



## **Moving Canada, Connecting the World: Unifor National Transportation Conference**

### **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

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#### **Len Poirier**

Elected National Secretary-Treasurer at Unifor's Constitutional Convention in 2022, Len Poirier formerly served as Assistant to the National President, Director of Road Transportation, and long-time National Service Representative.

Poirier first became a professional truck driver at Laidlaw Transport (Laidlaw Waste Systems) in 1986. Elected unit chairperson in 1988.

Poirier has served as Unifor's Road/Urban Transport delegate to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and has sat on the road section steering committee for many years. He is currently the Chairperson for Canada.

From 1986 to 1994, he was a member of CBRT & GW, co-founding the Road Transport Council which is recognized as one of Unifor's Industry Councils.

Poirier had been one of the longest serving Board of Directors under the Transport Health and Safety Association of Ontario (THSAO), and with the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association of Ontario (IHSA). In these roles, he has worked tirelessly to support the needs of the road transportation members of our union and the broader public as well.

Since 2008, Len has been involved or co-led national bargaining for Loomis Express and DHL with local unions from every province.

#### **Roxanne Dubois**

Roxanne Dubois is the Executive Assistant to Unifor's National President Lana Payne. In this role, she acts as the lead staff person responsible for coordinating the political work and campaigns out of the president's office of the national union. Previously, she worked as the union's Director of Strategic Planning and was assigned to the organizing department where she supported and planned strategic campaigns and special projects. She is a francophone community and labour organizer with roots in the student and social movements of Canada. Based in Toronto, she is an occasional writer and an avid reader.

## **Stephen Cotton**

Stephen Cotton is the general secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) – a global union federation of 665 trade unions representing 20 million workers in 147 countries in the seafaring, port, road, rail, and aviation sectors. He was re-elected to the position at the 44th ITF Congress held in Singapore in 2018.

Cotton joined the ITF in 1993 as the head of the agreement's unit in the maritime section. He was later promoted to the position of assistant secretary of the special seafarers' department (SSD), secretary of the SSD and maritime coordinator prior to his appointment as acting general secretary in October 2012.

Under Cotton's leadership of the ITF's maritime section, significant achievements were made that have positively impacted the maritime industry and bettered the lives of seafarers. Under his tenure, the ITF inspectorate expanded from 35 to 147 inspectors and contacts, and ships covered under ITF collective bargaining agreements increased to over 12,000 from less than 2,000. Cotton oversaw major Flags of Convenience (FOC) policy changes and led the introduction of 'Oslo to Delhi' and Mexico City policies, which laid the foundation for the landmark 2006 signing of the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) – establishing a set of international minimum standards enforceable by international law.

Throughout his career at the ITF, Cotton has sought to improve the operations of the ITF, focusing on building affiliates' power and streamlining the operations of the secretariat in order to make a real difference in the lives of transport workers and influence lead industry players in the transport sector. Under Cotton's leadership as general secretary, the ITF has transformed into a proactive campaigning organisation allowing the ITF and its affiliates to secure industry-leading contracts and protocols with key multinational companies in the transportation sectors, including aviation, maritime and road transport.

In 2014, Cotton received the United Seamen's Service (USS) Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award (AOTOS), the maritime industry's most prestigious award, in recognition of his work for defending the well-being and fair treatment of seafarers around the world.

Cotton is a trustee of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, the International Maritime Training Trust and serves on the United Seaman's Service governing body.

## **Sara Nelson** (*She / Her*)

Sara Nelson has served as the International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO since 2014, and she is currently serving her third four year term. She first became a union member in 1996 when she was hired as a Flight Attendant at United Airlines and today she represents 50,000 of aviation's first responders at 19 airlines. The [New York Times called her "America's most powerful flight attendant"](#) for her role in helping to end the

35-day Government Shutdown and InStyle Magazine placed her on their [Top 50 Badass Women list](#). [The New Yorker](#) profiled AFA and Sara's career in May 2022.

