



# 710 SYSCO'S IRONMAN RETIRES AFTER 54 YEARS OF SERVICE

There are few industries more cut-throat than that of the food service industry. And within that industry, few could argue that there is not a more physically demanding job in the industry than that of a Sysco delivery driver. And, in my opinion, there are no tougher, more educated, more pro-union Sysco drivers across the country than those represented by Local 710 at Sysco-Chicago. What makes this job unique? The long hours with little rest (65-70 hours every week); the fingerprinting of each and every case of a 700-1000 piece load or more every day; the endurance of making the delivery with a two-wheeler (dolly) upstairs, downstairs, and through high-trafficked greasy kitchen floors; the honing of driving skills in some of the tightest, most congested alleys and streets in the city, all while being micromanaged by company supervisors who constantly pressure the driver to get the job done quicker.

The job is not for the faint of heart, nor for those not willing to work the gauntlet of demands brought on by this titan of an employer in one of the leading culinary cities in the world. But those who do, they do so with the humility of providing for their family and the expectations of one day reaching the end of their marathon.

Enter Bob Harwood. At age 72 (almost 73) and after a combined 54 years with Ralton and Sysco-Chicago, Bob, the most senior driver in seniority, has finally crossed his finish line. I reached out to my former co-worker to congratulate him on his retirement and he agreed to meet for breakfast along with Local 710 Secretary Treasurer and Principal Officer, Mike Cales.

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⋮ MIKE RAMIREZ • BUSINESS AGENT



**TEAMSTERS LOCAL 710**

**MICHAEL J. CALES  
SECRETARY-TREASURER**

AN AFFILIATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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Hired on May 6, 1965 at the tender age of 18, Bob recalls how he was offered the job by a Barney Keegan (CTDU) and started driving off of the then Kedzie Avenue location. The minimum wage back then was a whopping \$1.25 an hour, but as a union driver, Bob earned \$3.25 an hour. It was too good of job for him to pass up. "The funny thing is", he recalls, "the amount of hours I worked everyday at the age of 18 are the same amount of hours I worked everyday at the age of 72."

As a former Sysco driver myself, I had the privilege of working alongside this triathlon group from 2004-2011 and was honored to serve as one of four Union Stewards

during my time. I looked up to Bob because he was one of the few die-hard downtown drivers who knew every nook and cranny of the city, all without the luxury of GPS. He was always willing to lend a hand whenever he was needed.

When I asked Bob what advice he would give to the newer Sysco drivers, he said, "Get out while you can. Don't let the job destroy your body," - words that gave me peace of mind.

In the 54 years as a driver, Bob said that the best thing was being part of Local 710. Bob retired from Sysco-Chicago on May 17, 2019 and will continue to care for his wife of 53 years.

TO ONE OF THE TOUGHEST MEN I KNOW  
TO A TRUE DIE HARD  
**TO THE IRONMAN TRIATHLETE OF SYSCO-CHICAGO**

ON BEHALF OF ALL OF TEAMSTERS LOCAL 710,

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
**BOB HARWOOD**  
**ON YOUR RETIREMENT**

MAY YOU BE BLESSED WITH MANY YEARS  
OF GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

*Mike Ramirez*

*Teamsters Local 710 Business Agent*



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