

BULLETIN

Proud of our past, ready for the future

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n this issue of The Report, you will be introduced to Kit Farrar, a founding member of the union and an instrumental player in establishing the Health Sciences Association. Kit was a dietitian working at Lions Gate Hospital and nearing retirement when she got together with other health science professionals to talk about forming their own union. She ended up being the unions first president and executive director.

The early 70s were a time of change in the public sector, including health care. There was intense organizing activity as the public sector had secured the right to collective bargaining. Organizing campaigns in the health sector forced health science professionals to think about where they stood and what their vision for workplace representation looked like to them. The original group of professions that formed HSA included dietitians, social workers, medical record librarians, pharmacists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and X-ray and laboratory technologists. Delegated by their professional associations to attend the organizing meetings, they worked to find ... and eventually create ... a union that best represented their community of interest.

In the 35 years since Kit Farrar and others formed HSA, change has remained a constant characteristic ... of the workplace, of labour relations, and of the union.

Next spring, HSA activists will have another occasion to consider their unions future. As I announced at the April 2006 annual convention, I will be leaving the post of president after 14 years. Since 1993, the union and the position of president has continued to evolve at an extraordinary pace. When I started as president, my major role was that of chair of the board of directors.

We rented office space at Hastings and Boundary, the operating budget was \$3.1 million, and our staff had not topped 30. HSA had just begun organizing in the community sector. Today, the president is the chair of the board, as well as the chief executive officer, the operating budget is over \$10 million, we own our own building (mortgage-free) and employ more than 50 staff working on behalf of 14,000 members covered by four major public sector collective agreements and a number of individual collective agreements with private organizations.

With nominations for president set to open in December, now is the time to be thinking about what the future of HSA looks like for you. The upcoming regional meetings are an ideal venue for members to start talking about the important decision that delegates will make at the 2007 convention. As a member, you need to consider the issues that are important to you and how you believe those issues should be represented in the publics eyes, in the provincial and national labour arenas, and within our union.

Its an exciting time for our union, we have a wealth of talent within the membership and we are well positioned for the next stage. I think Kit would be very proud of the union she founded, and particularly proud of the members and staff that work to make HSA what it is today. 

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