



GOOD NEWS:

WORKER OVERCOMES INJURY TO GRADUATE TO BETTER JOB

The morning of November 4, 2004 began like any other Thursday for Sheila McCrea. The then 42-year-old quality control technician clocked in at the production facility where she worked and exchanged greetings with her colleagues, preparing for another day. After six years on the job, McCrea was experienced and accustomed to physical labour. But no amount of experience could have prepared her for the life-altering consequences a routine task would cause her that day. While lifting a 27 kg box, McCrea felt a snap in her back that instantly dropped her to the floor.

"I don't know what happened, I didn't do anything different than any other time," she told the co-workers who rushed to her aid. Within minutes, McCrea realized the severity of her situation, as pain shot down her back and left leg as she was helped to her feet. After reporting the incident to her supervisor, McCrea went to the hospital, where she filled out a *Form 67*. After her examination, she was told to stay off her feet for a few days.

McCrea tried to return to work three days later, but the pain proved too much. Unable to stay on her feet for even a half day, she returned to the hospital, setting a trend for the next 18 months. No treatment worked. Pain medication made her groggy, steroid injections did little, and physiotherapy often seemed to make the pain worse. It wasn't until months later that X-rays and an MRI revealed she had two herniated discs in her lower lumbar spine, as well as sciatica (symptoms caused by compression of nerve roots giving rise to the sciatic nerve). She was scheduled for surgery in June 2006, which was still months away.

With it looking more and more like she'd never be able to return to life on the floor, she used the time before her surgery to upgrade her office skills through online courses offered by the community access centre. McCrea was successful, as was her surgery, and she was thrilled to rejoin her employer as an administrative assistant in November 2006, two years after the injury.

But her sense of accomplishment was cut short in April 2007, when she was notified her position would be phased out by June. McCrea recalled frustration.

"I kinda went through a phase, but I had a talk with myself, because I didn't want to get into a rut. I knew that could be the end."

Recognizing her aptitude for office work, McCrea's WorkSafeNB rehab specialist, Jeff Curtis, recommended she pursue retraining in the field, based on her attitude and work ethic.

"The best I could hope for is that other clients and stakeholders realize that this approach



Sheila McCrea

taken by an injured worker can and will lead to ultimate success, despite injury and subsequent limitations," he said. "It is obvious that Sheila only needed a hand up, not a hand out."

After researching her plan to go back to school, the issue of funding remained. McCrea, drawing on her resourcefulness, suggested to Curtis she apply for Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits (CPPD) while recovering from surgery and for the duration of her retraining, something Curtis called paramount.

"I am confident that the costs associated with training would not have been able to be considered for approval."

In June 2007, McCrea enrolled in the Executive Medical Office Assistant program at CompuCollege. She didn't let the fact she hadn't seen the inside of a classroom for over 20 years dissuade her, and finished at the top of her graduating class with a 97% average. She also won a distinction award for excellence in her program.

In March 2009, McCrea was hired on as a casual at the Cancer Registry in Saint John and picks up occasional shifts at the hospital in neighbouring Sussex. The experience has given her a new lease on life, both mentally and physically. She began

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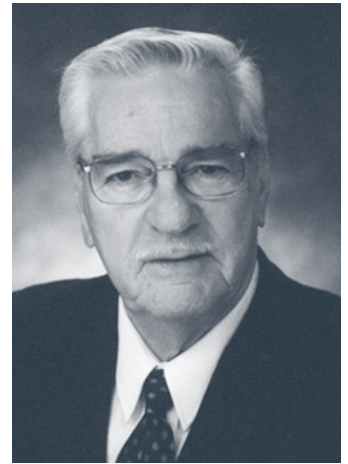
Save the date!

WorkSafeNB's 30th Annual Health & Safety Conference
October 17-19, 2010
Delta Beauséjour, Moncton, N.B.

WATCH FOR OUR NEW CAMPAIGN!



WORKSAFE NB FONDLY REMEMBERS FORMER CHAIR



Raymond P. Campbell

WorkSafeNB is saddened by the recent death of Ray Campbell, a former chair of WorkSafeNB's board of directors. Campbell served as chair from 1999-2001, when WorkSafeNB was known as the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC). In fact, before his time as chair, Campbell was involved with the initial study that examined and eventually led to the amalgamation of the former Workers' Compensation Board and the Occupational Health and Safety Commission that became the WHSCC.

Before joining the WHSCC board of directors, Campbell had served as deputy minister of Labour and Manpower, deputy minister of Social Services and secretary of the Treasury Board. He gained considerable experience working with both worker groups and employers throughout his career.