## **Christopher Garrod**

Christopher Garrod has worked in Canada's rail sector since 2001, getting involved in workplace health and safety very early in his career. Chris was first elected vice president of health and safety and legislative coordinator for Unifor local 100, in 2014. Representing workers in Canada's freight and passenger rail systems, he advocates for stronger workplace health and safety programs and improved legislation. He currently serves as chair of the Unifor rail industry council and is a member of Unifor's national executive board, representing the rail sector".

## **Jack Liang**

Jack Liang is a Digital Organiser at FIRST Union, Aotearoa New Zealand. FIRST covers private sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand, including transport, logistics and manufacturing. Jack works closely with Anita Rosentreter (Strategic Project Coordinator) to organise Uber drivers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Jack has an academic background in law and experience in community organising. She is passionate about drivers coming together to leverage their recent employee status court case win to secure and eventually go beyond their minimum legal entitlements and the implications this has for gig workers' rights more broadly.

## **Jason Woods**

Jason spent his adult life on the BC waterfront, first as a fisher, learning the struggles of maritime workers and through exposure to the militant UFAWA. He would go on to coastal tugboats and wrote his Transport Canada Captain's license. Jason knew he would spend his life fighting for safety, health, and dignity for seafarers. He serves as President of ILWU 400 Marine Section and General Workers and executive member of the ILWU Canada and VDLC Executive boards. Jason has led the fight against substandard tugboat operations, challenging government, and industry to improve legislation, regulations, and culture of the industry.

## **Lana Payne**

Lana Payne was elected National President in 2022, becoming the first woman to hold this leadership office.

Before her election, Payne served the union as Secretary-Treasurer from 2019-2022. Payne brings three decades of inspired leadership to workers, including through her previous position as Atlantic Regional Director. A proud feminist and activist, she found her home in the labour movement in 1991 with FFAW/CAW.

A former journalist Payne wrote a newspaper column for more than 20 years and was named one of Canada's 23 Bold Women of Vision.

As President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour she utilized her media experience to raise the profile of the labour movement and successfully achieved significant changes to minimum wage and labour laws.

Since Unifor's founding, Payne has advocated for stronger union and workers' rights, helped usher in paid leave for victims of domestic violence in the Atlantic Region and was a leader in the fightback against Nova Scotia's unprecedented attack on workers.

In her former role as Unifor Secretary-Treasurer, she co-ordinated Unifor's pandemic response, including the fight for paid sick days and stronger Employment Insurance, and navigated the union through a financial crisis.

### **Jennifer Murray**

Jennifer Murray is Unifor's Atlantic Regional Director, elected at the union's 2022 Constitutional convention.

Prior to her election, Murray served as the Atlantic Regional Representative to Unifor Local 4000.

Murray has served as Recording Secretary and Financial Secretary of Unifor Local 4005, and as a Shop Steward.

Her union training includes grievance handling, workplace leadership, human rights and women's activists, in addition to Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees.

Murray got involved with her union because she wanted to help people, saying the union does amazing work and she wanted to be part of that.

In her spare time, Murray enjoys spending time with family, especially her niece and nephews, reading, snowshoeing, and spending time at her cottage and with her cat Gus.

### **Taylor Bachrach**

Taylor Bachrach has represented the riding of Skeena-Bulkley Valley since 2019. Prior to entering federal politics, Taylor was a local leader in northwest BC for many years, first as municipal councillor in the Village of Telkwa and as mayor of the Town of Smithers from 2011 to 2019.

Taylor is passionate about standing up for rural communities and giving them the representation in Ottawa they deserve. Taylor is focused on fighting the climate crisis, pursuing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and improving rural services. This means creating good jobs in a just transition and increasing funding for infrastructure like rural internet and transit.

As the NDP's transport critic, Taylor serves on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. He has brought forward issues ranging from rail safety to maintaining regional air service in the North.

As a former small business owner and community advocate, Taylor understands the challenges facing everyday families in Skeena-Bulkley Valley, where he lives with his wife Michelle and their two daughters. Taylor spends his spare time enjoying the spectacular landscapes of the Northwest, canoeing, skiing and biking.

