



Feminist: the new F-word?

I am a feminist who wears make up, shaves her legs and occasionally wears a push up bra.

Growing up the word feminist was greatly revered. My family's feminist history was significantly discussed and fussed about. From my great grandmother, Alice Dowler to mother, Noel Ekrol, I grew up in a world of strong, courageous women, who were not afraid to let their voice and opinions be heard.

Alice Dowler, my great grandmother, was born in Ottawa in 1867. After graduating high school, she went on to telegraphy school in the 1884. During her post-secondary education, she met and married my great grandfather, Zeb. In 1907 they homesteaded on the Alberta prairies with their nine children—a culture shock for everyone.

My Grandma Alice took up the fight for the Dower Act, working tirelessly for the right for women to inherit their husbands' property and to veto the sale or any other disposition of the family property.

This pioneering spirit moved from generation to generation.

My mother Noel Ekrol fought battles of her own, and did not care what others thought of her. During her younger years she often drove local kids' home from school who had been bullied..

The Itani's, a local Japanese family and the Derricksons, a local indigenous family, were recipients' of her courage.

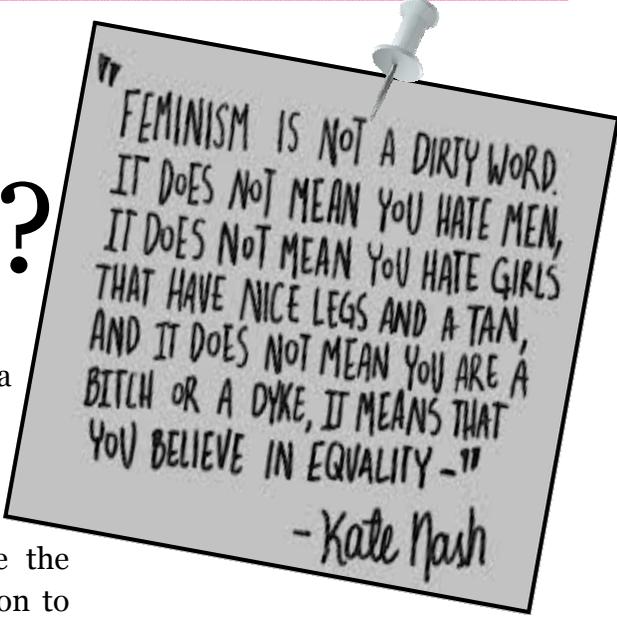
In 1963, my mother made the socially unacceptable decision to take her three kids and leave an abusive marriage; both my grandparents supported her decision.

Soon after, she opened a dry cleaning business and laundromat. Sometimes it was difficult for her as a woman, to be taken seriously. Often my Grandfather Neil helped out so she was able to get more things accomplished.

My mother taught me that I could fight like a girl and that was okay. Just FIGHT for what is RIGHT!

I also left a marriage when I had very small children. The tax laws surrounding child support payments became my rallying call. I was paying tax on the money I earned to look after my children and I also had to pay tax on the money my children's father earned. This seemed absurd.

I was on the board of our local women's centre and had the opportunity to challenge this law. I was invited to attend round table talks taking place across Canada. I went to the Ministry of Justice to say just how ridiculous



the tax laws were around child support payments.

Eventually they did change the tax laws; now the custodial parent is not taxed on the money they receive for child support.

There are still many injustices heaped on our sisters. We must not put down the gauntlet; we have many battles left to fight. Our sisters from the indigenous and immigrant communities need all of our support as they challenge this government.

— Holli Hudson

Inside this issue:

Emily Murphy— Vicky Alexandris	2
Being Brown— Jean Dube Demeule	3
Suduko	3
Madeline Parent— Manon Camiré	4
Answers to Suduko	5
Sisters empowering sisters	5
The last word — Jamie Ross	6

Emily Murphy

Emily Murphy is known as one of the "The Famous Five" and one of the most influential suffragists in Canada.

Emily was born in Cookstown, Ontario in 1868. Her family were prominent members of society. Politics and law were regularly discussed at dinner. In 1887 she married Arthur Murphy, an Anglican minister and together they had four daughters. In 1903, after their daughter Doris' untimely death, they moved west to Swan River, Manitoba and four years later to Edmonton, Alberta.



Unifor Local 2002

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 Holli Hudson

Hilton Saint John

Peggy MacGougan-MacDonald

Emily was a natural leader with a strong interest in the protection of woman and children. After hearing of the plight of an Albertan woman and her children who were abandoned by a husband who sold the family farm out from under them, Murphy campaigned for the property rights of married women. By 1916, she helped persuade the Alberta government to pass the Dower Act, which allowed a woman legal rights to one third of her husband's property.

Emily was also instrumental in organizing the Women's Institute for rural women. She later became a member of the Equal Franchise where she worked with another activist, Nellie McLung to obtain the vote for women.

In response to injustices for women in the legal system, she successfully petitioned the government to "set up a special court presided over by women, to try other women." As she approached her fiftieth birthday she was appointed police magistrate for the city of Edmonton, becoming the first female magistrate in the British Empire.

