

IN SOLIDARITY PRESENTS

Day 1

# CONVENTION UPDATE

April 20th, 2006

## OPSEU honours Dr. David Suzuki

**S**pirit, dedication and ideals rooted in social justice exemplified Stanley Knowles. He was one of Canada's best-known and most-respected opposition MPs. His dedication to justice for all made him influential across all party lines. OPSEU annually recognizes individuals, or groups who exemplify the spirit, dedication and ideals of Mr. Knowles.

Dr. David Suzuki is this year's recipient of The Stanley H. Knowles Humanitarian Award.

Suzuki is Canada's preeminent science broadcaster. He also carries a global reputation as a geneticist, professor, public lecturer, and an environmental and civil rights activist.

He is best known as the long-time moderator of the highly successful CBC TV science magazine show, *The Nature of Things*.

It is widely recognized that *The Nature of Things* surveys the scientific landscape through a critical, humanistic lens. Such an approach has increasingly lent itself to investigations of controversial contemporary issues of social importance. Whatever one's opinion of

Suzuki's views, however, it would be safe to say that he remains the voice of popular science on the Canadian airwaves.

Over the years, Suzuki has delivered more than 500 lectures around the world, has received no fewer than 11 honorary university degrees.

Suzuki's many honours include being named Outstanding Japanese-Canadian of the Year in 1972, winning a Canadian Human Rights Foundation Award in 1975 and a Governor General's Award for Conservation in 1985. Named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1976, Suzuki has claimed several Gemini and ACTRA awards for his broadcast works.



## Rainford Jackson Education and Development Fund

### Coalition of African Canadian Community Organization

The Coalition of African Canadian Organizations is an ad-hoc group of community organizations that have come together to respond to issues of concern to the African Canadian community as a whole and more specifically the current issue of youth (gun) violence. To date the Coalition is made up of 30 organizations serving the Black Caribbean and Continental African communities.

They have met with the Prime Minister, Premier of Ontario and Mayor of Toronto and discussed their Action Plan. All three leaders have agreed to attend a high-level Summit which will most likely be held in Spring 2006. At the Summit, participants will agree on the mid- and long-term strategies to be employed to provide sustainable, lasting solutions.

The Coalition is attempting to move quickly to develop and implement an aggressive anti-gang and anti-gun intervention and prevention strategy to stop the killing.

This award honours a former board member who died too young. Rainford Jackson was a Region 1 activist with a strong interest in education and human rights.

## Honourary Life Members

### Stephanie Blake

Sister Stephanie Blake served as local president for 15 years and played a key role in organizing Ryerson University into OPSEU.

She was an EBM, PWC member, and helped establish the first local human rights committee. She is a former Sector Chair of Universities and was an active member of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council.

### Edna Bowes

Sister Edna Bowes began her career in the Ministry of Government Services in 1972. In 1986 she sat on the OPS Bargaining Team representing the OAG group. She participated in and rallied support behind many campaigns including Schedule 6 and Pensions.

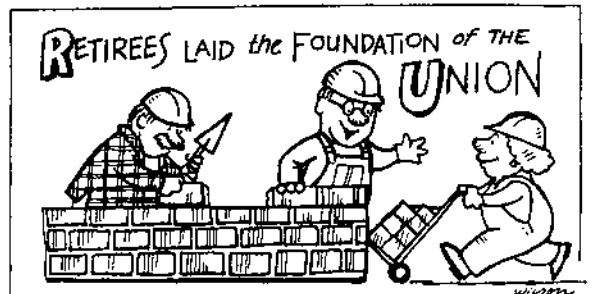
Edna was elected as EBM and sat on the Pension Committee and promoted education for stewards throughout her region.

### Ethel Birkett-LaValley

Sister Ethel Birkett-LaValley served as OPSEU local president, chair of the MNR ERC team, and Region 3 EBM V.P.

For ten years she served as Secretary-Treasurer of the OFL and was Canada's highest-ranking aboriginal unionist. Ethel became the first Aboriginal Vice-President of the CLC.

She was also dedicated to her local community, serving as councilor, reeve and mayor of Airy Township for 24 years, and a vice-president of the Association Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).



# Human Rights Awards

## Peggy MacDonald fights for equity

As president of Local 433, Peggy was instrumental in winning a significant award at arbitration. It required the employer to pay to have ALL their managers receive a one-half day of training from the Human Rights Commission and was also ordered to provide the same training to the sisters and brothers in her local.

