

## MAKAHONUK, Glen

On December 10, 1997, at the age of 46, Glen Makahonuk died quietly at his home, just over a month after being diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour.



Glen Makahonuk was a scholar, who earned a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce, and later, in 1976, a Master's Degree in History from the University of Saskatchewan. His thesis focused on the Estevan Coal Strike of 1931.

During his life, he continued to write articles which were published in the *Saskatchewan History Journal*, *Labour/Le Travail*, *Prairie Forum* and *Briarpatch*, among others. His last published article, "*The One Big Union in Saskatoon: A Case Study of Revolutionary Unionism, 1919-1922*", was published in the *Saskatoon History Review*, Number 12, 1997. He was meticulous and scholarly in his research and approached it as he approached everything - with dedication.

As well as working as a Senior Library Assistant in special collections at the University of Saskatchewan, Glen was President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Local 1975 for 11 years, and President of CUPE Saskatchewan from 1993 until his death. He also represented Saskatchewan and Manitoba CUPE members as General Vice-President on the CUPE National Executive Board from 1993 until his death; as Regional Vice-President on the CUPE National Board from 1991 to 1993; as Vice-President on the Executive Council of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour for six years; and as Chair for CUPE, Local 1975's Grievance Committee, handling more than 1,200 grievances.

In his work with the union, he took every opportunity to educate those around him about the issues being dealt with, and the background and history necessary to understand the issues.

People were touched by Glen and he was well respected by all who met him. Barb Byers, President of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, was quoted in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, on December 11, 1997, as saying that Glen was a man with "*a kind heart and a keen wit*" ... "*Where there was a demonstration, you'd find Glen there. If he was told about it, he'd be there. He lived being a trade unionist and social activist every second of the day. He was always there thinking what was best for workers. He was a true comrade.*"

Before the funeral, one person said that it was hard to lose someone like Glen, who lived a hero and died a hero. Strong words, but true according to Webster's Dictionary, which defines the word "hero" as meaning, in part:

*"1. a man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities. 2. a person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal."*

Glen lived his ideals, and acted courageously as a result.

As the pallbearers left the church they were followed by hands raised in solidarity and voices lifted in fond farewell:

*"Solidarity forever! Solidarity forever! Solidarity forever!  
For the Union makes us strong."*



Glen would have felt right at home.