

Take our Rams, we'll boycott your Walmart

**By DAVID COOK
President**

Stan Kroenke and his Rams are long gone. And this city shouldn't stand for it.

Kroenke, one of the wealthiest and most powerful owners in all of professional sports, said any NFL team that moves to St. Louis and the new world-class stadium we've proposed will be "well on the road to financial ruin," in his vicious proposal submitted to the NFL.

Forget for a moment Kroenke's disregard for our city's many strengths. Forget his stunning ability to ignore a passionate and engaged fan base. Forget his abject refusal to work with, or even communicate with, the community that hosts this football team. Forget the slap in the face it is to all of the hard-working men and women who took money out of their pockets to help support a team he tore apart.

Forget all of that and remember that Enos Stanley Kroenke made his first mark in the business world by partnering with the Walton family helping build strip malls and Walmarts around the nation.

Kroenke, the "successful" businessman, was forged in the dark and ugly world of real-estate development working for and with one of the most shameful corporate actors in America.

If it sounds like a Walmart deal, it is Walmart has a formula, and it probably sounds familiar to anyone following the long saga of St. Louis' struggle to build a new NFL stadium.

The retailer first demands special tax breaks and incentives, despite being one of the most profitable companies on earth. If anyone dares to refuse these incentives, they retaliate by painting a grim picture of life without them, dangling the threat of moving just across city lines to a neighboring town and blessing some other community with their presence.

They'll ask for special treatment like bending of zoning rules, to allow them to build their stores exactly how they like them, local standards be damned. They won't be above intimidation either or weaving lies about those standing in their way. They'll go as far as pit communities and towns against each

other to squeeze every possible dime out of local taxpayers - all while reaping billions of profits.

That is the Walmart way. And, that is the Kroenke way. Walmart's values are Kroenke's values.

Sadly, we need to remember that Kroenke only brought the Rams back to St. Louis because the city offered him an obscenely rich deal, one of the best in the League at the time, and the kind of deals Walmart begs for every day.

The deal, a laundry list of concessions from a city desperate for an NFL franchise, gave Kroenke and the Rams permission to break their lease and leave town if the Edward Jones Dome did not remain "state-of-the-art."

Payback time

Kroenke, always knowing this would be his window to one day abandon this city for greener pastures, is now doing just that, because that's the cold-hearted business he knows.

His regard for St. Louis taxpayers, small businesses, workers who will be impacted, let alone the fans, is absolutely nonexistent.

In short, all Enos Stanley Kroenke has done is treat St. Louis with the same contempt and cynicism that Walmart regularly treats communities and its workers.

We may not be able to stop what Kroenke does, but we can remember when we go shopping.

Remember the saga of Kroenke and his cruel departure. Remember who Kroenke is and where he comes from. Remember that every time you shop at Walmart, you're only hurting yourself.

Every time you shop at Kroenke's Walmart you make a choice to support men like him. Every dime spent at Walmart is a dime out of a union member's pocket. It's a dime taken away from pension plans and health benefits and better wages.

Don't put money in to the pockets of the people trying to take as much as they can out of yours.

If Enos Stanley Kroenke doesn't want anything to do with St. Louis then so be it. Maybe it's time St. Louis had nothing to do with Walmart.

It's payback time for the man who left town with our Rams. Let's stand up for our values and our families - we owe our beloved city nothing less.

Button up winner!



DAN KOTRABA of Schnucks Telegraph was one of the winners of our "ButtonUp" campaign. Just for wearing his button at work and submitting a photo of it during our contest, Kotraba won a free UFCW jacket. Hope it keeps you warm and dry, Dan!

Interested in a career with UFCW 655?
See job opening page 15.

AN EXCLUSIVE
TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR

UNION PROUD

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Local 655 looks to assist flood victims

UFCW Local 655 is asking it's 10,000-plus partners to help identify those most impacted by the recent floods so that we can do our part to help provide relief.

Missouri saw record flooding in the final days of 2015, which impacted tens of thousands of Missourians.

Those who suffered major losses are possibly eligible for assistance from UFCW Local 655. Not only does our partnership with United Way of Greater St. Louis help us provide a dedicated 2-1-1 line to all of our partners in need of emergency relief, but Local 655 is currently exploring the option of requesting aid for dues-paying partners from UFCW locals around the country.

"These floods had a major impact on some people's lives and it's pretty hard to worry about being at work on time when you're

home has been destroyed," said UFCW Local 655 President David Cook. "We care deeply about the UFCW family and anyone who experienced a major loss or knows of someone that did should contact us so we can get involved and try to help in any way we can."

Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency during the heavy rains that brought floodwaters — particularly in the St. Louis area — to the same level or above those reached in the infamous 1993 floods. Major highway closures created significant delays across the city and property damage estimates will likely be in the millions of dollars.

Those in need of assistance or who know someone who may need emergency relief for major losses should call the Local Union Hall or call Mike Frame directly at 636-736-2765.

Local 655 gets new homeowner back to work

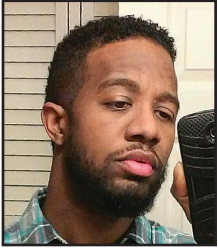
Every single day the Local 655 staff work hard for their 10,000-plus partners to get them the best deal on the job.

Just ask Jared Simmons. Simmons recently bought a house, no easy task in the modern economy. He said losing a job just couldn't be in the cards. After all, he was moving forward, reaching the American Dream.

Simmons, however, had been working at the Schnucks pharmacy warehouse for almost a year, but had had some issues with management treating him inappropriately.

"I don't want to make it a black white thing, but it definitely made me wonder if that was the thing," said Simmons, who is African American. "The manager in question just treated us like slaves, he broke protocol, and most of the night shift people are black."

Simmons was repeatedly harassed and



mistreated by one of his managers and, after a heated exchange, was suddenly fired without just cause, a complete breach of the union-negotiated contract he works under.

Simmons immediately called Local 655 staff to correct the injustice.

"I was ready and they jumped right on it," Simmons said. "They were all over it. Levi (Eddins, his Local 655 Union Representative) fought very hard for me. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have a job right now."

Simmons was back to work in less than a week with full reinstatement and back pay to compensate for his lost time on the job.

As a single man who just bought a home, Simmons said he was worried how he would pay his bills without a job.

"We all got bills, I got bills that go along with the new house," Simmons said. "And I don't have another income to rely on like a spouse, it's just me. I need to work."

Jared Simmons' story is just one of many, many examples of UFCW 655 standing up for hard-working people.

Get vital information about your workplace, your contract and more.

Text 'Join' to 738-674 to get signed up for our text program!

Survey

We're negotiating a new contract soon and we want to hear from you. What do you need to make the workplace better? Take our partner survey and tell us how we can fight for you. It only takes 5 minutes.

Go to
our website at ufcw655.org and click on "survey" and tell us what you need for a better life.

TEXTING PROGRAM / SURVEY

Have you signed up for our texting program?

Share Your Pride: Share this page in your break room.