During this time she fought for changing legislation and also advocated the evils of narcotics. Right up until her death in 1933 she remained an avid social activist, researcher and commentator.

– Vicky Alexandris



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We welcome your feedback on this publication. Comments can be sent to women@unifor2002.org

This publication is also available on our website at unifor2002.org

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Unifor and/or Unifor Local 2002.

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Cette publication est également disponible en français.

Being Brown



Rosemary Brown (1930-2003)
African Canadian politician,
activist, feminist, humanitarian,
oh, and mother of three.

Rosemary Brown was born on June 17, 1930 in Jamaica. Her father died when she was young and she was raised by her mother and grandmother. In her autobiography, BEING BROWN: A Very Public Life, she described her upbringing as safe and supportive, in a house ruled by women.

She immigrated to Canada in 1950, at age 20 to study at McGill University in Montreal. White students refused to be her roommate and she ended up in a private dorm room. Despite her unwelcome reception, Brown earned a Bachelor of Arts in 1955, a Bachelor of Arts in social work at the University of British Columbia in 1962 and a Master's degree in 1967.

In the 60's while working as a social worker in Vancouver, she joined the **Voice of Women**, an anti-nuclear group that lobbied for arms control and the elimination of nuclear weapons. She hosted a weekly television program called *People in Conflict*.

Prior to entering politics Rosemary Brown was a founding member of the Vancouver Status of Women Council (VSW) and the Vancouver Crisis Centre. In 1972 at the urging of the **VSW** she entered politics. Brown became MLA for Vancouver-Burrard, the first black woman elected to the B.C. legislature and served for 14 years. In 1988, Brown took a job in Ottawa as CEO and eventually president for MATCH International, an idevelopment agency run by and for women.

In 1975 she campaigned for leadership of the Federal NDP and came in second after 4 ballots on a wave of feminist organizing that would change that party in a

profound way. From 1993 -1996, Brown served as Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

During her tenure in parliament she helped found the Berger Commission on the Family, introduced bills to curb discrimination based on sex or marital status, led an effort to remove sexism from educational curricula and textbooks and got a law passed making seatbelts mandatory for children.

“To be black and female in a society that is both racist and sexist is to be in the unique position of having nowhere to go but up!”

— Rosemary Brown

Asked what advice she would give a woman about to enter politics, Brown replied, “Women should enter politics to bring about change. It’s a tough arena and an unpleasant one, the sacrifice called for can be only justified on the grounds that we are indeed making the world, our community a better place .”

Rosemary Brown devoted her life to the cause of justice and equality for women and minorities. She died unexpectedly in her sleep on April 26, 2003 at the age of 72.

— Jean Dube Demeule

6				8				
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		7					3	
			2		8			9
		5			9		1	2
			2			8		
4								7
	6	8					2	1

Madeleine Parent: Bridge over troubled water

It is unusual for a community to ask for a bridge to be named after a trade unionist, especially a female activist that wouldn't take no for an answer.

Madeleine Parent was an activist who advocated for Canadian labour, women and aboriginal rights. She fought against all form of discrimination and social exclusion.

Born from a well-to-do family in November 1918, Madeline recognized that not everyone had the same opportunities in life. She studied at McGill University and was involved in the Canadian Student Assembly where she lobbied for access to grants for underprivileged children.

After obtaining a degree in art, she taught English to French speaking garment workers. She went to work as a secretary for The Montreal Trades and Labour Council and soon became preoccupied with union activity.

She was influenced by Léa Roback, a free-thinking Communist and activist. Together they fought for the right for women to vote and organized workers in the six Montreal Cotton Dominion Textile Mills. They helped to create the Ouvriers unis du Textile d'Amérique' (OUTA) union which was affiliated with an American union.

In 1946 she was arrested after taking part in strikes at mills in Valleyfield and Lachute. The strikes lasted 100 days and led to the first collective agreement with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

Madeleine Parent was targeted by Maurice Duplessis and the Roman Catholic Church. She was arrested five times and convicted in 1948 for seditious conspiracy for union

organizing. Her trial dragged on for years but she was never jailed.



In 1952, Parent and her life-long companion Kent Rowley were expelled by the American leadership of OUTA. Quebec workers were forced to accept working conditions bargained by the Americans and felt betrayed.

Parent and Rowley left Quebec for Ontario.

In the '50s they went across Canada to create local unions independent from American organizations. In 1969 they helped to create the Confederation of Canadian Unions.

Madeline Parent was a rare activist that had influence in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

In Ontario she fought for pay equity, sat on the steering committee of the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women and contributed to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Rowley died in 1978 and Madeline returned to Quebec. She participated in the action committee for the Status of Women in the

Quebec Women's Federation and was a strong voice for aboriginals and immigrants.

Although she officially retired in 1983 at age 65 Madeline remained very active: she fought against the American Free trade Agreement at the 2001 Quebec Summit, walked in 1995 and 2000 in the International Women's march, opposed the Iraq invasions in 1991 and 2003 and was vocal in her support of gay marriages.

She died in March 2012 at age 93.

