

Expression of Condolence for James Clancy by Toronto City Council

Moved by: Councillor Mike Colle

Seconded by: Mayor Olivia` Chow

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of James Clancy, former OPSEU/SEFPO President from 1984-1990, and President of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) for 26 years, from 1990-2016. James passed away on April 2, 2024 at the age of 74.

A lifelong champion of public services and social justice, Clancy valiantly fought for decades against the forces of austerity, from the Thatcher-Reagan-Mulroney years in the 1980's to the present. During his years as OPSEU/SEFPO President, Clancy pushed the union to organize and expand throughout the Broader Public Sector, including paramedics, Children's Aid Societies, legal clinics, community colleges, child treatment workers, mental health and health care professionals.

Clancy was born in Kingston, Ontario, in 1950, to John and Joan Clancy, one of seven children. Clancy graduated from Carleton University in 1975 with a degree in political science, and joined the Ontario Public Service a year later. He immediately became active in Local 533, during a period of immense change in the union, as it had recently transitioned from the Civil Service Association of Ontario (CSAO) to the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) in 1975. By 1977 or 1978, he was elected as local president, in 1982, he was elected to the Executive Board, and by 1984, he was elected as President of OPSEU/SEFPO.

Clancy also met his life partner and mother of their three children, Debbie Champ, during this time. In an extensive 2016 profile by OPSEU/SEFPO's in Solidarity magazine, Clancy said that he learned plenty from her about feminism and activism during their years together.

Clancy is also remembered for his leadership in the fight against South African Apartheid, and advocating for the release of Nelson Mandela. His advocacy as the President of OPSEU/SEFPO was instrumental in the national fight to recognize and end apartheid in Canada and abroad. When Mandela walked to freedom in 1990, OPSEU recognized him with the Stanley Knowles Humanitarian Award – the union's highest

honour. This was just one of the many battles James Clancy and his team (including Skip Hambling and Warren 'Smokey' Thomas) fought, domestically and internationally, to advocate for issues facing everyday people, whether it was income inequality, workers rights, anti-discrimination efforts, and inclusivity.

He was predeceased by his parents, Joan and Jack Clancy, sister Ann Clancy, brother Mark Clancy, nephew Michael Wassill and niece Allison Macdonell. He leaves and will be greatly missed by his beloved wife Debbie Champ, and loving children Allison Miller (grandchildren Bernard and Isla Donnelly), Nicholas Miller and Alexander Miller, and his brother Michael Clancy (Margaret Ferguson), sister Julia Clancy, brothers Robin Clancy and Sean Clancy (Jennifer Clancy),and be greatly missed by his nieces and nephews.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to James' family.

April 17, 2024