

## SGEU to hold youth forum

SGEU members under 35 will have an opportunity to voice their opinions, share ideas, address the challenges they face, and work together to achieve meaningful engagement at a new, upcoming Young Workers Forum, Oct. 17-18, in Regina.

Dipa Bharadwaj, SGEU Education Officer, announced the youth forum yesterday at convention, affirming SGEU's commitment to empower young workers, which will contribute to a stronger union now and in the future.

The forum will provide a platform for young SGEU leaders and members to engage in dialogue about issues affecting them. It will also provide an opportunity for SGEU leadership to share ideas and advance a young workers' agenda into union priorities.

"The forum will adopt participatory methods to discuss opinions, encourage participation, and engage people in dialogue. Activities will include keynote speakers, panels, and open groups. Experienced union leaders and young activists will also offer expert perspective on various themes," explained Dipa.

You can help us promote this exciting forum by sharing it with your locals and bargaining units, and by encouraging young members to register at [SGEU.org](http://SGEU.org). The youth are our future, and we are happy to have an engaged group of young workers leading our union forward.



Photo: Steve LaVallee's granddaughter, Dace.



## Time for action

Unions across Canada are under attack with the election of right-wing provincial governments, Larry Brown, President of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) told delegates yesterday.

However, Larry reminded delegates that even though unions have their work cut out for them, an engaged membership can push back on these attacks.

"This is not a time for complacency, but vigorous action," he said.



## SFL solidarity

SFL President Lori Johb congratulated SGEU for our accomplishments and the important services our members provide across Saskatchewan.

In her new role, Johb is building relationships. "I believe we can get the most done for workers when we work together," she said, noting there is still progress to be made on raising the minimum wage and workplace health and safety.

Johb invited SGEU members to continue attending SFL events, participating in campaigns, and helping build solidarity.

## Indigenous VP resolution makes SGEU a leader

SGEU reaffirmed its commitment to reconciliation yesterday when delegates passed a resolution to create a position for an Indigenous Vice-President of the union, making SGEU the first public sector union in the country to do so.

The Indigenous VP will be elected in 2021 and will play a vital role in reaching out to Indigenous communities across the province.

Another notable resolution that passed involved enhancements to the internal dispute process to address member-against-member complaints.

This resolution allows for internal disputes to be handled more timely and strengthens the union's transparency and accountability. It also ensures that investigations and hearings are conducted according to the principles of natural justice.



## Audrey Yaremy

In 1980, Audrey Yaremy began working in the health care system and became a steward in SGEU two years later. That started her many years of leadership and activism in the union, working under six SGEU presidents including Jim Hayes, Barb Byers, George Roseneau, Barry Nowoselsky, Doug Blanc and Bob Bymoan.

"I'm grateful to so many people – so many great trade unionists – who had such a big influence on my life while I was active in my union," said Audrey, reflecting on her time as a member of SGEU.

Anyone who meets Audrey isn't surprised to learn she was a key activist in the Pro-Public Sector Campaign during the Grant Devine Progressive Conservative government throughout the 1980s when the labour movement was in for a real fight. She was there organizing and participating in many of the important town hall meetings, rallies and marches around the province and has vivid memories of the many times the legislature was stormed in protest of the government's regressive actions that targeted working people.

In addition to spending several years on negotiating committees, provincial council, provincial executive, and various standing committees, Audrey also represented SGEU at the SFL and NUPGE. She was instrumental as chair of the Health Sector in leading SGEU through the restructuring of the health system during the Romanow and Calvert provincial government administrations, including winning several representation votes between SGEU, SEIU and CUPE during very turbulent times.

Through her years of involvement, Audrey made many friends, acted as a mentor to a wide variety of members, and helped guide the union through some very turbulent times. Colleagues describe her as loyal, tenacious, hard-working and energetic. She has always been someone who didn't shy away from a challenge and lived up to her commitments.

Last night, she was awarded a life membership. "Becoming a life member of SGEU makes me feel proud of what we accomplished together and my role in the work we did," Audrey said. "It's so nice to be recognized for my involvement over the years."

In January of 2006 Audrey moved in to a new role in the union, as a Labour Relations Officer for SGEU, and retired at the end of 2018. Congratulations on becoming a life member, Audrey, and thank you for all you've done for the union and our members.



## Vern Stobbs

Vern Stobbs worked in the health care system since 1984, starting at Parkland Care Centre in Melfort. He served as a steward for most of his career, always supporting his colleagues and standing up for the rights of working people.

Vern was active in the former SGEU branch structure, and served on negotiating committees including for Parkland Care Centre and during the first SGEU Provincial bargaining structure with Wascana Rehab and Lakeside. Vern was on the campaign committee that actively worked throughout the Dorsey representation vote, which was a very challenging time.

Elected to the SGEU LTD Supervisory Committee for several terms, Vern took his role very seriously because he knew how important it was to support members with long-term disability issues to have a fair hearing of their situations. He cared and took action to make working conditions better for all employees as a member of the OH&S committee.

Although he retired in 2011, Vern was soon reemployed and was still an active SGEU member at the time of his passing in November, 2018.

Last night, he was honoured as a life member of SGEU. Wendy Simonson grew up in the same community as Vern and accepted the award on his behalf. She smiled as she was asked about Vern and said he was someone who made a difference, and made life better for people, whether it was at his job, in the union, or in his community.

"Vern was so very proud to be a union member," Simonson said. "It really meant something to him."

Those who knew Vern will agree – he was a solid union member, a great mentor and a good friend to many. He will be missed.