

“Our family is demanding answers”: Widow of Ronald Adams Sr. speaks after Father’s Day memorial for Stellantis worker in Detroit

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Members of Ronald Adams Sr.’s family gathered Sunday to hold a Father’s Day memorial for the 63-year-old Stellantis worker who was tragically killed at the Dundee Engine Complex in Michigan on April 7. They assembled at Adams’ long-time home in the northwest Detroit Bagley Community to remember the deeply missed husband, father and grandfather, and to spread his ashes in a memorial garden behind the house.

Adams, a skilled and experienced machine repairman, was doing maintenance work inside an enclosed factory cell when an overhead gantry that lifts engine blocks suddenly engaged, pinning him to a conveyor. Adams died within “minutes” from “crush injuries and traumatic asphyxia,” according to the Washtenaw County death certificate.

Dundee workers have said that prior to the fatal accident, Stellantis was cutting corners on safety to get the factory up and running again after a costly retooling project, which was more than a year behind schedule. But Stellantis, the United Auto Workers and the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) have not released any information about their official investigations into Adams’ death—now more than 10 weeks ago.

“I have not gotten any information from Stellantis, MIOSHA or the UAW. Not a letter. Not one word on why he died,” Ronald’s widow, Shamenia Stewart-Adams, told the *World Socialist Web Site* at her home this week. “I want answers, our family wants answers. We’re demanding the truth.”

She continued, “When I speak for mothers and wives of our husbands who go to these places and work to provide for their families, what I can say is when our husbands depart our home and families, we expect them back home. We don’t expect them to be killed by machinery.

“What we want is accountability and transparency for mothers who have to stay behind and raise their children without a father. We want accountability and transparency from the UAW and Stellantis. I’ve not gotten that. Absolutely, no wife, no mother, no family should be left in suspense of what happened to their loved one.”

In mid-May, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) initiated an independent investigation. The investigation has begun gathering testimony from Dundee and other autoworkers on the death of Ronald Adams, Jeep worker Antonio Gaston and other victims of corporate profit. Adams’ family members and co-workers have expressed support for the rank-and-file investigation to break through the official coverup, reveal the truth and hold those responsible for Adams’ unnecessary death to account.

On Monday, WSWs reporters visited Shamenia at the family home. She described the Father’s Day memorial. “Sunday was a difficult, emotional day for us. It was the first Father’s Day without Ronnie. We are still devastated. We are trying to get used to our new normal without him. Some days are better than others.

“We had a family gathering. Just some of Ronnie’s siblings, the kids and grandkids. Some of the kids were out of town and took part online. There were three generations. It was special. Everybody got to sign the rock and shake the ashes out of the urn into the garden. The reason I chose the backyard is because my husband was a hardworking man, and he was a real homebody. He was a real protector and a man’s man. His home was his castle.

“He went to work, and he came back home. He took the kids to practice, all their sports, and came back home. A lot of our activities were right here, and I was content with it. I didn’t need to go to fancy restaurants because he had already made our home. I wanted him to know as

hard as he worked for his family, he didn't have to do anything extra to make me happy, because I was already happy."

Shamenia explained that after the April 28 funeral for Ronald Adams Sr., a horse-drawn hearse carried his casket through the streets of the Bagley Community. "The neighbors waited to see the horse and carriage and showed immense respect. Children were saying they didn't know who it was, but it must have been somebody special. Our neighbors told me it was really something to see. I just felt it was the right thing to do, because my husband lived in Detroit and spent his entire life in this neighborhood. He knew so many people in the Bagley Community. So, I just felt it was fitting. It was a standup event for a standup guy."

The Bagley Community house was Adams' boyhood home, where he and his sisters grew up. His father, Walter Adams, was a General Electric worker in Detroit who had migrated to the city from Pittsburgh. His mother, Edna Maxine Adams, whose family came from Owensboro, Kentucky, was an educator in the Detroit Public Schools who worked at the US Department of Health and Human Services until she retired.

Adams attended Bagley Elementary and Hampton Junior High in his neighborhood before graduating from Henry Ford High School in 1980—the same year that saw massive job and wage cuts for tens of thousands of autoworkers during the Chrysler bailout and the onset of Reagan's economic recession. After high school, Adams joined the US Air Force and was stationed in the Philippines and other locations.

Following his honorable discharge, Adams earned an associate degree in Electronic Engineering Technology in 1988 and soon after began a 16-year career as an aircraft mechanic with Northwest/Delta Airlines. In 2004, he was hired at the Global Engine Manufacturing Alliance (GEMA) plant—a joint venture between DaimlerChrysler, Hyundai Motor Company, and Mitsubishi Motors—which became wholly owned by Stellantis (then Chrysler) in 2012. Adams worked at the plant for 19 years, earning his journeyman's license as a skilled machine repairman, before his death on April 7, 2025.

In 2014, Adams married Shamenia, a Detroit Public Schools worker from a family of autoworkers. "My dad and my brother work for Chrysler," Shamenia explained. "My grandparents retired from Ford. I'm from a whole family of UAW workers." Ronald and Shamenia have a blended family of 10 children and 11 grandchildren, many of whom gathered at the family home to celebrate

Father's Day.

Shamenia explained how important it has been for the family to receive messages of support from workers at the Dundee Engine Plant, as well as from across the United States and around the world.

"I am overwhelmed with the outpouring of love and concern that I have received from families and workers throughout the United States, and even from Canada, Mexico and Turkey. I'm overwhelmed with gratitude and can't thank them enough. Our entire family thanks them for their support, their condolences. We are so grateful to have family and workers acknowledge my husband in such a manner. I'm saying this with me making a heart emoji with the palms of my hands.

"That goes for workers in all countries. Every time I read an article on the WSWS, my eyes just pop open, and I'm in awe. I'm just so appreciative. It must be that my family's story may get close to home. They may have lost a loved one due to factory work and things of that nature. I was shocked and surprised by how many workers lose their lives from these accidents every year.

"My final thoughts, I guess would be to tell people, just be safe at work. If you know something, say something and don't accept working in unsafe conditions. Don't feel pressured to work under those conditions," Shamenia concluded.

The tragic death of Ronald Adams is part of a broader pattern of exploitation and cover-up by the auto companies and the UAW bureaucracy. Stellantis, with the backing of the union and government agencies, is trying to bury the truth. This is why the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) is organizing an independent investigation, led by workers themselves.

We urge autoworkers at Dundee, throughout Stellantis, and across the auto industry—along with workers across the US and internationally—to support this effort. Come forward with information about Adams' death or similar incidents.

Fill out the form below to add your voice to the fight.



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