

P R O F I L E

DEREK MILLER

DEREK MILLER immigrated to Hamilton, Ontario from Guyana in December of 1974. While in Guyana he was a teacher and a member of the Guyana Teacher's Association. Upon arriving in Hamilton, Derek was employed by Dominion Glass where he was an active member of the United Glass and Ceramic Worker's Union. He participated in the local Labour Day celebrations. In 1982, Derek was hired as a correctional officer and became a member of OPSEU. In 1999 he joined the Coalition of Black Trade Unionist, an international labour organization fighting for the rights of black workers globally.

Holding offices of Steward, Chief Steward, Secretary/Treasurer, President of his local from 1987 until 1994, Derek served to further the issues that directly affected his co-worker and the union as a whole. Some of the issues he tackled included facial hair in the Ministry of Corrections for black workers, the excess statutory deductions of gross pay and Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Policy (WDHP) complaints.

Derek has taken an active role in the fight for equal rights. He has served as an MDT Human Rights Officer, presented

briefs to government Ministers – the first local president to do so, and even fought off successfully a lawsuit for raising these issues in the press. While serving as president of his local, Derek was successful in having the Ministry of Corrections appoint a special mediator/investigator to look at the labour practice in the workplace.

As a correctional worker Derek experienced various forms of discrimination which he fought using the Health and Safety Act, the media, the grievance process and the Labour board itself. In 1994, Derek received a commendation from the Ministry for his assistance in training others on anti-discrimination and anti-harassment in the workplace.

As a rank and file activist, Derek campaigned and won a seat on the 1995 OPSEU Executive board. Serving on the board from 1995 until 2001, Derek strived to mobilize and empower the membership to tackle the issues that were important. He used open communication for both the good and the bad, hailing successes and learning from the losses. He was part of the campaign to have a non-discrimination clause enshrined in the OPS collective agreement.