Shortly after his appointment as chair, he told WHSCC News that he took on the role because of his passion for working with people. "My first love is working with people. I love examining issues, coming up with solutions and implementing them. That was especially true when I was with the Department of Labour, so when the opportunity as chair presented itself, I couldn't resist," he said.

Roberta Dugas, current chair of WorkSafeNB's board of directors, served as a member representing the general public during

Campbell's chairmanship. "Having worked with Ray as a member of the board, I will always remember his communication skills, his great knowledge, his compassion for injured workers and his great respect for people," Dugas said.

Donna McNeill, a labour relations officer with the New Brunswick Nurses Union also served on the board of directors with Campbell. "There were many things I appreciated about him," McNeill said. "For one, he was always a gentleman. Even when we disagreed on issues, he demonstrated the belief that strength lies in differences, not in similarities. I appreciated the fact that he was very much a family man, and I always felt he had a great deal of compassion," she said.

Pat Darrah, president of the Saint John Construction Association, also served on the board of directors with Campbell. "Ray was very cognizant of the little guy. He was interested in everybody's views and always made the time to talk to anyone – it didn't matter who you were. He always made sure nobody got left out," Darrah said. "He worked for the good of others...all through his civil service career. One example is the *Employment Standards Act* – he was instrumental in raising the standards for workers in New Brunswick."

As board chair, "Ray was very inquisitive," Darrah said. "He always ensured he had all the information

he needed to make informed decisions, and to make sure things were done in an orderly, well-organized fashion."

"He was just a great guy," Darrah said, a sentiment that is shared by all those that knew Campbell.

Doug Stanley, CEO of WorkSafeNB, said he had many work associations with Campbell over a period of 40 years. "Ray laid the foundation for what the organization has achieved through his commitment to establishing a sound governance policy," Stanley said. "Ray was truly a distinguished public servant who did a lot for workers and employers in New Brunswick."

When he joined the WorkSafeNB (WHSCC) board, Campbell said he hoped "to make New Brunswick a safer place to work." On behalf of all New Brunswick's workers and employers, we thank him for doing just that. Our condolences go out to his family and friends. •

EVENTS

Day of Mourning April 28

Canada's National Day of Mourning is a day to remember workers killed, injured, or who developed an illness on the job. Please call your local District Labour Council for the times and locations of events planned in your community.

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week May 2 - 8

NAOSH Week focuses the attention of employers, employees, the general public and all partners in occupational health and safety on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace and at home. This year's theme is "Safety & Health: A Commitment for Life! How Safe Are You?" For more on NAOSH Week, visit: www.naosh.ca.

Disability Awareness Week May 30 - June 5

This year marks the 23rd annual Disability Awareness Week (DAW) in New Brunswick. The theme is "Yes we can!" A variety of exciting activities and community projects related to the theme are being planned across the province. Regular updates on DAW events will be posted on the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons' website, at: www.gnb.ca/0048.

DAY OF MOURNING REMEMBERS THOSE KILLED AND HURT AT WORK

On September 22, 1971, Pauline Farrell set the table for two, like she always did, before heading to bed. Her husband, Bill Kelly, was working an overnight shift for NB Power and was scheduled to be home in time for breakfast.

Tragically, Farrell was awoken at 3:50 a.m. to devastating news that her husband was killed in an explosion at work. "The priest came to tell me what happened, and when he saw the two place settings, his eyes welled up with tears," Farrell said. "I was nearly six months pregnant, and my whole life came crashing down when I heard that Bill was dead."

On April 28, Farrell will be attending her local Day of Mourning ceremony in Moncton. She said she attends the memorial event every year to honour her late husband. Her daughter, who never met her father, attends the Saint John ceremony.

"This is an important event that every New Brunswicker should go to," Farrell said. "We need to gather together as a community to honour all workers killed, the same way we do for our veterans on Remembrance Day."

The Day of Mourning is an annual event initiated by the labour movement in 1984 to call attention to tragedies in the workplace and to improve workplace safety standards. April 28 was chosen as the day of remembrance because it was the

day the third reading took place for the first comprehensive *Worker's Compensation Act* (Ontario 1914) in Canada.

"I believe that remembrance is important. It allows us to express sorrow for the grief and suffering experienced by the victims, and their family, friends and colleagues – and it serves as a reminder that the work being done to improve workplace health and safety is far from over," said Roberta Dugas, chair of WorkSafeNB's board of directors. "It is also an opportunity to stand together and pledge to learn from these tragedies and work harder to reduce them."

Last year, 11,000 New Brunswickers were hurt at work and another 10 lost their lives in work-related incidents. Farrell said every workplace death brings back tragic memories. "After 39 years, my heart is still heavy and I think of Bill every day. I have so much to share with him. I can't even begin to explain the sadness his death has brought to my life, my daughter's, his family and his colleagues."