The people in the Suroît region where she led the textile workers in Valleyfield want her to be remembered. They asked the government to name a new bridge that goes over the Beauharnois canal after her. In July 2013 the toponymy commission of Quebec gave their approval.

"I believe young women of all origins and circumstances will continue the struggle against long standing injustices," Parent remarked over 60 years ago. "Building coalitions with their sisters around the world and with men who care."

We cannot fail her!

— Manon Camiré

Solution to Sudoku—Page 3

1	2	3	7	4	6	8	9	5
7	9	6	5	2	8	3	1	4
5	4	8	1	6	3	2	9	7
2	1	4	9	7	6	5	8	3
6	5	7	8	3	2	9	4	1
8	3	9	4	5	1	7	2	6
9	8	5	1	6	7	4	3	2
3	7	1	2	9	4	6	5	8
4	9	2	3	8	5	1	7	6



Sisters from Local 2002 attend the 2013 Women's Convention at Port Elgin

From left: Peggy Nash, Cheryl Kryzaniwsky, Eve Graham, Vicky Aleaxandris, Sylvie Schmitt, Carmelle Sénosier, Holli Hudson, Peggy MacGougan-MacDonald, Jean Dube Demeule, Tammy Moore, Tina Gillales, Manon Camiré, Donna Buchan, Sari Sairanen and Cheryl Robinson

Sisters EMPOWERING sisters



Earlier this year, five women from Jazz and one from Air Canada (Donna Buchan, Jean Dube-Demeule, Holli Hudson, Shelley MacDonald, Kathy Oelkers-MacDonald and Merlane Quon) participated in **Walk in Her Shoes**, a CARE Canada campaign. Participants challenge themselves with a personal or team walk to raise money to empower women and girls in the developing world.

"In Canada we take things like clean water and education for granted," said team captain and Jazz women's advocate Donna Buchan. "Our goal is to raise funds and awareness to help women around the

world who are less fortunate."

The team, who called themselves Jazz Moves, walked 8,000 steps for eight days to simulate what a female experiences daily in the developing world. They set a modest goal to collect \$1000.00 for the cause, but enthusiastically raised over \$2000 to help women, girls and communities around the world to overcome poverty and adversity.

"We had a lot of fun doing this walk and we plan to participate again in 2014," said Donna. "We invite all of our sisters in Unifor 2002 to check out the **care.ca** website, create a team and support this amazing initiative."

*"If you've come to help me,
You are wasting your time - and mine.*

*If you come because your liberation
is linked to mine,*

*Then let's join hands and start
working together.*

— Ayesha Imam
Founding director of BAOBAB for
Women's Human Rights in Nigeria

The last word ...

We mourn but we believe a better world is possible

Every year on December 6, Canadians remember the young women whose lives brutally ended at the École Polytechnique in Montreal.

Since that horrific day in 1989, what has really changed?

Recent headlines in the Globe and Mail blared out: *In 17 minutes ...another Canadian woman will be forced to have sex against her will.*

When I read those headlines, I thought every woman in Canada should be outraged; and in an ideal world, every man.

Why is the 17 minute stopwatch still ticking?

Thirty years ago, the Canadian justice system changed the laws and the language of rape, rebranding the age old crime as sexual assault. The author of the report, Kirk Makin calls it a “30-year experiment gone wrong.”

Downgrading the term *rape* to *sexual assault* has enabled the discussion to lose focus on the real issues; it blurs the act of rape with indecent assault and unwanted touching. Queen’s University law professor Pamela Cross, an expert on sexual assault says, that sexual assault has become a “kind of a soft phrase – a joke used by people who want to be dismissive.”

Rape is about power, not sex.

Less than half of reported complaints result in criminal charges and, of these, only one in four leads to a guilty verdict. This sends a very powerful message not only to the women who have been assaulted but also to the men who don’t take no for an answer.

The criminal justice system has become mired in terminology and consistently fails the victim.

The focus has shifted to winning or losing cases and whether charges of *sexual assault* can be substantiated. Women and children are violated all over again, this time in the courts where they should be protected.

Is this yet another entrenched patriarchal system in place to protect men and wield power over women?

Women need to stand up for their rights and hold hands with those who feel the inescapability of intimidation. As a society, we need to ensure that women who come forward are not shunned and shamed by family and community. Perpetrators must be held accountable for their crimes with more emphasis on rehabilitation, especially when statistics

confirm that there are so many repeat offenders.

We must create a better world for our daughters *and* sons, where we respect each other to ensure no violation of self, spirit and body; let us build on trust, privacy, control and the afterlife of bruising shame and guilt.

-Jamie Ross, President Local 2002



The Unifor Women’s department, in partnership with the CLC, has been working with the Center for Research and Education at the University of Western Ontario in order to develop a survey measuring the impact of domestic violence in the workplace: the personal effects on individual workers, coworkers, and costs to the employer.

The survey will be launched on December 6, 2013. A report of findings will be released next year on December 6; the 25th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre.

Whether or not you personally experience violence at home, please take the time to complete this very important and timely survey.

The survey can be found here: fluidsurveys.com/s/DVatWork.