

IN MEMORIAM - CLIFF PILKEY

July 27, 1922 to November 17, 2012





CLIFF PILKEY

JULY 27, 1922 –
NOVEMBER 17, 2012

Workers across Ontario have lost a monumental figure from Ontario's labour movement, Clifford George (Cliff) Pilkey, who passed away on November 17, 2012, during his 91st year. A life-long trade union activist and former NDP Member of Provincial Parliament for Oshawa, Cliff was best known for his tenure as the third President of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL). Throughout his career as a trade unionist and politician, Cliff was a courageous champion of women's and human rights whose contributions to workers' rights, social equity and workplace health and safety have left a legacy that will be felt for generations.

Cliff served in the Canadian Armed forces from 1942 to end of war 1945 and was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 43 in Oshawa, for 62 years. Cliff began his trade union activism as an Oshawa autoworker and later led the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 222 (now CAW Local 222). By 1957, he was the President of the Canadian UAW Council, while also serving as President of the Oshawa and District Labour Council for a decade. He entered electoral politics in 1962 as an Oshawa Alderman until he was elected to the Ontario legislature for one term as the MPP for Oshawa and Ontario New Democratic Party Labour Critic, from 1967 to 1971.

"There is no way we could accept a society with no minimum wage laws, no basic protections or rights for working people, no system to guarantee that the sick and aged have adequate care. Yet the labour movement is forced to fight hard for every bit of progress. It is never a given." - Cliff Pilkey

CLIFF PILKEY'S RECORD OF SERVICE

1942-45	Canadian Armed Forces
1954-57	UAW Local 222 Financial Secretary
1957-59	UAW Local 222 President
1957-67	Oshawa & District Labour Council President
1962-66	Oshawa Alderman and Deputy Mayor
1967	Awarded the Centennial Medal of Canada
1967-71	NDP MPP for Oshawa
1967-73	UAW National Representative
1973-76	UAW Director of Citizenship and Legislative Department
1972-76	Oshawa Alderman
1976-86	OFL President
1990	Inducted into the Order of Ontario
2012	Awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal

Cliff also dedicated himself to numerous committees, councils and boards, including:

- Dome Stadium Corporation
- Durham College
- Greenshield Canada
- Niagara Institute
- Ontario Council on Public Pensions
- Ontario Economic Council
- Ontario Hospice
- Ontario Manpower Commission
- Oshawa Senior Citizens' Centre
- Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 43
- Royal Ontario Museum
- York University



Four generations of OFL Leadership: Cliff Pilkey (1976-86), Sid Ryan (2009-present), Wayne Samuelson (1997-2009) & Gord Wilson (1986-97)

After his term of provincial office Cliff returned to the Oshawa City Council and to the UAW as a Service Representative and later as the Director of the Citizenship and Legislative Department of Canada. In 1976, Cliff was elected President of the OFL, a position he held until 1986 when he retired. Cliff went on to found the Workers Health & Safety Centre (WHSC), represent labour on many government committees and sit on numerous boards, including those at York University and Durham College. In 1967, Cliff was awarded the Centennial Medal of Canada and in 1990 he was invested with the Order of Ontario. On June 18, 2012, Cliff was awarded one of Canada's most distinguished honours—the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for a “lifetime of committed service, steadfast loyalty and true dedication.”

“Cliff’s contribution to the labour movement was enormous. He was a shrewd negotiator and a tough debater but he was also passionate and thoughtful. Cliff Pilkey was a labour leader who was way ahead of his time. He knew injustice when he saw it and he always stood true to his principles. In his time, Cliff faced death threats and hate mail from those who felt threatened by social progress he championed, but he never wavered in his support for women’s rights, workers’ rights and human rights.”

- Sid Ryan, OFL President (2009-Present)

Under Cliff's leadership at the Federation, Ontario workers made many incredible legislative advancements, including equal pay for work of equal value, dues check-off, expedited arbitration and a ban on professional strike-breaking. In several workplaces that were dominated primarily by women, like Radio Shack in Barrie and Fleck In London, Cliff turned strikes into province-wide mobilizations that led to pressure for First Contract arbitration, which was later won through legislation. In 1978, when a private American equity firm bought up and promptly closed Houdaille plant in Oshawa, Cliff supported a worker-led takeover of the plant that spread similar takeovers at Windsor Bumper and Beach Foundry. He used his influence with the Bill Davis government to bring in plant closure legislation to ensure that workers received notice, severance, the pension protection.