Every workplace accident, not just fatalities, impacts lives. Yves O'Brien was only 14 when he was severely burned while working at his father's garage. The combination of diesel fumes and a wood furnace created a bomb that threw him to the floor, lighting him on fire. His father grabbed him and threw him outside in the snow

to extinguish the fire. While the injury took a physical toll on O'Brien, he said the accident was very emotional for his entire family.

"I was in the hospital for three months and it took 22 surgeries to put me back together," O'Brien said. "Emotionally, the accident was tough. My dad blamed himself, but I know that without him, I wouldn't be alive. I'm so thankful."

O'Brien said he hopes the Day of Mourning will increase awareness and provide education to prevent workplace injuries.

WorkSafeNB encourages everyone to find a significant way to mark this important day such as a moment of silence, lowering your workplace flags to half-mast, or attending a remembrance ceremony. For more information on Day of Mourning activities, visit the WorkSafeNB website at www.worksafenb.ca.

Yves O'Brien



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walking on her lunch breaks, losing 50 pounds in the process and greatly reducing the stress on her back.

And just last month, Sheila was promoted to a permanent, Level 2 position with the Cancer Registry, further evidence that hard work pays off, Curtis said.

"It demonstrates that some may need to initially accept less than their ideal job when re-entering the workforce."

Today, at her Pearsonville home, it's sometimes hard for McCrea to believe that through all the physical pain, therapy and hard work, she transformed an ordeal into an achievement, a fact not lost on her husband, Jim.

"I'm very proud of her for being able to step outside of her comfort zone and continue with the retraining and to come out of it with great marks and an award," he said.

McCrea says that with a strong support network and the right attitude, anything is possible. "Give it your best, because we all have a different situation and a different injury to live with. Just put your best foot forward and reach for achievement." •

IN THE COURTS



AURELE BRUN, of Aldouane, N.B. pleaded guilty on March 2, 2010, to a charge of defrauding WorkSafeNB of more than \$5,000, by failing to declare earnings between July to December 2006. Brun was sentenced to two years probation and ordered to pay \$8,210.85 in restitution.

The **TOWN OF RIVERVIEW** was fined \$5,000 when they pleaded guilty on December 11, 2009 to a violation under section 9 (2)(C) of the *OHS Act* for failing to provide training and supervision to an employee using a chainsaw to cut pallets.

The worker suffered a laceration to the back of his leg as a result of the incident.

GRAND FALLS ROOFING INC., pleaded guilty on December 4, 2009 to an offence under section 49(1)(a)(i) of the *OHS Act* for failing to provide individual fall arresting systems for employees required to work from an unguarded work area more than 3 metres above the nearest safe level. The employer had been issued five stop-work orders in the span of three years. They were fined \$2,000, plus a \$400 victim surcharge.

NEW BRUNSWICK CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SAFETY BREAKFASTS

Nobody needs to explain the importance of workplace health and safety to Roy Silliker.

Having spent the last 22 years working in the heavy construction industry, Silliker has seen far too many workplace injuries. Wanting to stop these injuries led to his current position as the general manager of the New Brunswick Construction Safety Association (NBCSA) in Miramichi.

And with the North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week just around the corner (May 2 - 8), he finds himself kicking it into high gear. NAOSH Week activities include a series of breakfasts for JHSCs across New Brunswick, featuring health and safety discussions, and Silliker is one of a select few who have attended every one of them for the past 20 years.

"The breakfasts bring interesting speakers in and provide a chance to meet with others in the field,

to swap ideas and suggestions on how to improve the sector overall."

NAOSH Week evolved from the CSSE's (Canadian Society of Safety Engineers) Canadian Occupational Health and Safety (COHS) Week, which took place from 1986 to 1996. New Brunswick began celebrating the safety week in 1990, making 2010 the 20th anniversary.

NAOSH was conceived when labour representatives from Canada, Mexico and the United States met during the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) talks in the mid 90s. The CSSE was asked to expand its COHS Week into a North American initiative. The logistics for NAOSH Week were laid out between 1997 and 2000.

Silliker says the program has come a long way since the early 90s, when breakfasts and other activities were often limited to the province's

larger urban centres.

"Thanks to changing attitudes, innovation and especially the hard work of volunteers, we've experienced continuous growth. There used to only be breakfasts in Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton. Now they happen right across the province."

This year's theme is "Safety and Health: A Commitment for Life! How Safe Are You?"

"It's an important question people should ask themselves. Yes, there is an overhead cost, but safety improves morale and happier workers are more productive workers. As well, fewer lost time claims means a better bottom line."

For more information on NAOSH Week, please visit: www.naosh.com •

