



PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA - BC REGION

# ACTIVIST SUMMIT

MOBILIZE MEMBERS • BUILD COLLECTIVE POWER • CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE



## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### Debra Sparrow, Cultural Educator and Knowledge Keeper - Musqueam Nation



Debra Sparrow was born and raised on the Musqueam Indian Reserve and is self-taught in Salish design and jewellery-making. Her work can be seen in various museums and institutions including the University of British Columbia, Vancouver International Airport, Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, the Royal B.C. Museum in Victoria and the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle.

Debra designed the logo for the Canadian Men's Hockey Team for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, B.C. More recently, Debra weaving designs illuminated the roof of BC Place Stadium as part of the

Vancouver Mural Festival's Blanketing the City initiative. Debra continues to work on pieces close to her heart at her home in Musqueam. It is Debra's hope to educate others about the beauty and integrity of her people's history through her art.

Debra is an acclaimed weaver who has been weaving for over thirty years and is deeply involved with the revival of Musqueam weaving. She is active in a program at the Museum of Anthropology designed to teach grade four children about Musqueam culture and history. Debra has also been an instructor at Langara College, teaching a Reconciliation Weaving course.

In addition to her weaving, education has been of equal value to Debra Sparrow. Recognizing weaving has the ability to offer stories of our heritage, it also serves as a traditional form of education to effectively teach us of math, science, history, and philosophy. Among teaching classes, she also shares her knowledge through public speaking, presentations, and publications.

### **Jamey Mills, REVP BC**



Jamey Mills was re-elected for a third term as PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President (REVP) for British Columbia in May 2023, having first been elected in June 2017. He is a long-time union leader who began his activism as the young workers coordinator on the PSAC BC Regional Council and chair of the BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) Young Worker Committee, where he also sat on the BCFED Executive Council.

As REVP, Jamey represents over 20,000 members in British Columbia, sits on PSAC's Alliance Executive Committee, and chairs the PSAC BC Regional Council. He also chairs the PSAC National Board of Directors (NBoD) Health and Safety

Committee, sits on the NBoD Environment Committee, and is the AEC officer responsible for Canadian Food Inspection Agency Group bargaining.

In addition to his PSAC roles, Jamey serves as a Vice-President of the BCFED and a member of its Executive Officers. He also sits on the Board of Directors for Union Savings, a non-profit, union-run members' benefit program. Given his extensive health and safety experience, Jamey is a member of the National Joint Council's Service-Wide Occupational Health and Safety Committee, which advises on Treasury Board policies and programs related to occupational health and safety.

## Barb Nederpel, HEU President



Barb Nederpel is a powerhouse in the labour movement, serving as President of the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU), which represents over 60,000 health care workers across British Columbia. A dedicated union activist, Barb has spent years championing workers' rights, strengthening Canada's public health care system, and advancing social justice and human rights.

Since becoming an HEU member in 2006, Barb's leadership has been transformative. From steward and local chair to her election to the Provincial Executive in 2012, she has always fought for fairness. In 2018, she made history as HEU's first woman president, leading the union through one of the most challenging periods in modern history—the COVID-19 pandemic. Under her leadership, HEU secured critical protections for health care workers, achieved long-overdue wage parity in the fractured long-term care sector, and successfully reintegrated over 4,000 contracted-out workers into the public health system.

Barb's influence extends beyond HEU. She is a Regional Vice President on CUPE National's Executive Board, serving as the NEB liaison to the national Women's Committee, and sits on the BC NDP executive—because she knows that electing progressive governments is key to strengthening workers' rights.

Always forward-thinking, Barb has led efforts to modernize union locals, ensuring members stay connected and empowered through new technologies. With unwavering dedication and a bold vision for the future, she continues to fight for stronger protections, better wages, and a more just society for all.

## Sharon DeSousa, PSAC National President



Sharon DeSousa was elected as the national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada at PSAC's 20th National Triennial Convention in May 2024. She previously served as PSAC's national executive vice-president, a position she held since 2020.

Sharon DeSousa has broken barriers at every stage of her activism – becoming the first racialized woman in PSAC's history to serve as both National President and National Executive Vice-President. Previously, she became the first racialized woman to serve on PSAC's Alliance Executive Committee when she was elected Regional Executive Vice-President for Ontario in 2011.

Sharon's ongoing leadership and relentless pursuit of justice underscores her commitment to fostering an equitable, inclusive labour movement and bettering conditions for all workers.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Sharon came to Canada at the age of five. After earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Ontario College of Art & Design University, Sharon worked as a benefits officer with Service Canada, and served as Vice-President of equity for her local, Canada Employment and Immigration Union Local 00648.