

activists serve as facility representatives, on local executive boards, regional and national committees, and in numerous other capacities to guide NATCA on aviation and workplace safety issues, legislative affairs, finance, communications, constitutional matters, and such.

“It is on their shoulders that we have built our successes,” Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin says.

NATCA’s first national president and executive vice president walked into a largely empty office, hired staff members, bought furnishings and fax machines, and launched the union into flight. As the organization grew, its leadership evolved, too. Each subsequent administration adroitly adapted to the times and carried NATCA forward.

In 2000, the union moved into its own seven-

floor headquarters in Washington. The spacious building is a far cry from the cramped quarters it had leased across town at the offices of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association in 1987. Working conditions there were so tight that NATCA’s director of labor relations conducted business from a converted closet in the president’s office.

While NATCA rose from the ashes of its predecessor, the new union has charted its own course and achieved unique successes. Even so, both organizations trace their roots to very similar motivations and ideals.

1. Related by Jerry Tierney and Paul Williams during interviews in February 2002 and March 2001, respectively.