

— Viola Luzzo —

This historic photo shows mourners at the funeral of Viola Luzzo, a 39 year-old woman from Detroit, who was murdered on March 25, 1965 by the Klu Klux Klan. Luzzo was in Alabama volunteering on the Civil Rights March between Selma and Montgomery.

Luzzo, the wife of a Teamsters Local Union 247 business agent and mother of five, was an activist in the Detroit area and member of the NAACP who was not afraid to stand up for her beliefs. She was appalled by the violence and injustices in the south and felt compelled to join the movement for equality.

Luzzo was murdered while driving back to Montgomery after dropping protesters off in Selma following the march. She and fellow activist Leroy Moton, 19, were getting gas at a local filling station when they were subjected to abusive calls and racist scorn. Soon after, Luzzo stopped at a red light and a car with four members of the local Klan pulled up alongside her. When the Klansmen saw a white woman and a black man in the car together, they immediately began pursuing the civil rights activists. Luzzo attempted to outrun the attackers but was overtaken. Luzzo was shot twice in the head while driving and died instantly. The car crashed into a ditch where Moton was covered in blood and lay motionless while the Klansmen stopped to ensure both of them were dead. Moton survived and eventually testified against the attackers.

James R. Hoffa immediately chartered a plane to return Luzzo's body to Detroit.

Her shocking death brought heightened attention to the civil rights fight in Alabama and across the south. Her funeral was attended by many leaders and dignitaries including Martin Luther King Jr., James R. Hoffa

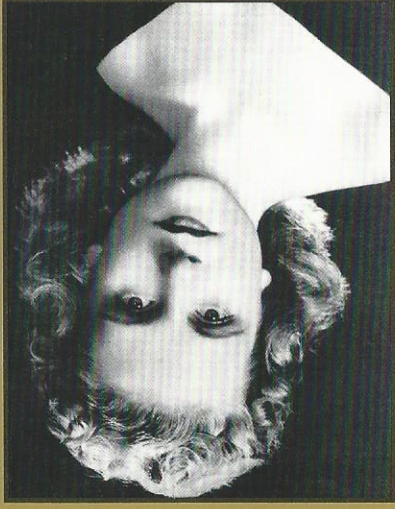


the 1960s. The Teamsters Union, under the leadership of General President James R. Hoffa, provided financial support to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and others during this period. Additionally, thousands of Teamsters participated in rallies and marches across the nation – including the 1963 March on Washington. Their dedication and vision continue to inspire Teamsters today.

and Walter Reuther. President Lyndon Johnson and Michigan Governor George Romney commented publicly on her bravery and sacrifice. Unfortunately, the response of J. Edgar Hoover and other leaders was less dignified. Fearing her murder would trigger more civil rights action, they downplayed her role and ran a smear campaign against her, her family and her background. These actions almost destroyed her family.

President Johnson appeared on national television and announced the arrest of the four Klansmen within 24 hours of the murder. Three of them were acquitted of state murder charges, while the fourth, Gary Rowe, was an FBI informant and was given immunity for his testimony. The three, Collier Leroy Wilkins, William Eaton and Eugene Thomas, were later convicted in federal court of violating Luzzo's civil rights and were sentenced to 10 years in federal prison.

Luzzo was one of many Teamsters who believed in justice and equality for all people and took an active role in the Civil Rights Movement of

