



# LIONS' CAN'T-MISS PICK

Oregon offensive lineman Penei Sewell is the right choice, Dave Birkett says

SPORTS, 4C

ON GUARD FOR 189 YEARS

# Sunday Free Press

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## ENTERTAINMENT, 1D 'Minari' offers some lessons

As bias against Asian Americans grows, Oscar nominee has heartwarming message.



## BUSINESS, 1B Everybody into the pool!

Swim school Goldfish, started in Birmingham, is expanding nationally.

## HOUSE ENVY, 8D A fairy-tale house for \$3.5M

Fine French Normandy in Birmingham updated with theater, wine cellar, gym.

## METRO, 4A Pontiac mayor off ballots

Deidre Waterman failed to submit six campaign finance reports on time.

## Infection totals

Michigan: 17,289 deaths, 819,320 cases  
U.S.: 571,905 deaths, 32,040,606 cases  
World: 3,095,018 deaths, 146,042,160 cases  
(As of 8 p.m. Saturday)  
Sources: Johns Hopkins University and state of Michigan.

## Inside today's Free Press

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## Weather

High 55° | Low 36°  
Sun, clouds. Forecast, 2A



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## AMID MICHIGAN'S THIRD VIRUS WAVE, THE SAME SAD STORIES



Dr. David Vandenberg checks on the comfort of John Collins, 84, of Milan, last Tuesday as Collins recovers from COVID-19-related symptoms at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti. PHOTOS BY MANDI WRIGHT/DFP

# 'Most of them ... THEY'RE SCARED'

Many who are being hospitalized now are younger, unvaccinated, and some of them are seriously ill

Kristen Jordan Shamus  
Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK



Andrea Kanerva, 59, of Hamburg Township, still regulates her breathing as she speaks from her bed in the COVID-19 unit at St. Joseph Mercy. She was waiting for her release from the hospital.

Andrea Kanerva sat on the edge of the bed with her hair pulled up, exposing the ties of her blue hospital gown. Fuzzy green socks with white treads covered her feet.

She spoke deliberately, breathing deeply as the lines on the monitor behind her danced up and down, graphing fluctuations in Kanerva's pulse, blood-oxygen level and respiratory rate.

Kanerva, who lives in Hamburg Township and works as a service adviser for Briarwood Ford in Saline, is part of Michigan's third wave of novel coronavirus patients — hospitalized at the height of a surge that for weeks has led the nation.

"There were days when I thought I was turning around a little bit and then I went right back down. It's been a long struggle," said Kanerva, who tested positive for the virus on April 7 and was hospitalized nine days later.

See **VIRUS WAVE**, Page 22A

## UAW was close to a takeover: He saved it from feds

Gamble has navigated union past its crisis of corruption

Phoebe Wall Howard  
Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Rory Gamble had early dreams of making the pros as a defensive tackle, but his father suggested a good job in the factory when it was clear NFL recruiters wouldn't be calling.

No one ever expected that the welder repairman from Detroit one day would be in a position to help save the influential UAW labor union from ruin.

Gamble, 65, went from keeping an assembly line running years ago to keeping the nearly 400,000-member organization running today as a man drafted to be president during a crisis of rampant corruption and criminal convictions.

In a series of wide-ranging interviews with the Free Press, Gamble and others, including the former U.S. Attorney who took on the union, and top leaders of the Detroit Three automakers talked about Gamble's role in steering the UAW during its darkest moment, a situation more tenuous than many may have realized, and its prospects for the future.

The UAW came close to losing control of the entire operation.

"I gave him the benefit of the doubt and that ended up working well," said the former U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of

See **GAMBLE**, Page 10A



UAW President Rory Gamble stands in front of Local 600, where he first joined the UAW in 1974 as a welder fixture repairman at the Ford Motor Co. KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/DFP

## After Chauvin verdict, what can fix policing?

Better training, ditching facial recognition software, more, proposed

Frank Witsil  
Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The rare verdicts — Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. — against a former police officer in the three-count murder trial of George Floyd in Minnesota have prompted calls for police reforms from activists, state attorneys general, and even the president of the United States.

