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News

# Teamster leader Ron Carey dead at 72

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Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Teamsters President Ron Carey, who pledged to rid the union of mob corruption but was later forced from leadership in a financial scandal, has died in New York at age 72, his son said Friday.

Carey died at New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens Thursday evening of complications from lung cancer, Daniel Carey said in a telephone interview.

After a stint in the Marines, Carey first joined the Teamsters in 1956 while working as a driver for United Parcel Service. He became president of a local union post in New York in 1967 on a platform of challenging corrupt leadership in the organization.

In 1989, federal officials began overseeing much of the Teamsters' operations after the union settled a civil racketeering lawsuit alleging it was controlled by organized crime. The settlement required top officials to be chosen by union members, a decision that led to Carey becoming the first Teamster president elected by membership.

When he took the helm of the union in 1992, Carey cut his own salary, eliminated perks such as limousines and private jets and removed dozens of local leaders tainted by mob influence.

In 1997, Carey led 185,000 workers in a two-week strike against UPS that cost the company \$750 million and ultimately won the union 10,000 new full-time jobs. The 1997 walkout is considered one of the most successful victories in the modern labor movement.

"I worked closely with Ron on the UPS strike, which was so pivotal and successful in holding the line on standards for workers," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said Friday. "He played an important role in leading and changing the labor movement."

Carey won re-election in 1996 over James P. Hoffa, son of the former Teamsters President

Jimmy Hoffa, but the result was later overturned following charges that Carey's campaign illegally used about \$885,000 in union funds. Unions are prohibited from using their own money to fund election campaigns.

Carey was forced out of office in 1997 and banned from the union. Hoffa won a new election in 1998 and remains president of the 1.4 million-member union.

Federal prosecutors later indicted Carey on charges of perjury and making false statements for telling investigators he was not aware of the scheme. A federal jury acquitted him of all charges in 2001.

Carey was retired and living at his home in Queens, N.Y., when he was diagnosed in September with inoperable lung cancer.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, and five children.

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