

**The University of Toledo  
Law Review Symposium  
“Public Sector Labor Law: At The Crossroads”  
College of Law Auditorium  
Friday, October 21, 2011**

**by Lloyd A. Jacobs, M.D.**

It is entirely fitting that this discussion take place here in Toledo Ohio, on the campus of a great university, in the auditorium of a great College of Law.

Toledo has long been an epicenter for organized labor and often the recipient of the good things that have been derived from the labor movement; and occasionally the recipient of unintended negative consequences of it.

We are sitting, after all, less than an hour’s drive from the Ford Rouge Plant where Harry Bennett and his so called “Service Department” administered a beating to union members in a pitched battle. Toledo is the town where organized labor fought for and won the fight for retirement pensions. Richard T. Gosser, Vice President of the United Auto Workers from 1947 to 1963 asserted “Toledo is a good town for working people.”

Gosser himself is an interesting study<sup>1</sup>. His parents migrated from Cleveland to Toledo’s south end about 1895. His older brother began working at age eight; he, Richard, stayed in high school for two years, and left St. Francis de Sales the year my father was born – 1916. He served two years in the federal penitentiary in Milan, Michigan, four miles from my farm in Michigan. When he was paroled, his first job was at Willys-Overland Motors. He became president of Local 12 (UAW) in 1938 to 1942. And he was president of UAW Local 12 the year I was born. I write these paragraphs as I have to point out that the labor organization movement is intricately and intimately connected to our lives and our town. The labor movement is “of this time, of this place.”

So it is entirely appropriate that today’s proceedings examine important aspects of the labor movement and its relationship to government structures. Today’s proceedings are not just interesting, they are important. Important debate that can have a significant impact on a society and culture can be held at no better place than at a great university’s College of Law. This Symposium fits exactly with my vision for The University of Toledo.

My vision is that this university becomes an economic pillar of this community, state and nation; that it be responsive to the human capital needs of corporate America, and government, ahead of the needs and desires of traditional academia. My vision is that we participate in the marketplace, that we form and formulate the culture of this nation.

So later today an important question is being asked and debated. Has the pendulum swung too far? Is a significant resetting in order? Is the impact on higher education likely to be consistent with the desperate need for reform in higher education, that most important societal

responsibility? Is legislation an appropriate vehicle to create such a clean slate environment? These questions are not just interesting, they are important.

Let me speak of one certainty. The employees of The University of Toledo, whether members of a union or not, are of great value to the university and to our society. I want for them a prosperous lifestyle, excellent health care, and a reasonable retirement package. I want them to have the satisfaction of being a contributor, to experience the pride which attends doing a job well and participating in important work. I will do everything I can to promote those goals whether the law changes or not.

Thank you for listening.

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<sup>1</sup> Borden, Timothy, The Michigan Historical Review Spring 2000; Vol.26, No.1.