What happens next depends on how Michiganders — and Americans — come together after a year of violent protests and an election in which many people seem so politically far

## Inside

• Tapes show chaos at scene of teen's death, 9A

• Opinion: Too many officers automatically fear Black men, 35A

## apart.

But coming together is part of the challenge, said Watoii Rabil, an assistant professor of criminal justice at Oakland University. But true change, he added, must go beyond policy reforms.

Some people also are waiting for Derek Chauvin's sentencing.

"I hope the sentencing fits the crime, but I don't believe the sentence is going to," Frederica Turner, a 58-year-old Dearborn resident, said. "Nope I don't. Not in

See **POLICING**, Page 6A



A mural in memory of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd is seen in a parking lot at the corner of East 8 Mile Road and John R Street in Detroit on Friday. RYAN GARZA/DETROIT FREE PRESS

## COVER STORY

Michigan, Matthew Schneider, who led the years-long corruption prosecution of more than a dozen UAW and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles executives for theft and bribery.

"We could've gone in and taken over the union for 25 years like the Teamsters case, but that wasn't needed," Schneider said, referring to a government takeover of the other union some 30 years ago. "It would've branded all the union members, the workers them-selves, as corrupt. But the workers were not corrupt."

Critics predicted the high-profile prosecutor would use the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) to take over the UAW for years. The federal law, created in 1970 to fight organized crime, allows for prosecution and civil penalties for a pat-tern of ongoing criminal enterprise activity.

At issue was whether the extensive pattern of financial corruption displayed by two former presidents of the UAW, Fiat Chrysler executives and others would end up unraveling the organization.

"There was an underlying undercurrent in this case whether or not I would charge the union with RICO, whether that should've been done," Schneider said.

"We could've certainly done that. But just because you have the power to do something doesn't mean you need to or you should," he said. "I decided it wasn't necessary. I could accomplish the goal without hitting the workers over the head with a hammer."

Instead, they negotiated. In the end, Schneider and Gamble agreed to a settlement that includes oversight by a federal monitor for six years and to allow members to decide whether to alter the union constitution and allow for direct election of top leaders rather than the longtime delegate process.

The case against the UAW is considered among the broadest involving union corruption in U.S. history because there have been so many guilty pleas, and two were made by presidents.

"I thought Rory was very thoughtful, very serious and it was also clear to me that he cared about the union," Schneider said. "I didn't perceive this was a job he particularly wanted, and he decided he needed to do this. It wound up working to the best advantage of the union."

### Taking the helm in crisis

Even Gamble looks back at how things have unfolded in disbelief.

Having just emerged from a six-week strike on General Motors in late 2019, UAW board members reached out to Gamble and asked whether he would take control of what had become an epic disaster.

Then-President Gary Jones was stepping down after having his home raided earlier by agents from the FBI and the Internal Revenue Service, and the organization was rudderless.

Gamble was shell-shocked. He had no intention of seeking the top job, and he was in the middle of contract negotiations as vice president of UAW-Ford.

"I came in under a lot of adversity," Gamble told the Free Press this month. "When the board first approached me about taking this on, it was on the very morning that I was preparing to present the 2019 Ford agreement to my leadership team from all across the country at the TCF Center. I was already under pressure that day."

People said Jones was going to step down, take leave, Gamble needed to fill his shoes.

"That was extreme pressure. Later that Sunday, I got a call from the Rev. Horace Sheffield III, whose father was a former union representative" and a top civil rights aide to legendary UAW President Walter Reuther, Gamble said. "He congratulated me. And I didn't even think about the African American piece of it. At that point, it hit me. 'How do I save my union?' The first thing I did was spend two days with legal to try and get an accurate update on just what we were facing. I have to stress, I was never fully made aware of all the things the government was looking at."

Former presidents Dennis Williams and Jones, neither of whom had history in Detroit, had disgraced the union. And Gamble was a trusted go-to man after serving on the board since 2006.

