens more mechanics. It would be six years before they all got back their jobs.

The case has been often cited in subsequent labor disputes in which airlines are required to abide by System Board decisions.

Following are some emails with aircraft mechanic Bill Guthrie who was part of the larger group involved.

-Jake Lamkins

Bill, I was looking at websites <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/372/682> and http://www.leagle.com/decision/1961504295F2d209_1440/INTERNATIONAL%20ASS'N%20OF%20MACHINISTS%20v.%20CENTRAL%20AIRLINES.%20I%20NC, trying to see if this was when the Pratt brothers were off work. Seems like you told me you were one of them too.

Is this the lockout you mentioned about them? Do you recall the names of the six that were fired?

-Jake Lamkins

As I remember the strike only lasted about 8 days. When the IAM called an end, we were all called in for interviews. Most people that previously held lower classifications (cleaner, stock clerk, etc.) were offered an opportunity to return to those positions. About half of us were terminated and reinstated after the court ruling. That took six and a half years

-Bill Guthrie

I found a court decision that named Robert K. Doud, Sherman V. Cornstubble, Otha L. Broom, Clinton R. Casey, Parker R. Davis and Ernest E. Fuqua, Appellants. Are these the six mechanics that were out for six years? How long were the Pratts, you and others out?

-Jake Lamkins

That's the six Jake. We were all out six years. These 6 men worked in the sheet metal shop. We were in a contract dispute and things were tense. We had a DC-3 with wing damage on Friday afternoon. They asked for a couple of people from the SM shop to work O/T on the week end to repair it. Not anxious to help the Co., they all refused. Since the A/C was scheduled for a charter flight On Monday, Dave Vaughan declared an emergency and sent notice in writing that anyone who went home instead of working O/T would be fired. Needless to say the strike occurred because they refused to reinstate those 6 people.

-Bill Guthrie

I'm still trying to get it straight. Besides the six named in the lawsuit, how many others were out six years such as you and the Pratt brothers? Did you all get back pay and seniority?

-Jake Lamkins

I think there was about 80 or more. We all got our seniority

back to hire in date. I think the 6 got a monetary settlement. Not sure how much.

-Bill Guthrie

This is a 2007 email from Bill about what it was like during that six year layoff.

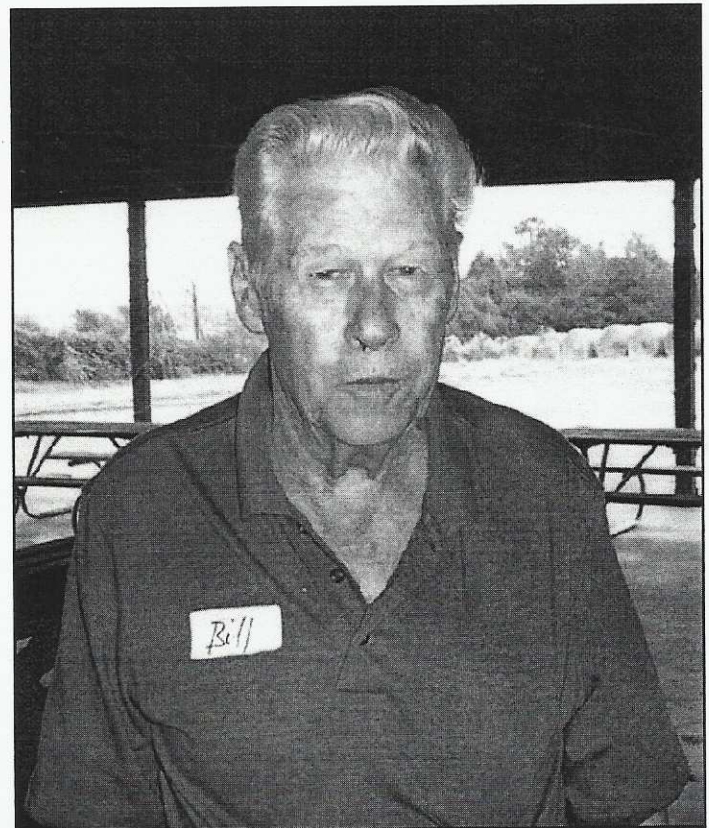
-Jake Lamkins

Just over 50 years ago, (Feb 04,1957) I worked my first day for Central Airlines. I started as a stock clerk in the maintenance dept. at Meacham Field in Ft. Worth. I was soon very astute at knowing most all of the parts necessary to maintain a fleet of 9 Douglas D.C.3s.

