

Interview: Judy Darcy (JD)
Interviewer: Blair Redlin (BR)
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Transcription: Cathy Walker

BR [00:00:05] Hi, Judy. Welcome.

JD [00:00:06] Thank you. It's great to be here, Blair. Great to see you.

BR [00:00:09] Yeah, wonderful to see you as well. I'm looking forward to this interview.

JD [00:00:13] So am I.

BR [00:00:16] We can proceed, starting, hopefully with a bit of description about your early life and your upbringing and how that impacted your views about workers and labour and feminism. For example, your immigrant father worked in the petrochemical industry in Sarnia. What was his work? Would you say yours was a union household? Your mother was in the Danish Resistance. What impact did that have on you, so this is a long question.

JD [00:00:52] My family immigrated from Denmark in 1951 when I was 18 months old. My father was Russian, my mother Danish, and they met when they worked in a camp for displaced persons under the United Nations after the war. Yes, my mother had been in the Danish Resistance. She hid Jews in her apartment, her little tiny apartment in Copenhagen. She was tortured by them, by the Gestapo, because she wouldn't give up any secrets. My father served in the war, had lived in France at the time, taken prisoner of war at Dunkirk. He managed to keep the fact that he was a Jew a secret the entire time. Fortunately he was released without them knowing that.

JD [00:01:35] After the war he also kept the fact he was a Jew a secret from everyone, including his kids for 40 years. They immigrated to Canada. He was afraid there would be another war in Europe. He wanted to shield his children from antisemitism, and that's why he didn't tell us. Not a soul, except my mother, knew. He carried that with him.

JD [00:01:58] They were both highly qualified, university educated. My mother's small town and fishing village in Denmark, first in her family to go to university. My father had studied in both Moscow and in Toulouse. Like many immigrants that come to Canada, his credentials weren't recognized. He worked in shipping rooms at first and then finally got a job in a lab in Sarnia, Ontario, known then as the Chemical Valley of Canada, Canada's chemical valley, five miles of tanks, tubes and spheres, a fairyland of lights by night or day, 'Canada's Chemical Valley.' I say that because I actually did a radio show in high school. That was the blurb that we gave every single day on the air.

JD [00:02:40] He worked there, but he had a lot of bitterness and a lot of resentment about the fact that he wasn't recognized. I think both my parents' values shaped me. There was certainly a sense that there was discrimination. Of course, he'd lost his family in the Holocaust, although we didn't know that.

JD [00:03:04] It wasn't a union family. The kids next door, the father worked in construction. There were some regular strikes. I really didn't know a thing about unions

until I moved to Toronto to go to university, got involved in the student movement. We walked a picket line and that's when I learned about unions for the first time.

BR [00:03:23] What a fascinating background. You studied at York then?

JD [00:03:29] I did.

BR [00:03:30] For a period of time. You walked picket lines. Did you get involved in other student politics?

JD [00:03:37] Well, I met some student radicals my second week at university, including David Chudnovsky, who later became an MLA and is still a close friend, and Ruth Herman who has worked for HEU, UFCW and various other organizations, progressive folks. I met David my first, second week. He introduced me to a world I didn't know anything about, a critique of the power structure in the university, the war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement, which, that's what was swirling all around us at the time. It was the sixties and the student movement. I was swept up in that immediately.

JD [00:04:17] Ran for students' council, got elected, didn't have a clue what I was doing, but I was also becoming a feminist. Went to my first meeting of the Toronto Women's Liberation Movement as we called ourselves and was introduced to feminism. That kind of became my life. University studies, it was, why would I study about it? Why wouldn't I try and change the world instead? I learned later you kind of change it a step at a time, but in those days.

BR [00:04:46] Of course.

JD [00:04:46] It was the sixties. It was the sixties.

BR [00:04:50] You were young and you were a student.

JD [00:04:52] I was.

BR [00:04:54] At that time there was this story about, could you tell us the story about running in the Miss Canadian beauty pageant?

