

Funeral to be held today for UPS worker Andy Schanding, killed on the job in Lexington, Kentucky

By Will Morrow
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Anthony “Andy” Thomas Schanding, a 43-year-old United Parcel Service worker, was killed on the job Tuesday morning at the Mercer Road hub in Lexington, Kentucky. He suffered a fatal injury while performing maintenance on a conveyer at approximately 11:20 a.m. He was pronounced dead fifty minutes later, shortly after arriving at the University of Kentucky Chandler Hospital. A funeral will be held today in the nearby city of Carlisle, Kentucky.

Andy leaves behind a loving family: his wife of 21 years, Sarah Dixon Schanding; a son Elliot and a daughter Emilee; his parents, Bradley and Bonita; brother David; and sisters Elizabeth and Kathy.

The family published a tribute on Facebook on Tuesday, describing Andy as “a private person [who] was humble, shy, quiet and genuine.” His sister, Elizabeth Hughes, wrote, “Your heart was so big, your smile was contagious and your love for your wife and children was enormous. You were a wonderful father and husband and the love between you and Sarah was admirable. You did good my brother now go rest easy.”

Andy Schanding had been employed at UPS for one year. Before then, he spent 20 years at Stamler/Joy Mining in Millersburg. He was born on December 11, 1974, and graduated from Nicholas County High School in 1994. According to the obituary published by his family, he enjoyed farming, karaoke, throwing darts and working on small projects. He was by all accounts a well-respected and liked worker, and his family has included employees at both Stamler/Joy and UPS among the honorary bearers at today’s funeral.

No information has been released by company management, the Teamsters union, the coroner’s office or the federal government’s Occupational Safety and

Health Association as to how or why Schanding was fatally injured. The Teamsters Local 651 has not returned a request for information or comment from the *World Socialist Web Site* and has not published any statement, besides a brief Facebook post linking to the family’s obituary.

Andy’s sister Elizabeth told the *Herald Leader* that he was always highly conscious about safety, both on and off the job. She said Schanding’s supervisor at UPS told the family that Andy was known at the plant for being cautious and always wearing his safety harness. He was wearing the harness when he was killed.

Andy’s brother in law, Tim Dixon, himself a former UPS employee and now an autoworker in Kentucky, told the *Herald Leader* that employers “squeeze every nickel” out of workers. “Companies are greedy,” he said. “That’s when mistakes are made.” Dixon added that Andy enjoyed his job. “I never saw anyone who loved to go to work as much as he did.”

Thousands of UPS workers are injured or killed in workplace accidents every year due to relentless company demands for speedup, facilitated by the Teamsters union, to maximize profits.

The day after Schanding was killed, UPS released its quarterly profit figures, showing a 20 percent year-on-year increase in third quarter profits to \$1.5 billion. The company is on track to record a \$7 billion profit this year. This money, enough to give every UPS worker around the world a \$20,000 raise, will be passed on to investment funds and the billionaire financial parasites who control them, in the form of stock buybacks and dividend payouts. In the past twenty years, UPS has increased its dividend-per-share

payout four-fold. It will hand over \$3 billion in dividends in 2018.

The atmosphere of management harassment and intimidation in the warehouses has increased following the the Teamsters' October 5 decision to defy the 54 percent "no" vote by UPS workers on its sellout four-year labor contract backed by management. Workers in hubs across the country report that the company has been inspired by the Teamsters' gangsterism to go on the offensive.

Schanding's death is not an isolated incident. On a GoFundMe page set up to send money to Andy's family, one worker, Lisa Hayes, commented, "A fatality almost happened at our facility due to a conveyor." The *WSWS UPS Workers Newsletter* has spoken with hundreds of other UPS workers across the country over the past four months. Without fail, every worker has a horror story of an injury to themselves or someone they know.

In Rockford, Illinois, Lily, who earns \$13 an hour and is attempting to raise three children with her husband, told us how a co-worker, who had received little training, had her finger ripped off by a rapidly moving box on the sorting line.

In Tennessee, Sean, a 32-year-old permanent part-time UPS worker, told us how his wrist tendon was torn trying to lift an overweight package. He was sent to a company-approved doctor, who proscribed anti-inflammatories and instructed him to return to work with a brace. Only five months later was he able to get the surgery he needed, and he has permanently lost range of motion in his arm. He is now living on poverty-level workers' compensation payments trying to support his baby son and wife.

In Ontario, California, Irene, a 36-year-old porter of 10 years, revealed that workers are becoming dizzy and have to leave work early due to the polluted air in the warehouse. The fumes are caused by welding as part of ongoing construction work to install new, more highly-automated equipment. Many workers have become sick, including pregnant women workers on the line. Last year, Irene said, a 22-year-old worker had a seizure, fell on his head and was killed.

Such conditions exist only because the Teamsters functions as an arm of management and suppresses workers' grievances and concerns.

At the Blue Sky Parkway UPS Freight hub, also in

Lexington but separate from the facility in which Andy Schanding was killed, an explosion in May injured two workers. A propane torch reportedly set off the explosion of tanks of acetylene (a gas used for welding) on a truck and trailer parked in the hub. The two workers who were hospitalized and six other workers in the vicinity were lucky to escape with their lives, having been sufficiently far away when the explosion occurred.

Every year, thousands of workers are killed on the job in America's industrial slaughterhouse. The most recently-available government data, from 2016, reports 5,190 workers killed on the job, up by 7 percent from the year before. Another 50–60,000 workers die from occupational diseases, including Black Lung and cancers caused by workplace pollution. This means an average of 150 workers die every day on the job.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>