"We had some weak accounting systems in place. I feel good that they've been correct-

ed," he said. So much has been done behind the scenes involving procedure, dismissal of employees and other measures the board supported, he said.

"Corruption begins in the heart," Gamble said. "I worked with Dennis. I worked with Gary. We're all human and we're all susceptible to human frailties. What you have to do is do a constant self-assessment of what you're doing when you're put in charge of other people's lives. You protect dues money and carry on the fight for families. I see some people letting themselves get away, because you get a lot of people playing up to you."

News reports at the time said Gamble himself was under investigation.

"People who really knew me did not believe it, even though it was reported over and over again. It was a ridiculous scenario being reported," he said. "But it made me go harder. As a Black man in America, I knew, and this is a shame, really a shame, as a Black man in this country, I knew when I stepped into this role I would be subject to skepticism. It knocked me for a loop that I was subject to an outright lie."

Gamble is the first Black leader of the UAW.

"As an African American union representative, my dad told me, 'You have a responsibility to your members to carry yourself appropriately so you can keep the door open for your brothers and sisters,'" he said. "I felt it was an affront to my credibility to help uplift my brothers and sisters of all races."

Schneider told the Free Press, "I can tell you at the conclusion of this case, when Rory and I stood up at the podium, at that time I didn't have any hesitancy standing by his

side."

### Ambitious agenda

No one is suggesting Gamble will be on Easy Street anytime soon. Skeptics remain.

"It's a dark time in our history that personally saddens me. It saddens me that people got comfortable in what they were doing and kind of lost sight of what the mission was," said Bernie Ricke, president of UAW Local 600. He represents nearly 30,000 active and retired members from the Rouge plant.

"It's just been a very challenging period. We have the combination of investigations, convictions, the pandemic, the whole industry shifting from internal combustion engines to electric and that could have huge implication on people we represent. All these things going on and life-changing technology," Ricke said Wednesday.

Gamble is the right person for the right time, said Ricke, who has known Gamble since forever. "He's at the end of his career. A lot of people would not have stepped up at this point in their lives. But he had to right the ship. And he didn't have a lot of time to do it."

### Time to heal

Rick Callaway of Flint, a conveyor attendant working at the GM CCA Parts Division in Swartz Creek, has been a UAW member since 2016. He said rank-and-file members are cautiously optimistic about the union's future but being stung takes time to heal.

Assembly workers say Gamble is a good person but everyone is apprehensive and watching to see how things unfold, Callaway said Thursday. "Everybody is still trying to feel him out and figure out what's happening to the union as a whole."

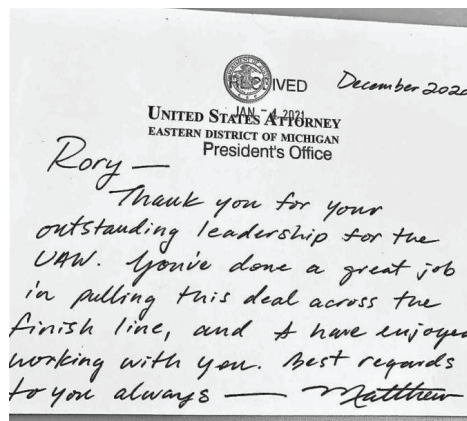
The strike was brutal and Gamble has been instrumental in moving things forward, Steve Gruener, president of UAW Local 659 in Flint, said Wednesday. "He stepped in during a tumultuous time and gave great leadership. The UAW has done a good job at holding companies accountable during COVID and keeping members safe."

### Mary Barra weighs in

Holding companies accountable involves collaboration and trust. Gamble has personal cell numbers for CEOs of top auto companies, and they have his.

"Rory is a person of extremely high integrity," GM CEO Mary Barra told the Free Press. "When he says he's going to do something, he does it. I would say he understands the business as well as I do. We get right to the issue and right to the opportunity."

