



APRIL 28

# DAY OF MOURNING



April 26, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

## **National Day of Mourning, April 28, 2022**

Each day we benefit from the labour of thousands of essential workers who give large proportions of their lives to provide us with everything which makes up modern life, from power to textile. And every year, hundreds suffer injury or illness because of their working conditions. And some of these workers die on the job.

This year, we remember Unifor members:

Harvarinder Singh Powar, Local 101R  
Dan Sevcik, Local 199  
Charanjit Parhar, Local 111  
Marc Russell, FFAW-Unifor  
Joey Jenkins, FFAW-Unifor  
Marco Carretero Ovalle, Local 1999  
Lawrence (Larry) Kendall, FFAW-Unifor  
Arthur Manalo, Local 303  
Ron Karmody, Local 36-X  
Charles Ryan, UFAW-Unifor

They are not forgotten.

### ***"Mourn the Dead, Fight for the Living"***

The slogan for the Day of Mourning reflects the need to remember those who have lost their lives but also contains a strong reminder of the need to press for improvements in health and safety in our workplaces, ensuring that workers are protected from the workplace hazards that lead to preventable, needless deaths, serious injury or illness.

Today, many Canadians can name the virus that causes COVID-19. That virus is known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) which may result in serious respiratory illness and long recovery times. Thirty years ago, residents of Plymouth, Nova Scotia and surrounding communities learned that methane gas was the hazardous fumes that were allowed to build up in confined underground spaces and eventually exploded, killing 26 miners and injuring dozens more on May 9, 1992 in the Westray mine.

These catastrophic events though have so much in common. The lives of the families of those who were killed, injured and diseased (or made ill) in these and other workplace tragedies, change them immeasurably. They often feel let down by a justice system that takes far too long to establish exactly how their loved ones died, or the circumstances that led to them suffer life-changing injuries or illnesses and diseases.

Occupational health and safety laws across Canada require employers to take every precaution reasonable to safeguard workers. When this duty of care is not met, they can be subject to compliance orders and prosecution. But when this breach amounts to a wanton or reckless disregard for the lives and safety of workers resulting in death or bodily harm, justice demands more. The Canadian labour movement, and United Steelworkers union in particular, lobbied for 12 years to amend the Criminal Code which is embodied in Bill C-45, also known as the 'Westray Law', which was enacted in 2004.

Although we feel that there is a need for new or improved health and safety regulations in a number of areas, even more urgently, we feel that **enforcement of existing laws, including the Criminal Code Amendments, must be improved.**

On April 28, please take time to reflect on the service rendered to each of us by thousands of unseen workers who make up the workforce in our communities and who support the life we lead.

Let us collectively ensure that this year's Day of Mourning observances send a strong message to all governments and law enforcement agencies of their obligation and responsibility to strongly enforce health and safety laws and regulations. We need to tell our elected politicians that we want action and we intend to support only those who will give us this commitment.

In solidarity,



**Lana Payne**  
National Secretary-Treasurer



**Renaud Gagné**  
Quebec Director