

**REPORT OF THE
WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
TO THE MGEU 65TH CONVENTION 2018**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Area 1	Carole Reid	Area 6	Danielle Rubin
Area 2	Shawna Lamb	Area 7	Carolin Brown
Area 3	Hannah Prodan	Area 8	Terry-Lyn Gagnon
Area 4	Jacqueline Paton	Chair	Terry Rear
Area 5	Penny-Anne Wainwright	Staff	Erin O'Hara, Staff Representative Lee Edwards, Staff Representative Christina Bielski, Administrative Assistant

2018 MGEU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The 2018 MGEU Women's Conference was held in Brandon from Sunday, April 15 to Tuesday, April 17, 2018. The theme of the conference was "Take a Stand – On Domestic Violence and Bullying in the Workplace".

158 women attended the conference. Many of the participants were first-time attendees, were new to the labour movement, or had limited exposure to activism.

The conference began on the Sunday evening with a speakers' panel on sexual assault (in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month). The panel featured Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Status of Women), Nahanni Fontaine (MLA for St. Johns and advocate for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls), and Dr. Corinne Mason (Associate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies and Sociology at Brandon University).

On the Monday, conference participants attended the following workshops:

- "Bully-Free Workplaces" - Presented by Susan Coldwell (Coordinator, Bully-Free Workplaces Program at Nova Scotia Government and General Employees' Union)
- "Domestic Violence in the Workplace" - Presented by Karen van Leusden (Outreach Coordinator, Willow Place), Laurie Bleeks (Education Centre Facilitator & Program Specialist, MGEU), and Samantha Probetts (Pension & Benefits Specialist, MGEU)

The conference concluded on the Tuesday morning with a speech by the members of the Women's Committee and a closing presentation by comedian Lara Rae (Artistic Director of the Winnipeg Comedy Festival).

Wellness Practitioner Claudette Durupt (Rainbow Bridge Alternative Health Centre) provided self-care sessions throughout the conference.

In addition, Grands 'N More Winnipeg (part of the "Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign" supporting grandmothers raising their own grandchildren and other children orphaned through the AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa) was on-site at the conference to sell their merchandise. Grands 'N More raised \$1160 through its sales at the conference.

Conference participants arrived with generous donations of baby supplies, toiletries, clothing and gift cards for the YWCA Westman Women's Shelter in Brandon.

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The National Day of Remembrance is commemorated in Canada each year on December 6. This is the anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre in which an armed man shot 28 people, killing 14 women, before committing suicide. The Manitoba Federation of Labour hosts a luncheon in remembrance of these women, and of those Manitoba women and girls who have lost their lives to violence.

The MGEU purchased tables for this event in both 2016 and 2017. MGEU Women's Committee members, MGEU President Michelle Gawronsky, and other MGEU activists attended this event at the Fort Garry Hotel. It was a time for us to remember and mourn the women and girls who have lost their lives to violence.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Members of the MGEU Women's Committee attended the International Women's Day Breakfast held at Union Centre on March 8, 2018. Featuring fresh cinnamon buns and a silent auction, this breakfast was hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress, the Manitoba Federation of Labour, and the Winnipeg Labour Council. Brothers from a range of unions were on hand to serve the breakfast, which was free for sisters and cost \$5 for brothers.

PRAIRIE SCHOOL FOR UNION WOMEN: SASKATCHEWAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Hosted annually in the spring by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour at Waskesiu Lake, Saskatchewan, this four-day school program is filled with learning and sharing in a supportive environment. At the school, women bond, develop leadership skills and build solidarity with their union sisters. The women who attend come from various unions, jobs, and walks of life. Sixteen MGEU women (eight in 2017 and eight in 2018) were selected to attend the school.

SAYING GOOD-BYE TO LEE EDWARDS

It was with great sorrow that the Women's Committee said good-bye to their long-time staff liaison, Lee Edwards. On May 8, 2018 Lee passed away after a short and brave battle with cancer.

Beyond the dedication Lee had for her family, she devoted her career and life to the betterment of others. Lee was a labour leader, a strong negotiator and a fierce fighter for advancing the rights and needs of her peers and union members.

The Women's Committee extends its deepest condolences to Lee's family, and would like to thank all MGEU staff members who assisted the committee during this difficult time.