After the national strike, the UAW established a "complete reset" to move forward,



Then-U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider sent UAW President Rory Gamble a letter in December after the two men arrived at a resolution of the UAW inquiry. It is framed and hanging in Gamble's home now. PROVIDED BY RORY GAMBLE



COVER STORY

Gamble

Continued from Page 10A

Barra said.

"Rory is a strong leader, a person I have huge respect for," she said. "He is a person of high integrity, not limited to the union or the auto industry. He's also very accessible. We have each other's cellphone numbers. We can just text each other. Nothing has to sit or simmer. It's a very constructive relationship."

She added, "One of the things that really impressed me about Rory, when COVID hit, he was instrumental personally in pulling autos together to develop the right safety protocols that allowed us to go back to work — protecting lives and livelihoods. He brought all the companies together. We weren't competing on safety. We were sharing best practices so we could all do the right thing for the people."

While Gamble is known to fight for members, he has a gentle approach. He never makes the fight personal, and he's pragmatic. He understands that when the companies make money, so do the workers.

Deep pockets

While the UAW is known for its strong presence in the automotive industry, the union continues to expand into legal, higher education, gaming, hospitals and scientific research. College campuses have been a consistent growth area for the UAW, as new members point to new contracts with improved wages and workplace safety protections. The University of Connecticut spoke favorably of UAW goals and discussions. Membership remained steady in 2020 despite COVID-19 and other challenges.

Dues from all members helped fuel the strike fund in its time of need.

The Strike and Defense Fund balance in 2020 was \$790 million, up \$51 million. UAW net income for the year was \$12.7 million, up \$1.2 million, based on data provided to the Department of Labor.

Bill Ford: Building trust

What sets Gamble apart from others is his commitment to building trust and communication all year, every year, not just during contract talks, said Bill Ford, executive chairman of Ford Motor Co.

"If Rory agrees to something, you don't have to write it down. That makes it really easy," Ford said in an interview Monday.

"The other thing I very much appreciate about working with Rory is that we can go off the record very quickly and easily and give each other background and how we see the situation. I know it's going to stay with him and he knows it will stay with me. An executive at an auto company doesn't always know all the different pressures a union leader is facing and doesn't always appreciate those pressures."

It's easy to be with Gamble because he loves to laugh, Ford said.

When laying out the issues and the future, Gamble gets it.

"Rory is tough. We've disagreed on a lot of things but it's never personal," said Ford, who has worked with labor affairs for 40 years. "You build trust when things are quiet. Trust carries over to negotiations."

This minimizes confrontation. "When you actually do get into negotiations, if you don't know the person at the table across from you and the trust isn't there, you have no idea when they say they can't go any further, is that negotiating or true? If a person looks you in the eye and says, 'Look, I can't do this,' you have to know them and trust them and be able to believe them."

Ford noted that Gamble has worked hard to build trust with GM and Stellantis after working with Ford for decades.

Ford CEO Jim Farley told the Free Press, "Rory is a special leader. His dedication to the American worker ... his integrity and problem-solving are exceptional. As well, his devotion to his family and community is something I respect deeply."

Gamble has spoken publicly about burying his granddaughter, a nursing student, at age 21, and the effort to find substance abuse treatments for UAW families.

Stellantis: Tireless

While Barra and Ford have worked closely with Gamble for a longer period of time, Mike Manley, Head of Americas at Stellantis, has developed similar observations about the union leader.

"Rory has been a pioneer. During his term, he has steered the union through challenging and unprecedented times, which includes a global pandemic and our recent merger with Groupe PSA," Manley said in a statement Thursday.

"Rory has a reputation for being a problem-solver, recognizing the business needs and constraints, but with an eye toward finding solutions. ... Rory is respected as a trade unionist, advocating tirelessly for his mem-



UAW President Rory Gamble stands near a monument that memorializes the Hunger March and the five lives lost that day at the Fort Street Bridge Park in Detroit. The incident served as a catalyst in the creation of UAW during the Depression. Gamble says he is a humble leader who believes in working together. He was named president by the International Executive Board until the June 2022 UAW Convention. KIMBERLY P. MITCHELL/DETROIT FREE PRESS

bers. His unwavering commitment and passion for the automotive industry, for the UAW and all of its members, for which he himself has been a member of for 47 years, is unmistakable and a true testament to his character."