### **Bruce Snow**

Bruce started his Rail career in 1981 as a Carmen apprentice with CN and became active in the Labour movement in 1993, and has held positions in Health and Safety, Employee and family assistance, Local Chairperson, Vice President and President of Unifor Local 100 and was appointed as a National Staff Representative in 2012. Later in February of 2017, Bruce was appointed to the position of Unifor National Rail Director and 2019 as the Unifor Transportation Director. In 2022, National President Lana Payne appointed Bruce to the position of Assistant to the National Officers.

In his role as Assistant, Bruce oversees a broad range of Transportation Sector Bargaining, legislative matters as well Transportation focused Campaigns.

### **Blake Scott**

Blake Scott works as in-house counsel in the Unifor Legal Department in Toronto. He was called to the Bar of Ontario and the Bar of British Columbia in 2021, and articulated with the Unifor Legal Department prior to becoming a lawyer. Blake practices in the areas of labour, human rights and administrative law. During law school, he served as Executive Director of the Greater Vancouver Law Students' Legal Advice Society.

Blake holds a B.A. from the University of Guelph, an M.A. from Concordia University in Montréal, and a J.D. from the University of British Columbia.

### **Kaylie Tiessen**

Kaylie is an economist and policy analyst. She joined Unifor's Research Department in 2016 and is the research lead in aviation, aerospace, fiscal policy and macroeconomics. She also leads Unifor's efforts to understand and prepare for the Future of Work and supports pay

equity committees to do the math required to get women the compensation they deserve. Before joining the research department, Kaylie worked at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Ontario Office (Unifor local 567) and participated in Unifor's Good Jobs Summit. Kaylie loves kayaking. She spends her summer evenings on the lake and winter evenings dreaming about summer.

## **Jim Stanford**

Jim Stanford is Economist and Director of the Centre for Future Work. He divides his time between Sydney, Australia and Vancouver, Canada.

Jim is one of Canada's best-known economic commentators. He served for over 20 years as Economist and Director of Policy with Unifor, Canada's largest private-sector trade union (formerly the Canadian Auto Workers). He is quoted frequently in the print and broadcast media, and writes a regular column for the *Toronto Star*. He is also the Harold Innis Industry Professor in Economics at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada, and an Honorary Professor in the Department of Political Economy at the University of Sydney. Jim has also served for many years as a Research Associate and volunteer with the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#).

Jim received his Ph.D. in Economics from the New School for Social Research in New York. He also holds an M.Phil. from Cambridge University, and a B.A. (Hons.) from the University of Calgary.

Jim is the author of *Economics for Everyone: A Short Guide to the Economics of Capitalism* (second edition published by Pluto Books in 2015), which has been published in six languages. Stanford has written, edited or co-edited six other books, and dozens of articles and reports in both peer-reviewed and popular outlets.

He has provided research and advice through numerous federal and provincial government panels and inquiries on economic policy, innovation, jobs, and social policy. Jim is recognized for his ability to communicate economic concepts in an accessible and humorous manner.

## **Daniel Cloutier**

Daniel Cloutier was elected as Unifor Québec Director in April 2022. Cloutier first got involved with the union in 1989, during a labour dispute at Purolator that lasted four months. Upon returning to work, he was elected as a steward for Local 146 of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP), one of the founding unions of Unifor.

He served in various capacities, including as local president before being hired as a CEP service representative in 1997. Covering a broad range of sectors provided him the opportunity to work in several regions of Québec as well as in the rest of Canada.

Cloutier has led numerous negotiations, including several at the national level, resolved strikes and arbitrations, and worked in the Health and Safety department. He also served as president of the Canadian National Representatives Union.

Following the creation of Unifor in 2013, Daniel joined the Health and Safety Department, where he worked to make the Service de défense des accidentées et des accidentés du travail (SDAT) an effective tool for defending local unions and their members.

