GLASS & METAL ALLIANCE

# TUREKA DIXON

FTI INSTRUCTOR & AGMT CERTIFIED GLAZIER

# SPOTLIGHT

## On Tureka Dixon:

**Title** Journeyperson Glazier with Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc. (Philadelphia, Pa.)

**Hometown** Wilmington, Delaware

**Family** Sons Denzel (17) and Blaize (6); mom Theresa

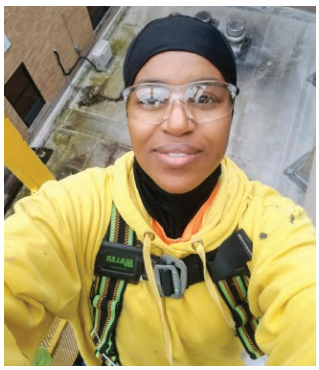
**Favorite TV Show** This is Us

**Fun Fact** Tureka writes poetry in her free time.

## ABOUT TUREKA

When Tureka Dixon tells new people that she's a construction worker, they often remark, "But you're so small." "So what," she answers with a laugh. She has worked as a union laborer and glazier, building a reputation for poise and hard work.

Tureka grew up in Boston before relocating to Delaware where she graduated from Brandywine High School in Wilmington. After she earned a degree in Psychology from University of Phoenix, Tureka found herself doing payroll for a construction company in Boston. When she observed that crews in the field made more money than she did, she investigated becoming a construction worker. She joined LU421 in Boston as a laborer, where she worked steadily until the 2008 financial crisis. After a series of layoffs, a friend suggested Tureka become a glazier. The friend had attended a brief training session installing glass panels. "That's NOT all it is to glazing," Tureka remarked, but she immediately enjoyed the new line of work. When she moved back to Delaware to be closer to family, she transitioned from her Boston union to LU252.



## ENJOYING THE CHALLENGE

"I like to be challenged," explained Tureka. "Each [glazing] system has its own little differences. You have to think. Your brain is constantly working. You're literally using all of your muscles – body and brain." Tureka flexes her muscles as a Journeyperson Glazier for Eureka Metal and Glass Services, where she has been employed for three years. Every day offers something different, from curtainwall and storefront to glass railings and interior framing systems. She doesn't mind a bit, and in fact, prefers the variety to remaining on a single job site for weeks at a time. Most recently, Tureka has worked on glass replacements.

*At left: Tureka on the job for Eureka Metal & Glass Services*

*Left to right: Tureka with her sons Denzel and Blaize at her 2014 graduation, Tureka with her mom Theresa, and Tureka with her sons*

The Eureka team affirms that Tureka excels at any challenge given. "Tureka is spot-on with her abilities in glazing," said Glazier Foreman Jeff Tufner. "I would have Tureka on my crew any day."

## FAVORITE PROJECT

Tureka's favorite project involved construction of two structurally glazed subway entrance pavilions beside Philadelphia's City Hall. Undertaken while she was employed with APG International, the Dilworth Park Pavilions were built of 5,000 square feet of laminated structural glass without frames or supports. Although she only spent three weeks on the project, Tureka was amazed at the end results. "That job was a wow. It's also one that you can ride by and see. It was different and special."

## EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES

Since she didn't become a glazier until her 30s, Tureka embraces every opportunity presented by LU252. After earning her associate degree as part of the apprenticeship program, Tureka continued her studies to earn her Bachelor of Science in Construction Management from the National Labor College in 2014. Last year, she became one of the second group of Philadelphia glaziers to earn the prestigious Architectural Glass and Metal Technician (AGMT) certification. The third-party credential affirmed her safety and skills in glazing via rigorous written and field evaluations.

Tureka also teaches material handling and stairways and ladders as a part-time instructor at the Finishing Trades Institute. She enjoys the privilege of working with young glaziers and even high school students. She advocates for the long-term career benefits glazing offers, such as healthcare, annuity, and pension, but she also endorses the craftsmanship inherent in the job. "Glazing is definitely a skill you will be amazed with," Tureka describes. "Some projects, you can't believe it once it's done." The opportunity to be part of completing that work is both meaningful and rewarding.

## CENTERED BY FAMILY

Tureka's life revolves around her family: 17-year-old son Denzel, six-year-old son Blaize, and her mom Theresa. "My mom is my rock. She plays a very important role in helping me maintain my career," Tureka says. Theresa arrives to Tureka's house each morning at 5 am to help the boys get ready for the day, before leaving for her own full-time job. "It's a blessing that I have her." COVID-19 has prevented the family from their typical summer enjoying amusement and water parks. Instead, they have shifted to hiking at Brandywine Creek Park and playing basketball at home.

## WHAT'S NEXT

The uncertainty of COVID-19 has left many union craftworkers questioning their futures. Tureka shared her perspective on the pandemic during an interview with *The Hill* in late March. Temporarily laid off at the time due to construction shut-downs, Tureka was vocal in her support of working men and women and for government to balance the safety of roughly 11 million construction workers with stimulus efforts that provide meaningful provisions. Watch her interview on YouTube.

"I work with some great girls and guys and it's just a sense of family," she describes. "I don't think you get that in most work settings. And it's not only glaziers but also the other trades that you see on jobs." Tureka's experience has been positive. Now back to work safely, she's cautiously optimistic about her future.