

**GEORGE BROWN - MERL RODOCKER  
MEMORIAL BURSARIES**

**STUDENT  
BURSARY AWARD**

To commemorate the outstanding contribution made by two outstanding trade unionists brothers George Brown and Merl Rodocker, CALMAW instituted an annual bursary award in 1986 to be made in each active region of the union. When CALMAW merged into the CAW it was agreed to carry on this annual Bursary.

Each bursary will be for \$500 and eligibility and qualifications are listed below.

**ELIGIBILITY**

1. Award to be open in competition to any student proceeding from Grade XII to a post secondary institute or to undergraduates in any year proceeding to a higher year.
2. The student must be enrolled as a full-time student and carry a relatively full course load (60% minimum) (i.e. 9 credits).
3. Recipient of award must be a CAW member in good standing or spouse, son, daughter or legal ward of CAW member in good standing, or spouse, son, daughter or legal ward of deceased or retired CAW or CALMAW member in good standing at time of death or retirement, or spouse, son, daughter or legal ward of support staff worker employed by CAW.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applicants must have a 65% grade point average.

Factors considered will be the type of studies being undertaken and the need for financial assistance in doing so.

**SELECTION**

The successful applicants will be chosen by an independent judge appointed by the union in each region.

**APPLICATIONS**

Application forms are available from local secretaries or from either the Winnipeg or New Westminster office.

**DEADLINE**

Applications for the 2008 bursaries must be received in either the Winnipeg or New Westminster office on or before September 15, 2008.

For Manitoba/Saskatchewan  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
1376 Grant Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0X4  
Phone: (204) 489-0355  
Toll free: 1-800-665-7492

For B.C./Alberta  
326 - 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
New Westminster, BC V3M 4J7  
V3M 4H6  
Phone: (604) 522-7911  
Toll free: 1-800-665-3553

CAW/CTCA  
CANADA

**THE  
GEORGE BROWN - MERL RODOCKER  
STUDENT  
BURSARY AWARD**

In 1986 CALMAW instituted the George Brown - Merl Rodocker Bursary to commemorate the magnificent contributions of two of the union's most distinguished builders.

When CALMAW merged into the CAW on January 1, 1992 it was agreed to retain this Bursary for all CAW members in the Western provinces where CALMAW held certifications (i.e. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C.)

This pamphlet is produced to give applicants for the award a brief insight into these two remarkable trade unionists who, while so different in origin and personality, shared the common goal of wanting to build a democratic, effective union for Canadian workers.

The following biographies are not intended to be definitive of their lives and contributions to the cause of dignity and justice for working people, space and my own limitations could never do justice to that.

It is hoped that all applicants and interested parties appreciate that the modesty of the bursary certainly does not measure up to the stature of those in whose name the award is made.

"Jess Succamore"

"Merl's dedication and devotion to his brothers and sisters is irreplaceable, ...I came especially to admire his tremendous courage during the last days of his illness. Merl represented all that is best in the human spirit."

Pat McEvoy

"... George drove himself with a dedication for achieving status for those who would not, or could not, speak for themselves."

John "Pop" Jacobs

## GEORGE BROWN

September 4, 1928 - April 4, 1974

A native of Edinburgh, Scotland, George Brown was born in 1928. He served his apprenticeship as a diemlaker and became involved as an activist in the Amalgamated Engineering Union. George travelled extensively in Europe as a union delegate and was a shop steward at the Ford plant in Dagenham, just outside of London prior to leaving Britain. George immigrated to Canada in 1959, settling in the lower mainland of B.C. He was active in the Steelworkers union while working at Spear and Jackson, A.I.M. Steel and he was fired for trying to organize the Durand machine works. George came to prominence at the time of one of B.C.'s historic disputes, the Lenkurt strike of 1966.

George was the Chief Steward at the Lenkurt Electric Plant in Burnaby, B.C. and was the plant spokesman on the negotiating committee. Negotiations were taking place when the company provoked a walkout. George, along with 256 other Lenkurt union members, was fired. The result was mass picketing; injunctions, arrests, and the betrayal of the workers by the American leadership of their union -- the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). When the dust settled most of the workers lost their jobs, four trade unionists were jailed and, from this turmoil sprang the seeds of building a Canadian union; one that would not tolerate foreign interference -- a union controlled by the rank and file union members.

Along with two other Lenkurt workers, Donna Pooghkay and Jess Succamore, George set about building a new union, and on November 6, 1966 the Canadian

Electrical Workers Union (CEWU) was founded. George Brown was elected to the position of Vice-President and later to the position of President. After three

dynamic years of fighting to establish the union, the collusion of the American unions with the employer and the bias of the B.C. Labour Board called for a change in strategy.

George supported the merger of the CEWU into the Canadian Association of Industrial Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW) on December 1, 1969.

From the merger until the time of his sudden death at the age of 45 on April 4, 1974, George held the position of Regional Vice-President for B.C. and Alberta in CAIMAW.

Under his leadership the union in his region grew from a dream to having 2,000 members in twenty certifications.

George Brown was a quiet spoken, well educated and articulate socialist who believed that working people could only advance their well being through a strong, well-educated trade union movement. He was devoted to his wife Helen and daughter Ione and the union and his family dominated his being. George was a keen sports fan and had been a champion cyclist in Britain. His brother Jackie Brown was a Commonwealth Boxing Champion and this was a great source of pride to him.

A special banquet held on November 6, 1986 - the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the CEWU - Georges' wife Helen and daughter Ione were presented with a commemorative plaque noting Georges' contributions to the union.

## MERL RODOCKER

March 12, 1932 - December 13, 1984

Born in Shell Lake Saskatchewan in 1932, Merl Rodocker spent the preteen years of his life in nearby Prince Albert. Always a bundle of energy, he sold and delivered newspapers and numbered former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker among his clients. Merl always retained a great fondness for Mr. Diefenbaker because of his kindness and thoughtfulness to one so young. Prior to leaving Prince Albert, Merl worked as a telegraph delivery messenger.

When Merl was twelve years old he moved with his mother Olive to Popkin near Bridal Falls in the Fraser Valley of B.C. At the age of fourteen he worked as a whistle punk for a small logging outfit and then as a planer in a saw mill. Later Merl worked as a hard rock miner, as a driller and blaster and worked in many mines and construction sites throughout B.C.

In 1971 Merl started working at the big Kenworth truck building plant in Burnaby, B.C. up to the time the company closed up operation in 1982. Early in 1971 when CAIMAW started organizing at that plant, Merl was one of the most active supporters of bringing Canadian unionism to his workplace. From that time, up to his death some thirteen years later, Merl devoted endless days and nights to the cause of Canadian unionism.

Always active in his own local, he attended as a delegate all conferences and conventions of CAIMAW and the Confederation of Canadian Unions.

For many years Merl was the mainstay of the Confederation of Canadian Unions booth at the Pacific National Exhibition, where his open and engaging personality made him such a great ambassador for the independent Canadian union movement.

However, it was his tireless efforts as an organizer that his contribution was unsurpassed. Merl was involved in just about every organizing campaign in our union during this period and he also helped other new Canadian unions to organize.

Whether working at Kenworth or working on a lost time basis, Merl worked days, nights, weekdays and weekends, whatever it took to get the job done. It mattered not who Merl talked union with, a miner, waitress, or a plant worker, all found his directness and obvious honesty something to respect and admire.

On October 12, 1984 just two months prior to his death by cancer, around a hundred of his close friends gathered at the union hall in New Westminster to pay tribute to Merl's contribution to the union movement. On leaving the hall Merl, in obvious discomfort from his illness, stated that without doubt this was the most wonderful night of his life.