### **Wol-san Liem**

Wol-san Liem is based in South Korea and works for the International Transport Workers' Federation as Policy and Strategy Coordinator. Before moving into this position, she worked in the external relations and policy departments of the Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU) for over a decade. In this capacity she has worked to strengthen solidarity between Korean workers and the global labour movement and participated in or led several worker group delegations to the ILO tripartite forums on labour standards in the public sector and transport industry, including an Experts Meeting which adopted ILO guidelines on decent work and road safety in 2019. She was also elected as vice chair of the ITF Urban Transport Steering Committee and vice chair of the ITF Road Transport Section in 2018 and served in these roles until 2023. Before her work with KPTU, she was active in several labour and civil society organisations in both Korea and the United States. She received her BA from Colombia University in 1999 and her PhD from New York University in 2010.

### **Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue**

Dr. Jean-Paul Rodrigue received a Ph.D. in Transport Geography from the Université de Montréal (1994) and has been at Hofstra University since 1999, initially at the Department of Economics & Geography and then at the Department of Global Studies & Geography.

Dr. Rodrigue sits on the international editorial board of the [Journal of Transport Geography](#), [Transport Reviews](#), the [Journal of Shipping and Trade](#), and the [Cahiers Scientifiques du Transport](#). He is a board member of the [University Transportation Research Center](#), Region II of the City University of New York, and is a lead member of the [PortEconomics.eu](#) initiative as well as of the [International Association of Maritime Economists](#). Dr. Rodrigue was a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on the [Future of Manufacturing](#) (2011-2016). In 2013, the US Secretary of Transportation appointed Dr. Rodrigue to sit on the Advisory Board of the [US Merchant Marine Academy](#), a position he held until 2018. He is also the New York team leader for the [MetroFreight](#) project about city logistics. He regularly performs advisory and consulting assignments for international organizations and corporations and is interviewed by the media over transportation-related matters.

## **Gavin McGarrigle**

Elected Western Regional Director in 2019, Gavin McGarrigle was formerly the B.C. Area Director and served as a National Representative since 2006.

Active in many elections, McGarrigle oversaw the Unifor campaigns in 2017 and 2020 that led to a change in government and the subsequent re-election of the largest NDP majority in B.C. history.

He has opposed anti-union legislation in Manitoba and the anti-worker policies of Alberta's United Conservative Party and supported Unifor Votes efforts in the recent Saskatchewan and federal elections.

McGarrigle also worked as a union organizer and mobilized members to help achieve important legislative gains including single-step unionization in B.C. to allow workers to organize more easily.

He continues to press for a sustainable and inclusive foundation for B.C.'s forestry industry and for workers' voices to be heard in all sectors.

McGarrigle has been a leader on many picket lines to highlight the need for anti-scab legislation, including the Co-op Refinery lockout in Saskatchewan, and he continues to push for a nation-wide ban.

Born in Derry, Northern Ireland, McGarrigle has lived in British Columbia for more than 25 years.

## **Sari Sairanen**

Sari Sairanen is the Executive Assistant to the Secretary Treasurer of Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union representing workers in all economic sectors, including transportation, manufacturing, and natural resources.

Sari worked as the National Health, Safety and Environment Director for many years and continues to be responsible for protecting worker rights, promoting safe and sustainable work transformations while ensuring the health and safety of workers.

She has a passion for meeting people, learning their stories and building relationships in support of lasting, meaningful work adaptations for workers today and tomorrow.

Sari comes to the National union from the Airline division, which represents members from coast to coast to coast in Canada.



## **Bruno Dobrusin**

Bruno Dobrusin is a member of the Our Public Transport program at the ITF's Urban Transport Department. For two years he ran a just transition in urban transport project which focused on the effects of climate change on transport workers in major cities of the Global South and led to the just transition framework in urban transport at the ITF. He has worked at the crossroads of labour and climate issues for over a decade.

## **Krista Lee Hanson**

Krista Lee Hanson (she/her) is an 18 year full-time public transit driver working and living on the unceded and ancestral territory of the xʷməθkʷəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɪ (Tseil-Waututh) peoples and a proud active Member of Unifor Local 111. Krista Lee is an elected member at large on the executive of the Unifor BC Regional Council and the elected President of the Unifor Road Transport Council, representing the 24,000 Unifor members coast to coast to coast who move goods or people on the roads.

