

RETIRED INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT  
**BRUCE FOSTER**

*Goes Home*



Retired International Vice President Bruce Foster, 85, ATU's first African-American international officer, passed away on March 20. Foster was elected IVP in 1971, and was continually re-elected to that position until his retirement in 1986.

While Foster will be remembered as the first African-American international officer, he was most proud of being the first African-American local president, having been elected to that post by Local 268-Cleveland, OH, in 1968.


He had been a member of the local since his employment by Cleveland Transit in 1944, following service in the Army Air Corps. He worked hard to maintain a cordial relationship with management, yet he knew when he had to take his union out on strike.

Foster had a keen interest in politics and relished disarming potential opponents with the unexpected. He confounded people simply by being a Republican. But there was a method in his madness.



"Black people suffer," he explained, "when a Republican gets into office and they have nowhere to go. I worked with both Republicans and Democrats in Cleveland and I learned that you can't make any progress if you can't knock on that [Republican] door."

Known affectionately as "Mr. Foster," the retired IVP once recalled, "It meant a lot to me that I was able to help a lot of people...I worked hard and I always told people 'the way it was.' With the help of God I served people the way I was supposed to."

Foster's politically astute career was marked by an uncommon grace that won him lasting friendships which he treasured. He will be missed, but his legacy will last as long as there is a labor movement. 

*Photo: International Vice President Bruce Foster in 1971.*