Detroit roots

Being from Detroit may play a role in Gamble's approach.

"The UAW has been prominent in Detroit. It's more a part of everyday life and part of our lives growing up," Ricke said. "Rory's dad worked at Ford and was a union rep. My dad worked at Ford. We've families that are fifth-generation Ford workers."

Gamble's son and nephew work for Stellantis now.

When to hold, when to fold

An easygoing approach spilled into how Gamble handled federal officials during reform negotiations last year. He didn't fight or criticize the government or suggest the investigation was off base, as his immediate predecessors had done.

"He realized that wasn't the correct approach. We had all the cards; he had none," Schneider said. "The amount of corruption was pretty staggering. Workers were on strike and they were receiving a small fraction of pay for what they'd normally be getting paid. At the same time, you had leadership of the union out drinking thousand-dollar bottles of booze. They were living so extravagantly at the same time they pledged to defend and support workers who were struggling so badly. It really made me mad."

Schneider, an appointee of President Donald Trump who stepped down from his position in January as is routine during a change in administrations, said he was "in-furiated" by what investigations revealed.

"I've worked in a factory in Saginaw and I've driven a forklift truck," he said. "I was not a unionized worker but having been a worker for many years, I understand the (union) perspective and appreciate it."

Lately, feedback has been positive from union and nonunion workers who took notice of COVID-19 protections advocated by the UAW. Gamble has a punch list of other priorities for the future:

- Focus on new joint-venture partner-

ships in electric vehicle technology, where unionization isn't automatic, organizing new sites as needed. "Some of these companies don't have good track records."

- Reassess labor organizing strategy in light of the recent loss at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama, organized not by the UAW but the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. Focus on highlighting successes brought by union membership. Don't assume people know.

- Support Tesla workers and monitor. "Tesla workers are missing out on so much because they're not organized. They're being treated unjustly. It has a chilling effect when they start firing people."

- Improve support for LGBTQ workers who may face obstacles in the workplace.

- Be receptive to new organizing opportunities as workers reach out for support

The UAW said the Biden administration includes labor leaders in policy discussions regularly to share ideas and concerns, and Gamble has been on personal calls with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

"When I became president, even during the pandemic, I never heard a word from the (Trump) White House on what was needed

to protect workers," Gamble said. "Even though they were pushing the Big Three to get back to work, not one phone call about what was needed for protection. The previous administration was pushing to get back to work but not doing anything to protect Americans. I think that's an unconscionable sin we should never forget."

A new era

Anti-union tactics around the country have gone unchecked by federal authorities for awhile and that has effectively suppressed union activism when workers need it more than ever, he said. Things will change under the new administration, Gamble predicted.

Bigger, better, stronger

The UAW is here to stay, Gamble promised.

"Even though we had a bad cloud of corruption hanging over our heads, we did well for our members. We delivered the contracts, maintained our influence in the American elections process, protected our members," he said. "I committed that I would deliver a clean union. I've done everything I said I would do. I took on hard decisions. I took actions on staff. I just thank God."

Stepping into the role, his meetings with the U.S. Attorney came "on the heels of a lot of broken promises" from predecessors, Gamble said. "I understood the skepticism. I could not go into the meetings empty-handed. I put in his hands four pages of reforms up in place and running. We took time to go through each and every thing. I really appreciated that. It could have went in a very bad way."

His term ends in the summer of 2022. "My dad moved out the way so younger progressive leadership could move up," Gamble said. "I'm really assessing my role now. I believe in that concept. We're facing things now where we need to have someone who's going to have a footprint in the office for a long term, so everyone knows this person is going to be there."

One thing matters, he said. "All we have to do is the right thing and we'll be OK."

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Gamble's father, Bob Gamble, at the 1986 UAW convention in Anaheim, Calif., was a Ford factory worker. PROVIDED BY RORY GAMBLE