JD [00:05:01] I knew you were going to ask about that, so I'm on the students' council for York University but I'm also in the Toronto women's liberation movement. There is a Miss Canadian University pageant coming up in Kitchener-Waterloo. Simon Fraser University, which was then a bastion of left-wing activism, they had chosen Janiel Jolley, a feminist as Miss Simon Fraser University, to go and enter the competition. When the organizers of the event realized what she was about, they decided, first they said, okay, you can enter. Later they decided no, her goals, your goals and objectives don't correspond with the goals and objectives of this beauty pageant. I'm sitting at a meeting of the women's liberation movement meeting in Toronto one night, and they say, 'We need to find someone else to be a candidate but this time it has to be an undercover protest candidate.' I don't think anything of it. Then they say, 'Judy, aren't you on the students' council at York?' I said, 'Yes. Yes.' They said, 'Well maybe you could get to be Miss York University.'

JD [00:06:10] I immediately blurted out, 'There's no way I'm going in a bathing suit competition.' I made it sound like it was a question of principle but really, it's because it

had never been my strong suit wearing bathing suits, so I sure wasn't going to wear one in public. Then they found out there's no bathing suit competition so I'm kind of stuck.

JD [00:06:28] I go out. I borrow clothes. I go undercover. I've been with these beauty queens for several days pretending to be a contestant. I sneak out for strategy meetings at night, and there are protests. Then on the day of the beauty pageant there we are. It's televised live. I'm up on the stage. They describe me. At one point, Janiel Jolley, Miss Simon Fraser marches in from the back, surrounded by protesters and comes up and demands the right to speak. The host says, 'Oh, you can't speak. You're not a candidate.'

JD [00:07:02] Well, then I quit. Okay. She says, 'This is a meat market. This pageant exploits women.' That was my cue, because we had prepared this in advance. According to the media, the media report said, a brunette wearing a sari burst into tears saying, 'It's true, this is a meat market,' with tears streaming down her face. Indeed, they were streaming because I was 20 years old and I was undercover. I demanded my right to speak. He refused. We marched out together. We were all singing Solidarity Forever. Then afterwards they did the drum roll for the seven semi-finalists. Miss York University a brunette wearing a sari turned out to be one of the seven semi-finalists.

JD [00:07:57] Whenever people ask me that I want to be sure that people know I went in as an undercover protest candidate. I mean, I've changed a lot over the years, but I was never a beauty contestant type.

BR [00:08:11] It's still an amazing story and reflective of women's liberation activities. In those days you got involved with the Workers' Communist Party, including running as a candidate. What got you involved with that? For how long were you active and what eventually brought you to the NDP instead?

JD [00:08:39] There's lots of stuff in there. I was a child of the sixties. I was in the women's movement. We fought for many things, including the right to choose and the right to abortion, which was still in the criminal code. I was involved in a cross-country caravan where we chained ourselves to the seats in the House of Commons, shut down parliament for the first time in history. I sort of thought back about that when I was in the legislature. It was definitely unparliamentary behaviour on behalf of these radical women.

JD [00:09:17] At every turn governments were saying, we're refusing to listen. Millions marching against the war in Vietnam, the War Measures Act in Canada in 1970. The government, the previous Trudeau government refusing to change the criminal code. One thing after another, after another. I was already then also involved in the trade union movement. We saw wage controls. We had low paid library workers that I was part of where, we're earning, we're getting close to poverty wages. I guess it was you know, it's a sense of frustration. It was a critique of capitalism for sure, and a sense that the NDP was moving too slowly.

JD [00:09:57] There was a pro-Soviet Union Communist Party, but we didn't like the Soviet Union. We thought it was, saw it as more of a dictatorship. We saw China as doing things very differently. Poor peasants and workers having more control. We had pretty, I still wear red glasses, but we had rose-coloured glasses for sure. We didn't see. I went to China. I visited China. We only saw what they wanted us to see.

JD [00:10:35] Then at a certain point, you start, you both realize that you're not getting anywhere day to day. I could be super active in the union and be involved in helping to

build a lot of activism. Nobody wanted to talk about Marxist politics and it wasn't relevant to their lives. You start to realize it's not going to happen in this country and that there have to be other ways to make social change. It was also a situation where it was a party, very, very strict internal discipline, criticism, self-criticism, very hard on people psychologically, emotionally, politically and really hard to be a trade union activist and be criticized constantly. You're putting union first before the party? Well, yeah. At the end of the day, the union is what I wanted to do. That's what I wanted to do.