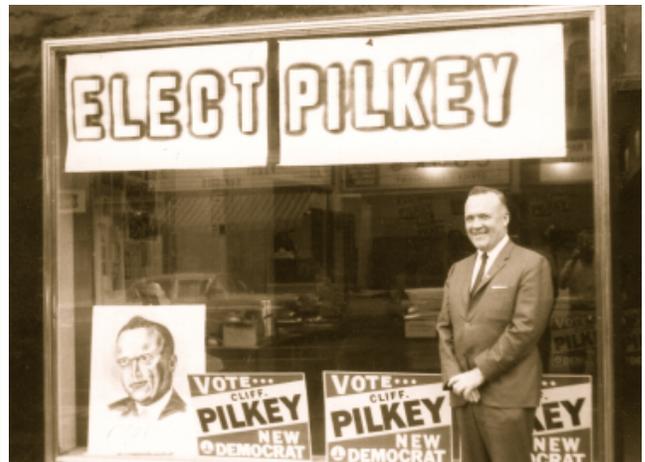
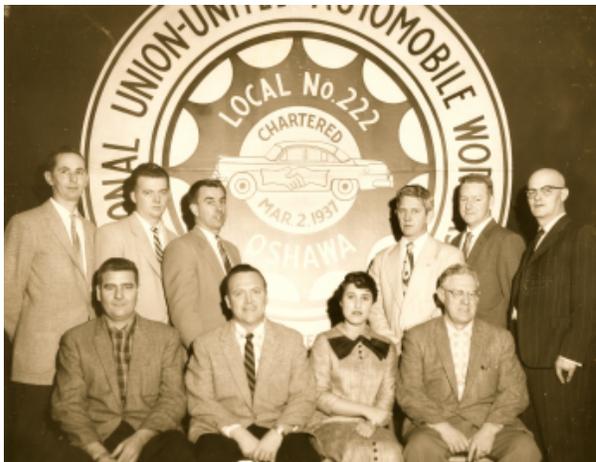
1978 Fleck rally in London.

“Cliff Pilkey was a thoughtful, compassionate and extremely effective leader who devoted his life to improving the lives of all working people and those among us who are in need. Those of us who had the privilege of working with him are all better for having known him. Well Done Brother, Well Done.”

- Gord Wilson, Former OFL President (1986 -1997)

“Cliff Pilkey’s visionary and determined leadership inspired a better world and his legacy of accomplishments stands tall with the very best labour leadership Canada has ever had.”

- Ken Lewenza, National President of the Canadian Auto Workers (2008-Present)



“No other organized group in our society has done so much, for so long, to break down the social and economic barriers that deny this country the full expression of its human potential.” - Cliff Pilkey

FIGHTER FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

During the 1980's, Cliff helped to pull Ontario's labour movement together to make important advances on women's issues. He led province-wide campaigns for pay equity and child care and he staunchly defended a woman's right to choose. Inside the labour movement, Cliff helped to create the OFL's Women's Committee and he made history by creating six affirmative action seats for women on the OFL Executive Board – the first of their kind in North America.

Cliff supported and mentored women in labour leadership and in 1986 he created a position for the OFL's first full-time woman officer.

“Cliff was determined, tenacious and intensely loyal. He was loved and respected by women workers because of his relentless support for women's rights inside and outside of the labour movement. He wasn't physically tall, but he was larger than life. It was as though he had a megaphone embedded in his throat.”

- Julie Davis, First OFL Executive Vice-President & the OFL's First Female Officer

“Cliff truly left his mark on our society. He did his damndest to make our society better for everybody.” - Chris Buckley, President of CAW Local 222 (2004-Present)

CHALLENGING RACISM

Cliff responded positively to the challenge from workers of colour to make racial equity a top priority of the labour movement. Under Cliff's leadership, the OFL ran the first comprehensive campaign against racism in the history of Canada's labour movement. Under the banner “Racism Hurts Everyone,” the OFL produced billboards, placards and radio and television ads to challenge public prejudices, but it also introduced anti-racism training for labour councils, affiliates and locals. To entrench this work, Cliff created a full-time OFL human rights directorship dedicated to anti-racism work, which led to the hiring of the first racialized person to hold a permanent position with the Federation.

“I admired Cliff tremendously. He was an incredible champion of working people who fought to create space in the labour movement for women in leadership. Under his leadership, anti-racism initiatives became a permanent part the work of the Human Rights Department.

I can still hear his passionate voice booming at the microphone.”

- June Veacock, First OFL Director of Human Rights/Anti-Racism Initiatives



Two photos: OFL's province-wide day care campaign was one of many campaigns spearheaded by the OFL's Women Committee.



OFL Secretary-Treasurer Terry Meagher and President Cliff Pilkey host a public forum on day care.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Over the years, Cliff dedicated himself to workplace health and safety. In 1978, Pilkey helped to win a significant victory with the passage of Bill 70 and the proclamation of Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The *Act* ordered mandatory joint committees in many workplaces, the right of workers to know about workplace health and safety hazards, and their right to refuse work if it endangered health and safety. Cliff understood workers and workplace representatives would require proper training in order



to exercise their rights and live up to their responsibilities as enshrined in the *Act*. Resolute in purpose, Cliff travelled across Canada to learn from the best practices in protecting workers and set out to negotiate with the government of the day, and indeed with his fellow labour leaders, the provision of centrally pooled grants to support an OFL health and safety training project that would seek to benefit all Ontario workers. Its four-week intensive training courses produced the first worker-experts who fanned out across the province to protect the hard-won gains, advocate for new protections, and train members in the workplace. He later convinced the then-Workers' Compensation Board to provide the sustained funding that gave rise to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre (WHSC).

