



Remembering a Global Leader in Workplace Health and Safety



With the recent sudden and untimely passing of Ralph McGinn, WorkSafeBC not only lost an extremely knowledgeable and committed Chair of its Board of Directors, but many lost a personal friend, and our country and the world has lost a foremost leader who made improving workplace health and safety a life-long priority, all the while leading his professional efforts through a very collaborative and personal engagement style which led to many lasting friendships.

In addition to all his tangible and lasting OS&H achievements, Ralph also thoroughly understood the value and importance of effective Return to Work and Disability Management programs, the positive impact that effective policies, programs and practices in these areas could have on the economic, social and psychological well-being of injured and disabled workers while at the same time reducing costs to employers and society at large. Ralph's larger than life impact can perhaps be best explained through comments from a small cross section of the many individuals who made their voices heard.

"Ralph cared very much about the safety of workers, and over the span of a long career, he was ambitious and energetic when it came to protecting those in the workplace. Ralph's legacy spans

the globe – he made a tremendous difference in mining safety, health and environmental protection as far away as Australia, South America and Africa. On behalf of the Ministry of Labour, I offer my heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and all his colleagues who are mourning his passing. Ralph will be missed."

Hon. Harry Bains, BC Minister of Labour

"Ralph managed to survive at a senior level with compassion and humanity intact. And with deep knowledge of what was both right and possible."

Hon. George Heyman, BC Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

"Very sad. Only met Ralph a few times, but think about very much a decent, progressive guy who made a real difference in the broader WCB and worker safety world. Sorry to hear it."

Hon. Shane Simpson, BC Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction



"I am so sad to hear about Ralph. Not only was he a staunch advocate for the DM / RTW cause, he was also a great teacher and facilitator. I learnt so much from just watching him interact with everyone whenever I was privileged to be in his presence. His humility, compassion for others and dedication to advancing others never escaped me! He will be greatly missed! It is a great loss!"

*Linda Nkemdirim, fr. Director,
Disability Management, CP Rail*

"This is so sad. He was such a nice man – a true gentleman. We will miss him."

*Trevor Alexander, President and CEO,
Workers Compensation Board of Alberta*

"What a blow! I met Ralph in Geneva when he was chief mines inspector. He chaired an international meeting on OHS in open pit mining in 1991. He has been my standard by which to measure the best in public service ever since. Rest In Peace."

*Andy King, fr. Department Leader,
Health, Safety and Environment, United Steelworkers (USW)*

"I am very saddened to hear of your husband and father, Ralph's passing. He was a very nice man. I had the pleasure of working with him in his capacity as Mines Inspector, then Chief Inspector of Mines when we drafted the new Mine, Health, Safety and Reclamation Code and the new Mines Act. As well, I had the pleasure of working with him when he headed OH&S and then the Workers' Compensation Board and WorkSafeBC. Ralph was always an outstanding champion of the need to protect workers' health and safety and was always brave in his protection of workers' rights."

*Cathy Walker, fr. Vice-President,
Health, Safety and Environment, Canadian Association
of Industrial Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW)
and fr. National Director, Health and Safety,
Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)*

"This is indeed an enormous loss. It has been my privilege, over four decades, to see (unfortunately only a handful - and that is one hand) a few truly great leaders in workers compensation administration. Ralph was one of those, someone who truly represented the qualities of what the American business leader Robert Greenleaf called 'servant leadership'. His quiet, but firm, oversight and genuine concern and nurture for staff in the workers compensation agency was notable. I personally feel a sense of loss. For you and the leaders of the disability management movement in Canada the loss will be far more palpable. Please pass onto the family the fact that his passing is a loss that resonates far beyond British Columbia and Canada."

*Alan Clayton, Associate Professor and Principal,
Bracton Consulting Services Pty Ltd, Melbourne, Australia*

"Very sad news. Great loss for many of us. Condolences to the McGinn family."

*Sari Sairanen, National Director,
Health, Safety and Environment, UNIFOR*

"When I first met Ralph, he was the Chief Inspector of Mines. I was not a supporter of the Ministry of Mines at that time, but Ralph had a real passion when it came to health and safety and convinced me otherwise. At the WCB he showed a unique leadership style. He was neutral, impartial, and he was fair to everybody and especially wanted the best for workers. He was a wonderful person and a strong advocate for working people."

Steve Hunt, Director, District 3, United Steelworkers (USW)

I liked and respected Ralph for his gentility, intelligence, and leadership. My condolences."

*Judy Geary, fr. Vice-President,
Work Reintegration, WCB of Ontario (WSIB)*



"I feel privileged to have met him a couple of times over the past few years through you and the work with disability management. We all hope to make a difference in this world and he truly has positively influenced policy to support workers. His passing leaves a big void."

Lani deHek, RN, CDMP, Manager, Disability Management & Health and Safety, BC Nurses' Union

"The loss of a long time personal friend, professional champion, and unspoken mentor will not easily be overcome, and while the initial intense sorrow will, over time, fade into positive memories and reflections of good times and joint achievements, nothing will entirely replace the void left behind. However, what we will commit to and strive to continue is the path of Ralph's vision that we can create safer workplaces and, with creativity, collaboration and never-ending commitment, we can achieve better Return to Work and Disability Management outcomes for injured and disabled workers."

*Wolfgang Zimmermann, Executive Director,
National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) and President, Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS)*