

# American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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For Background

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## STEWART ACUFF

Stewart Acuff was named Assistant to the President in July 2008 by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who noted Acuff's "strong leadership skills and a deep passion for the potential of unions to lift working people's lives." As Assistant to the President, Acuff champions one of the highest priorities of the federation—passing the Employee Free Choice Act to restore the freedom to form unions and bargain collectively to America's workers.

From 2002 to 2008, Acuff served as Director of Organizing for the AFL-CIO, coordinating strategies across the federation's 56 member unions to help working men and women join and form unions. He has been a community organizer and union organizer for 30 years. From 1977 to 1982, he worked as a community organizer in Missouri, Texas, Tennessee and New Hampshire for organizations affiliated with ACORN and Citizen Action.

In 1982, he joined the union movement as the organizing coordinator for the Service Employees International Union in Texas, where he was responsible for a campaign in which employees of 12 Beverly Enterprises nursing homes organized into the SEIU. In 1985, he became executive director of the Georgia State Employees Union/SEIU Local 1985. He helped build a union of 3,000 state workers despite the fact that public employees in Georgia had no collective bargaining rights, no dues check-off, no rights to meet and confer and no provisions for union recognition.

Acuff was elected president of the Atlanta Labor Council in 1991, where he served for nine years. He organized and led the successful campaign to unionize the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. In 2000, he joined the AFL-CIO staff as deputy director of field mobilization for the Midwest region. He served as deputy director of organizing from 2001 until becoming director.

Acuff writes and speaks extensively. He has written articles for the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Labor Research Review*, *In These Times*, *The Nation*, *Foreign Policy* and *Focus Magazine*, *Labor Studies Journal*, *New Labor Forum* and several Georgia newspapers. He also has written essays in *Which Way for Organized Labor?* (edited by Bruce Nissen) and *Organizing for Justice in Our Communities* (edited by Immanuel Ness and Stuart Eimer). He is a member of the Federal Reserve Bank Advisory Council, the National Board of Directors of Jobs with Justice, the First Iconium Baptist Church in Atlanta and numerous other organizations.

Acuff was born Dec. 17, 1954, in Trezevant, Tenn. He graduated from the University of Missouri magna cum laude with honors in sociology. He lives in Silver Spring, Md., with his wife, Mary Denham, and their children, Samuel and Sydney.

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