May 13, 2020 |

Statements

In memory of Ralph McGinn, a champion for workplace safety

We're shocked and saddened to learn of WCB Chair Ralph McGinn’s passing on Monday.

For many years, he has been at the forefront of keeping BC workers safe on the job: from his work in the 90s as WCB’s VP of Prevention, to leading the agency as President and CEO, and most recently as the board chair. And before that, as chief inspector of mines, Ralph earned a reputation for uncompromising enforcement of worker safety.

He played a crucial role in creating the BCFED Health & Safety Centre, now the largest provider of health and safety education in the province. And his support for the Patterson Review and a more worker-centered workers’ compensation system holds the promise of making life better for thousands of injured workers.

It’s bittersweet to think that one of the last actions of the board Ralph chaired was to move ahead with presumptive coverage around the COVID-19 virus. It’s a fitting tribute to his legacy: a decision at once sensible and humane, done swiftly in the interests of fairness to workers.

There are countless workers alive today because of that legacy – not just in Canada, but as far afield as Australia, Africa and Latin America. And there are many workers who will go home safe tonight to their families because of the work Ralph did.

With Ralph McGinn’s passing, we have lost a strong champion for health, safety and justice for working people, and British Columbia has lost a great and dedicated public servant. To his wife Sherron, and his children Maureen, Sean and Jennifer, our heartfelt condolences. We are grateful for all Ralph did, and we grieve with you for your loss.

In solidarity,

Laird Cronk and Sussanne Skidmore