

Health & Safety in OPSEU: A historical note

In 1975, discontent with government's handling of workers' occupational health and safety reached a climax which contributed to the Davis government losing its legislative majority in the elections of the year. During the minority governments of 1975-1977 and 1977-1981 the government was forced to introduce legislation to strengthen workers' rights. As a result of a vigorous campaign by OPSEU members the government was also compelled to accept opposition amendments which extended coverage under the Occupational health and Safety Act to the public sector.

In 1989 the Liberal government proposed amendments to the Act that initially offered few improvements for the protection of public sector workers. Once again OPSEU members mobilized to force changes to the amendments that resulted in expanded rights for public sector workers.

In the years since public sector coverage was won, OPSEU has responded to members' needs in many ways. Our health and safety officers provide education, advice and research into workplace hazards. Surveys and studies of hazards that affect our members have been conducted. Public hearings were held to force an indifferent government and employer to listen to us. Many gains were made in this way for the protection of our sisters and brothers from such hazards as working alone, job related stress, asbestos, poor air quality, radiation and repetitive strain injuries.

But we have had tragic losses too. Members have lost their lives while serving the public due to inadequate health and safety laws that should have protected them. We will mourn for our dead and continue to fight for the living.

OPSEU is committed to labour's fight for further reform of the health and safety laws of this province. We demand full rights for all our members, proper enforcement of the occupational Health and Safety Act and full coverage under the law for all workers in Ontario.

— Leah Casselman, President

Outstanding Local

1. At each annual convention an award is given to the local which has made the most outstanding contribution to the advancement of our members' interests in the area of occupational health and safety.
2. The local to receive the award will be decided by the Executive Board.
3. Nominations of locals for consideration for the award must be received in the President's Office **by Monday, January 8, 2007**.
4. Nominations may be made by any Board Member, or by any staff member (only through the President).
5. Nominations must include a brief statement indicating the nature of the outstanding achievement for which the award is warranted.
6. No Executive Board Member whose local is under consideration may vote on this award.

Outstanding Individual

1. At each annual convention an award is given to a member who has made the most outstanding contribution to the advancement of our members' interests in the area of occupational health and safety.
2. The individual to receive the award will be decided by the Executive Board.
3. Nominations of individuals for consideration for the award must be received in the President's Office **by Monday, January 8, 2007**.
4. Nominations may be made by any Board Member, or by any staff member (only through the President).
5. Nominations must include a brief statement indicating the nature of the outstanding achievement for which the award is warranted.
6. No Executive Board Member may vote on this award if he or she has nominated a candidate for the award, or if a candidate from his/her local has been nominated.

To arrange for nominations, contact one of your Executive Board Members.

Previous OPSEU Health & Safety Awards

Year	Outstanding Member	Outstanding Local
1984	Tom Menzies (awarded posthumously)	Local 251
1985	Muriel Ethier & Ken Thibeau (joint winners)	Local 546
1986	Marie Paynter	Local 306
1987	Robert Anwyll & Ken Armstrong (joint winners)	Local 329
1989	Jack McCarty & Jack Boulaine (joint winners) Special Awards: Ministry of labour Inspectors in Memoriam, Ian Harris and Donald Contant	Local 321
1990	Darryl Ford Special Award – Russ Ransome (awarded posthumously)	Local 728
1991	Gord Armes	Local 580
1992	Roy Bonner & Rick Lemieux (joint winners)	Local 413
1993	Mary Lumb & Gary Deschaine (joint winners)	Local 340
1994	Lisa Sinclair	Locals 351 & 352
1995	David Erskine, Local 114 Marjorie Martin, Local 203 Ron Lavigne, Local 431 Bill Playter, Local 329	Local 738
1996	Ken Armstrong, Local 102 Boysie Ramcharitar, Local 526	Local 359
1997	Nick D'Aurizio, Local 241 Keith Bates, Local 241	Local 241
1998	Mary Lou Heidt, Local 151	Local 436
1999	Marg Saltern, Local 337	Corrections Division
2000	Bob Arnold, Local 431	No nominees
2001	Terry Lee, Local 143	Local 310
2002	Nancy Labadie, Local 133	No nominees
2003	Mary Long, Local 216	Local 468
2004	John Lewis, Local 331	Locals 575 & 581
2005	Ianthe (Violet) Stringer, Local 448	No nominees
2006	Brian Wilson, Local 317	Locals 560 & 561

OPSEU Health and Safety Awards

**Deadline for nominations:
January 8, 2007**

