

Students join workers in fight for global justice

Luis Adolfo Cardona tells the story about his kidnapping by Coca-Cola death squads in Colombia

[Fadhel Kaboub](#) Apr . 19 . 2004

Students and labor activists from the Kansas City area will gather on Monday April 26 at noon in the Alumni Room of UMKC's University Center.

Among the speakers will be Luis Adolfo Cardona, a Coca-Cola Union leader forced to flee Colombia and Tara Widner, United Steelworkers' Staff Representative and an organizer of the Miami Free Trade protests.

According to the Colombia Action Network (C.A.N.), a network of grassroots activist organizations from around the United States, Luis Adolfo Cardona is a Colombian trade unionist that Coca-Cola death squads kidnapped and threatened to kill.

C.A.N. reports that on Dec. 5, 1996, a paramilitary death squad came to the Carepa bottling plant and shot dead lead union negotiator Isidro Gil. Luis Adolfo Cardona was kidnapped later that afternoon, but escaped and was forced to flee his home and eventually his country.

C.A.N. also reports that "the paramilitary death squad burned down the union hall of the food and beverage workers union... Then Coca-Cola Management printed up a letter of resignation and forced all the union workers to sign it."

Mr. Cardona was brought to the U.S. under the protection of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center. He lives in Chicago with the aid of the United Steel Workers of America and a retired steel worker's family hosts the Cardona family in their home. Mr. Cardona has spoken at many colleges and schools across the United States about the Coca-Cola boycott and stopping Plan Colombia, the \$1.2 billion dollar U.S. Government war plan for Colombia.

Steve Morrow and Tara Widner from the Kansas City office of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) see this event as an opportunity for students to join Labor's fight for jobs and global justice by becoming an individual member of the United Steelworkers.

"By joining the Steelworkers and becoming an Associate Member, students will have resources from an organization that has led the fight to protect out-sourcing of good jobs through bad trade deals, fought for human rights globally, and will keep fighting bad legislation that affects everyone in their work place," said Mr. Morrow.

Mr. Morrow told the Kansas City Aurora that by joining the Steelworkers, students will have access to the USWA staff for job related issues such as workers' rights in the work place, workers comp, as well as safety and health issues. Moreover, through the USWA benefits, "students will receive immediate savings on health, legal services, education, home mortgage and a long list of other programs that can benefit you."

The event is co-sponsored by USWA Associate Member Program, the UMKC Institute for Labor Studies, National Lawyers Guild-UMKC, the UMKC Economics Club, the UMKC Students for the Social Science Consortium, the UMKC Zeta chapter of Omicron Delta Epsilon, and SWAGS.

For more info visit:

[Columbia Action Network](#)

[United Steelworkers of America](#)

[Omicron Delta Epsilon International Honor Society in Economics UMKC Chapter](#)

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