

EWSC Advocate Award Committee

Re: Donna Zarowny  
CUPE Local 4799  
Wadena, Sask.

I would like to present the name of Donna Zarowny for the 2011 EWSC Advocate Award.

Donna is a member of CUPE Local 4799. She has held a position on the Negotiations Team for the past two rounds of bargaining with our employer, Horizon School Division. She is shop steward for her worksite at Wadena Composite High.

Donna began her CUPE union career in 1988. She was elected as Secretary-Treasurer. A mere two years later she became president of the local. In this role, she provided strong leadership for her members. She successfully merged her Lakeview local with the neighbouring Shamrock local as the two school divisions had amalgamated. With the ink barely dry, she led her newly formed local through a larger merger of six locals after the Ministry of Education mandated school division amalgamations. It was with this amalgamation, she became a member of the Negotiations Team. She was a valued member as she brought with her a strong spirit of determination. Her commonsensical view helped achieve our first Collective Agreement after some 21 grueling meetings with our employer. She was determined that her former local members would not lose any ground that they had gained walking the picket line.

This brings me to her former local's strike. After meeting with the employer over the course of 3 years trying to reach a successful conclusion to negotiations, she asked for a strike vote from her members. With, I am sure, a lot of fear and trepidation the members gave the strike vote. In April 2003, she led the charge on the picket line. From what I know, it took a lot of guts and courage, as in small towns feelings can run deep and actions of hostility can be displayed. But, anyone that knows Donna knows she will not back down from a cause she believes in. She provided strong leadership and endless support to her members that travelled from town to town picketing. They remained on the picket line some 144 days. This would have been a very difficult time for her local.

Donna was thrust into a situation that very few presidents ever have to endure. She stood strong for her union values and challenged the employer in a strike.

I am very proud to say that she is one of my union members and prouder still to call her my union sister and good friend. She is so deserving of this award and it is my hope that the EWSC Advocate Committee will bestow on her the EWSC Advocate Award 2011.

Respectfully submitted by:

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