She forced the employer to re-write their harassment policy and have it posted in all worksites, declaring the employers commitment to a harassment-free workplace.

With regard to accommodation, modified work and return to work issues, Peggy and her local now have full voice at all modified work committee meetings.

Sister MacDonald also negotiated to have violence in the workplace language placed into the Ongwanada OPSEU collective agreement.

## Local 506 in the forefront representing members rights

In 2005, Local 506 took a lead role in tackling equity issues confronting its members. The local consists mainly of MTO enforcement

officers, driver improvement staff and administrative support staff.

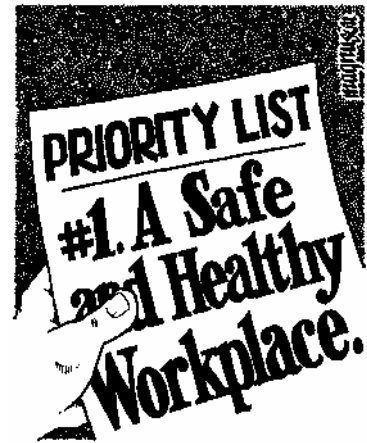
Despite the geographical challenges, it set up an e-mail network and local website to communicate with its members. The enhanced

communication enabled the local to enforce their contract vigorously at all locations.

They took on the task of representing individual members who have been subjected to harassment and discrimination by managers at the workplace .

Through grievances, the Ministry of Transportation was required to change its policy when accommodating pregnant employees who wear uniforms, as well as modifications of uniform equipment. The ministry was also ordered to re-train their managers in their responsibilities under the *Human Rights Code*, and the way accommodation is provided at the workplace.

Currently, Local 506 is at the forefront in representing a member's right for religious observance when the employee's spouse or partner is of a different faith.



## Health & Safety Awards

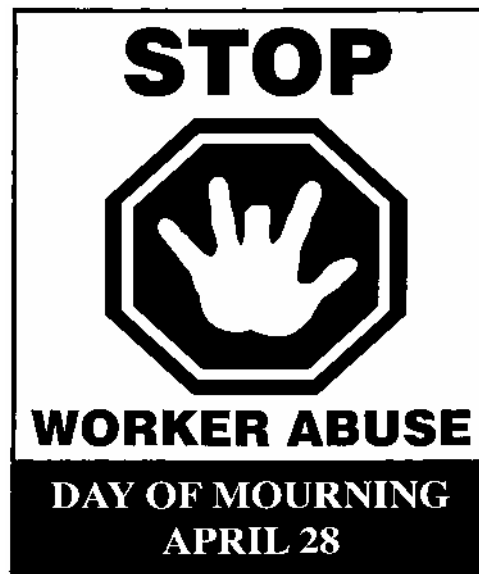
### Brian Wilson honoured for years of dedication

Brian Wilson, a Probation and Parole Officer, is mostly known for his role as a member of the Community Corrections Health and Safety Representative on the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Provincial Occupational Health & Safety Committee.

With Brian Wilson at the lead, members achieved \$1.6 million for ergonomic upgrades in every P&P office in the province. More than 1,100 staff saw rapid improvement in their workstations and their health.

He co-chaired the Review of the Safety and Security Policy Procedures, negotiated a Community Visits Risk Assessment for Probation Officers, and participated on the MERC P&P Workload Sub-Committee.

Brian was OPSEU's representative on the development of a valid Workload Measurement Tool, a member of the Workplace Violence Policy Committee, and when SARS hit he led the development of the Infectious Diseases Best Practice protocol.



### Determination pays off for Locals 560 and 561

Through the cooperation and dedication of both locals, they were successful in getting Seneca College to agree to install AEDs (defibrillators) and to provide training in their use.

The two locals worked together through their Occupational Health and Safety Committees, with petitions, newsletters and Convention resolutions to achieve this resolve. It is truly a life-saving achievement.

Brought to you by *IN SOLIDARITY*

This is the thirteenth year that the editorial committee of *In Solidarity* has produced the daily updates. We will provide a record of Convention events and happenings.

**Who we are:** Len Mason, Local 737; Laurie Sabourin, Local 368; Larry Farr, Local 559; Karrie Ouchas, Local 340; Mandy Dumais, Local 680. Ex-officio members are: James Tocker, Executive Board Liaison and Don Ford, OPSEU Communications.