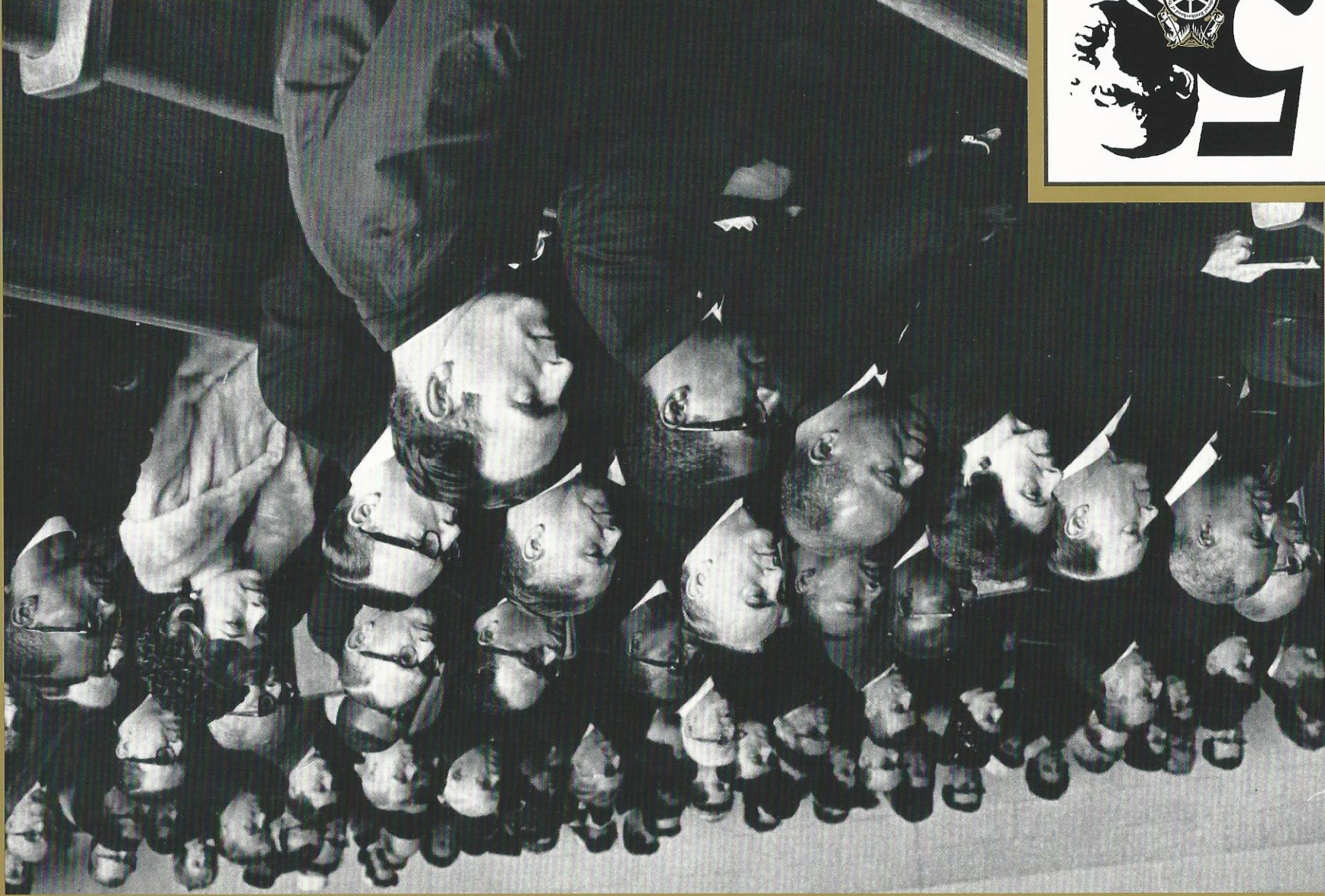


remembering the man

HONORING THE LEGACY



Mourners at the Funeral of Viola Linuzzo • March 30, 1965



Front Row (L-R): Rev. James Wadsworth, Roy Wilkins President of the NAACP, Walter Reuther, UAW President, Mrs. Reuther and James Farmer, founder of the Congress of Racial Equality, Rev. Bernard Lee, Executive Vice President SCLC and Lt. Governor William Milliken; 2nd Row (L-R): Civil Rights Attorney Fred Gray, Martin Luther King Jr., Teamsters International Vice President Harold Gibbons, Teamsters General President James R. Hoffa and Joe Konowe, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16