Today, the WHSC is a living memorial to Cliff's dedication to health and safety issues and his commitment to creating the best conditions for the workers of Ontario.

"Cliff was a leader who cared deeply about his union - the UAW/CAW - and Canada's labour movement. He learned about women's commitment to affirmative action, child care and choice and put those issues at the forefront of the OFL's agenda. He won great respect and support from women in the labour movement.

Cliff had a great sense of humour and loved to laugh, which endeared him to all. He was a great personal friend to Marilynne and I. He introduced us to one another at the CLC Convention in 1976. We will always hold him dear in our hearts. We will miss him."

- Bob White, Former UAW Canadian Director (1978-1985), First CAW National President (1952-1992) and Former CLC President (1992-1999)



Former OFL Secretary-Treasurer Wally Majesky with American Labour and Civil Rights activist César Chavez and Pilkey.

"Politicians who promised to wrestle inflation to the ground have put the workers there instead" - Cliff Pilkey

LEGACY FOR WORKING PEOPLE

“Nobody loved the labour movement any more than Cliff Pilkey. He loved the solidarity and camaraderie. He used his incredible sense of humour to bring people together and he always had his feet on the ground and had an eye to what was achievable. He was truly an inspiring leader.”

- Buzz Hargrove, Former National President of the Canadian Auto Workers (1992-2008)

Following a lengthy illness, Cliff Pilkey passed away on Saturday, November 17, 2012 at the Rouge Valley Health System, Ajax-Pickering Site. He was in his 91st year.

Cliff is lovingly remembered by Viola, son Allan, daughter Jackie and her husband Dan Zaika. Dear grandfather of John and Jane Pilkey. Survived by his sister, Evelyn Thompson. Predeceased by his brother Gord, sisters Mabel and Lorraine.

Lovingly remembered by Judy Robins, Marty White, John White and Marsha Tterlikkis and their families.

Visitation will be held at the Oshawa Funeral Home, 847 King Street West (905-721-1234) on Thursday, November 22 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The funeral service will be held in the Chapel of the Oshawa Funeral Home on Friday, November 23 at 11:00 am with the interment at Thornton Cemetery. A reception to follow at the CAW Hall, 1425 Phillip Murray Avenue in Oshawa.

Memorial donations to the Alzheimer Society or charity of choice would be appreciated.

Online condolences may be made at www.oshawafuneralhome.com.



Cliff Pilkey with First NDP Leader, and father of Canadian medicare, Tommy Douglas



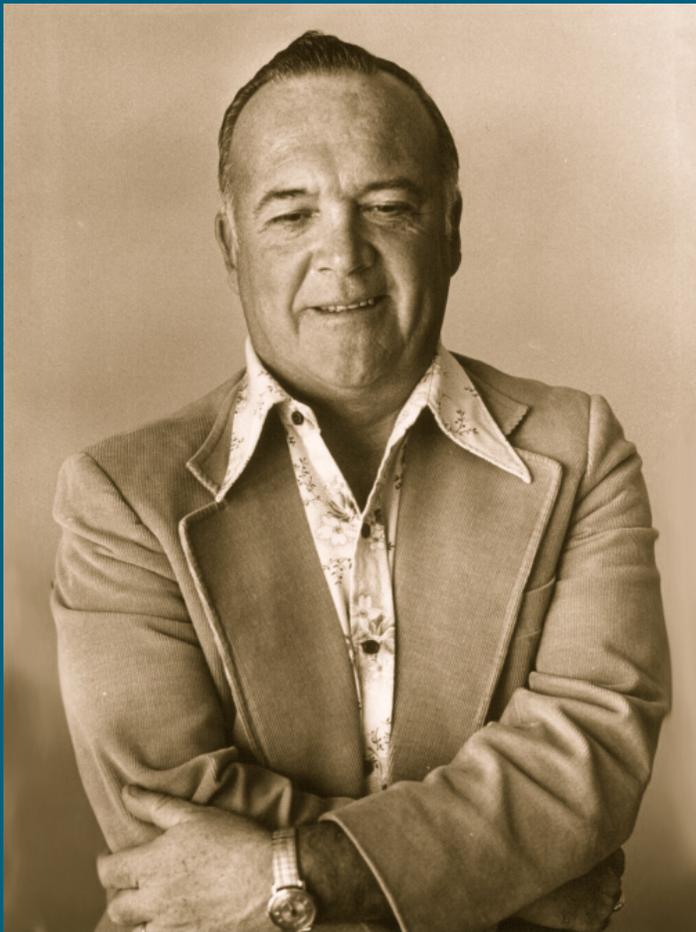
Former NDP Leader Ed Broadbent with Cliff Pilkey

“Cliff was a great fighter for the women and men of Oshawa, but more than that, as an MPP and President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, he fought for the rights of working people right across Ontario. His dedication and passion will be long remembered.”

- Ed Broadbent, Former Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada (1975-1989)

On behalf of the one million members of the Ontario Federation of Labour: rest in peace, Brother Pilkey. Your legacy lives on in our lives, in our struggles and in our work.

The Real Commerce Report '85



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