**PSAC Events and Accomplishments**

**1966** The PSAC holds its founding convention, the result of a merger of 16 staff associations representing 55% of the federal public service. The PSAC was presided over by a five person Executive Committee. The National Board of Directors met quarterly and was made up of all Component Presidents, the Executive Committee, and the National Directors from each region.

**1968** The first collective agreements were negotiated by the PSAC, and included provisions for severance pay and union security (the Rand formula).

**1976** The first woman elected to the PSAC’s National Board of Directors (NBoD), nine years after the union was formed, was Eleanor Ryan (National Director for Ontario). As of November 2010, 35% of the NBoD are women (more than 50% of the members are women).

Also in 1976, Aileen Manion was the first woman elected to the Alliance Executive Committee (AEC). As of November 2010, five of the nine Alliance Executive Committee members (AEC) are women; four of the PSAC’s 17 Component Presidents are women.

**1980** In the largest strike in Canadian history, PSAC Clerical workers (CRs – a female dominated group) for the federal government went on strike for better provisions for time off for the care and nurturing of pre-school-age children, adoption leave and paid maternity leave. The Library Sciences group of PSAC members achieved the first pay equity settlement.

**1984** The PSAC filed a Pay Equity CHRA complaint against the Federal Government on behalf of 50,000 clerical workers. In 1998 the CHRA Tribunal found in favour of the PSAC, and in 1999 the Federal Court of Canada supported the Tribunal’s decision. After 15 years, thousands of current and former clerical workers received pay equity settlements ranging from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars.

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**1985** The first PSAC National Women’s Conference was held and the full Women’s Conference cycle of regional and national conferences began following the 1985 PSAC Triennial Convention where 6 cents per member per month had been allotted for the funding of these conferences.

**1987** PSAC member Bonnie Robichaud filed a human rights complaint related to sexual harassment which led to a ground-breaking Supreme Court of Canada decision that “employers are responsible for maintaining a harassment-free work environment”.

**1988** PSAC increased funding for its Regional and National Women’s conferences to 21 cents per member per month. PSAC Regional Women’s Committees were constitutionally recognized and funded at the same convention. The PSAC Human Rights Policy was adopted.

**1989** The first PSAC Lesbian and Gay Support Group was formed.

**1991** For three weeks starting in September, 1991, tens of thousands of PSAC members participated in the largest strike in Canadian history. The strike ended with back-to-work legislation and imposed collective agreements. On the plus side, we achieved the Workforce Adjustment Directive which became a critical benefit to workers under the Mulroney-government cut backs of the mid 1990s.

**1992** The PSAC’s Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) is expanded to include eight representatives of groups covered by the Human Rights Policies.

**1993** PSAC holds its first National Conference for Members with Disabilities.

**1994** Regionalization in the PSAC. At the 1994 PSAC Convention in Montreal the structure of the PSAC was changed in a significant way. Starting with Quebec in 1994, and followed by the other 6 regions in 1997, seven Regional Executive Vice-President positions were created (3 National Vice-President positions were deleted). Each region subsequently held their own conventions to elect regional councils, and, starting in 2005, their Regional Executive Vice-President.

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**1998** The inaugural Prairie Region Convention was held in Winnipeg and the first Prairie Region Council was elected. Subsequent Prairie Region Conventions have been held in Saskatoon (2001), Calgary (2005) and Winnipeg (2008). Sister Robyn Benson has been the Regional Executive Vice President for the Prairie Region since her election at the 2000 PSAC Convention.

**1999** In 1999, the PSAC won a 14-year battle on behalf of 50,000 clerical workers in the federal public sector. The Federal Court of Canada ruling reinforced the notion that workers should be paid based on the work they do, not on the basis of gender. In 2002 the PSAC won it’s complaint for pay equity for women employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories. In addition to significant pay adjustments for the workers, the PSAC was also awarded $600,000 in legal feeds which was used to establish the PSAC’s Social Justice Fund. The battle for pay equity continues for PSAC members employed at Canada Post.

**1999** The PSAC negotiates a childcare fund for members at Canada Post.

**2000** Nycole Turmel was elected the first woman president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). She was re-elected in 2003 and resigned in 2006. In 2011 she was elected as the NDP MP for Hull-Aylmer and in July 2011 she was appointed as interim leader of the NDP and, therefore, Leader of the Official Opposition in the Government of Canada.

**2001** Following the “workless Wednesdays” strike, the PSAC negotiated the first-ever Joint Learning Program (JLP) with the Treasury Board which came with a budget of $7 million. The JLP has since been renegotiated twice (2004 increased to $8.75 million, and the same in 2008).

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**2005** On International Women’s Day, the PSAC calls for action on a national child care system.

**2006** The PSAC’s YOUR course (for youth only) was designed and facilitated in BC (by Monica Urrutia).

**2008** The first PSAC Prairie Region Youth Initiative was held, with 24 participants.

**2009** The PSAC Prairies Union Development Program (UDP), a 3-week leadership training course, is completed. Participants in the course were the most representative yet of the PSAC Prairies membership. Six of the 17 graduates were youth, five were Aboriginal workers, and three were workers of colour.

**2010** The 2010 – 2012 PSAC Prairie Region Education plan is approved. It includes provisions for three Youth Initiatives, three courses for Aboriginal Members, a Unionism on Turtle Island course, and a new Women at Work course.

**2011** The PSAC’s National Aboriginal Peoples’ Circle (NAPC) launches the campaign “Justice for Aboriginal Peoples – it’s Time!”

**2011** PSAC wins Canada Post pay equity case at the Supreme Court of Canada, after a 28-year battle. In a unanimous decision, the court awarded 50 per cent of the wage gap in damages.

**2012** Robyn Benson, 2nd Woman elected as President of the PSAC.

Sources for this document include “Over the Years” by Eleanor O’Connor published in Our Times Sept/Oct 1985; “The Widening Sphere: Women in Canada, 1870-1940, Jeanne L’Esperance Jan Coomber, Rosemary Evans; “Rights of Aboriginal Women On and Off Reserve by Dr. Peggy J Blair, for The Scow Institute; “Canadian Labour History” handout produced by the CLC; Status of Women Canada website: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca; Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW); Treasury Board Secretariat ; Public Service Alliance of Canada; CLC Young Workers in Action “Milestones” handout.

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