## **Paul Nagra**

Paul has over 35 years experience in the road transportation sector as an Owner Operator. He became a member of the CAW in 1995 at CN Intermodal and then a member of Unifor in 2014 with Harbour Link Container Services. In 2017, Paul became the Service Representative for the Vancouver Container Trucking Association (VCTA) Local. In 2020, Paul was elected as President of Local VCTA and was most recently re-elected President in 2023.

## **Ky Rees**

Ky Rees' pronouns are (they/them), and they sell their labour to Air Canada, giving them the happy opportunity to serve as the Chairperson of Local 2002's LGBTQ Equity Standing Committee as well as a delegate of Atlantic Regional Council for the same equity group; they are also a certified Health & Safety Trainer for the Federal jurisdictions and a proud Discussion Leader here in Port Elgin. When Ky isn't busy juggling their various hats, they're usually found elbow deep in some soil farming on their Homestead or tending their honeybee hives on the Indigenous Mi'kmaq (MIG-MAW) lands of K'taqmkuk (OOK-DA-HUM-GOOK ... aka Newfoundland).

## **Manon Camiré**

Manon's currently holds the position of Customer Sales & Service Representative, Montreal Reservations, at Air Canada. She was currently appointed as Human Rights Advisor for Unifor Local 2002 and is the Pay Equity Representative, representing Unifor on the Air Canada Committee. Manon has helped set up the Women's Advocate program for Unifor Local 2002 and held the position of Women's Advocate from 2011 to 2014. She assisted members facing domestic violence, made safety assessments, and conducted investigations involving allegations of sexual harassment. She was a union representative with Unifor Local 2002 from

1998 to 2020 and has promoted human rights and anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies, conducted investigations involving allegations of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and violence, and delivered training for members and leadership on workplace harassment and human rights. She has also represented members with disabilities, making sure they had the necessary accommodations they needed and has mediated conflicts between members. She acted as member of the Workers with Disabilities Committee, Quebec Council, and was also a discussion leader/facilitator for Unifor's National Education department, delivering training to members across Canada in all sectors including auto, telecommunications, rail, health care, and areas such as human rights, Women's Advocate Program, Women's Activist and duty to accommodate.

### **Paula Hurley**

Born & Raised in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, I come from a union family, my uncle being the former president of Local 64 up to his retirement. I've lived in 4 different provinces, from coast to coast in my life and experienced working in Airlines, Car Rental, and now Marine Transportation. I've been working with Marine Atlantic for 13 years, working in a variety of positions, but most recently as a Chief Storekeeper in the Passenger Services Department. I became involved in my local union activities a decade ago, as just a rank & file volunteer activist and took my first Union Education course, Women Activists in 2013 from there. In 2015, I volunteered to become my local's Health & Safety Representative, after taking the PEL H&S course and having the fire lit in me, I'd found my niche. I've been the H&S Rep for 8 years & counting, sitting on 6 different committees in that role, I'm also the Pay Equity Rep for our local on that Committee. I am the sitting 2nd Vice President, and have previously held the Recording Secretary position. In 2019 I began working with the Unifor Education Department as a Discussion Leader, primarily in Health & Safety. During the Pandemic, I decided to take an online university course, receiving my Certificate of Occupational Health and Safety in 2021, and I am currently working towards my CRST (Canadian Registered Safety Technician) certification.

### **Graham Cox**

Graham Cox is a labour union researcher at Unifor.

Previous to Unifor, Graham was a research and organizer at the Canadian Union of Public Employees. At CUPE his work focused on economic and policy analysis for the anti-privatization, trade, post-secondary education, utilities, employment insurance, special projects, and organizing files.

Before working at CUPE, Graham served the student movement as National Researcher of the Canadian Federation of Students and chairperson of the National Graduate Caucus.

**Navjeet Sidhu**

Navjeet Sidhu is the International and Social Justice Fund Director for Unifor, recently moving from the union's Research Department. He has long been involved in research and policy work in both the labour movement and community sector for 15 years. He has conducted research and has actively organized on issues relating to labour, income security, migration and anti-racism. He has been involved with a number of advocacy groups, campaigns and organizations, including the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, \$15 and Fairness, No One is Illegal, the Canadian Labour International Film Festival, and the Council of Canadians.