Many new words were added to my vocabulary, along with many airline codes, to which I was a total stranger, i.e. WDG (Enid, Ok), BVO (Bartlesville, Ok) and the ever popular SWI and SWO (Sherman, Tx and Stillwater, Ok). I had lots of help from people like Bob Donley, Jack Curtis, Charlie Florin, and a lead mechanic named Alden (Stormy) Sellers.

I was probably the happiest guy on the planet. Making \$1.24 per hour - great! My wife and I soon bought a home, a new 1958 Chevrolet, and for Valentines Day, 1958, a brand new baby girl.

All this joy was short lived, in April, 58, the airline was in a labor dispute with the I.A.M., of which I was a member, and it



Many thanks to Bill Guthrie for his help for this article and many other things over the years. He is a true FLriend.

Bill worked in aircraft overhaul and line maintenance at FTW, GSW, DEN, OMA, FSM (twice), MKC, MCI, MEM and SLC. He was in SLC at FL's shutdown. Bill then went to work for Western Airlines in 1986 shortly before the Delta Airlines merger. He spent the last 12 years of his airline career as a lead aircraft mechanic in Delta's SLC hub. Bill retired in Dec 1998 and returned to Texas.

-Jake Lamkins

ended in a strike. Now bear in mind , the strike lasted only 8 days. but after that there were interviews to determine if the company would allow us to come back to work. About 80% of us were fired, during what was a small depression in Ft. Worth.

It just happened to coincide with General Dynamics laying off approximately 5,000 people. Needless to say , jobs of any kind were scarce, and I went back to Abilene, Tx, where I worked at

many jobs - oil field roughneck - painter - carpenter - truck driver, just to mention a few.

But after 6 1/2 years of the I.A.M. fighting all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, wisdom finally won out and we were re-called to our former positions, with full seniority. This was in the fall of 1964, and life went back to almost normal.

-Bill Guthrie



40 YEARS of combined service was rewarded with 10-year pins to four Central maintenance men including Parker Davis (in plaid shirt) Clinton Casey, Otha Broome and Ernest Fuqua. They are flanked by Dave Vaughan, left director of maintenance and on the right by R. L. Wageneck, vice president-operations and Keith Kahle, president.

This 1964 article shows four of the Central Six aircraft mechanics getting their ten years pins shortly after coming back to work after being fired for six years! Note that Dave Vaughan, the man who fired them, is present for the awards.

CONVAIR NOTES

William Landrum - Did all of the Frontier 580s have the galley and lavs up front? Seems like one trip I flew they were in the rear.

Vicky Veldboon - All the FAL 580's I worked had galley, lav and net-covered cargo in front; cargo access, FA jumpseat and emergency exit door aft.

David Ruddell - AL and NC had them aft, not sure about PI. Not even sure PI had 580's

Jake Lamkins - PI didn't have CV580s - rather they flew the M404, YS11 and FH227.

Melodye McKamey Wangler - I loved flying the 580's. I don't remember the lavs and galleys any place except up front. I do however remember typewriters in the bottom of garment bags that hit me in the shins when I took the garment bag from passengers. Another good memory was that the guys got a GOOD lunch when we had turn arounds at airports with no restaurant and the flight attendant got peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. My how things have changed!!!!

Jim Mustain - You mentioned earlier u rode CV -600, had galley, lav IN REAR.

William Landrum - Now that I think of it it was a CV 600! Back in September of 1973 I flew from MEM-JBR on a TI CV600 N94230. On 9/27/73 that same aircraft, operating as Flight 655 crashed into Black Fork mountain near Mena killing all 11 onboard!

Jim Mustain - Remember the TI accident. I was Mgr. in MEM W/FL @ that time. TI mgr was good friend & he & I had watched that flight leave.

William Landrum - A good friend of mine in Oklahoma has been to the site of that crash near Mena, Arkansas and most of the wreckage is still up on that mountain! Go to okwreckchasing.org for pictures and everything!

Beverly Armando - Seems to me they were in the back also (62-68)

Gretchen Densley - I flew when we had galleys and lavs in the front!!