JD [00:11:34] The NDP, I signed up. I got signed up in 1984 by Julie Davis, who was then a longtime New Democrat, longtime CUPE member, president of the Ontario NDP, signed me up. I had just been to a debate, the '84 federal election. Ed Broadbent was the leader. There was a special debate on women's issues, on women's equality. Imagine that. That actually happened. I was blown away by what he had to say, really blown away at his commitment and the party's commitment to equality. When Julie found that out, she had cards with her at a CUPE women's conference in Ontario, 'Why don't you sign up, Sister?' I did. That was 1984.

BR [00:12:27] Fantastic. You've alluded to being a trade union activist. You began working for the University of Toronto.

JD [00:12:38] University of Toronto library.

BR [00:12:41] 1972. Were you quite active in that local?

JD [00:12:43] Right at the beginning. Absolutely. I ran a photocopy booth. My sister and I, Barb's sister, both worked at the photocopy booth. You're photographing books. You know, we're making like two bucks an hour. You're photographing books. You can't put the cover on the photocopy machine down because it'll hurt the spine of the book. The cover is up and you get flashing green lights, constantly, constantly. We had blinding headaches by the time we went home at night. We asked our supervisor if anything he could do.

JD [00:13:13] You're not leaving? Why would I do anything for you? We went to the chief steward in the CUPE local because the part timers weren't organized. He immediately went to the boss and said, 'You're going to do something about this.' Within days we got really strong sunglasses which prevented the headaches. It was health and safety on the job. That was the very first union issue that I was involved in. As soon as I switched to a full time job, I was kind of shop steward before I was off probation. The next year I was chief steward and then I was president when we led us, we were the first CUPE local to strike against Pierre Trudeau's wage controls. We thought we weren't going to be covered by the law. That was the legal advice we've been given, CUPE national, who in this case were wrong. We were on strike at U of T library against wage controls. Then of course also participated the next year in the Canada-wide general strike against wage controls.

JD [00:14:13] I worked there for several years and then worked after that at the Metro Toronto library shipping and receiving and delivering mail, which was a great job because you got to go through the building three times a day. It's a great job for a union activist. I could get the strike bulletins out right away. I was there until 1979, 1989, I'm sorry, 1989.

BR [00:14:43] That's quite a while.

JD [00:14:44] Yes.

BR [00:14:45] You were president of that local.

JD [00:14:47] For a while.

BR [00:14:47] For a while.

JD [00:14:48] Had different position as chief steward, education, president.

BR [00:14:52] Are there particular library campaigns or strikes or bargaining that stand out?

JD [00:14:58] Yeah, for sure. I was involved in three strikes, actually. At U of T library when we were on strike against wage controls, I remember Gil Levine, who was the CUPE research director at the time and kind of a mentor of mine came and watched, was there for the meeting. He remarked and he wrote afterwards about how it was a United Nations of workers. You have these women, Eastern European women, who didn't want much to do with trade unions. They thought it smacked of socialism and communism. You had women from India wearing beautiful saris, women from the Caribbean. It was a really multiracial workforce. This was their first experience with anything like this. I have just the most incredible memories of when we finished with the strike vote. The young activists, the lefties, they knew the words of Solidarity Forever, but nobody else did. All of a sudden you had these women in saris and these Eastern European women all sitting together with the long haired hippy looking guys singing Solidarity Forever, which was just a beautiful memory.

JD [00:16:14] When I was at Metro Library, we were on strike once for four days. That was quick and easy and we won. Then we were out for two months, over 104 concessions, 104 concessions. Tough, 1984 tough, really a tough strike but we were incredibly creative. I chaired the strike support and the strike coordination and community solidarity committee. We had to make it fun. You have to make this a good experience and you have to mobilize community support if you're going to be successful. We had worked with many community groups on issues like LGBTQ rights, on access, multilingual library collection with multicultural communities, the women's movement. We organized weekly rallies to bring support. One was an authors, poets and playwrights day, which included Margaret Atwood which garnered a lot of support, and a multicultural day and a women's day and a picket line fashion show where they were, costumes were judged for warmth, colour, style, and political correctness, political message. We did a lot of community mobilization. It was, I think, a really good example of unions and community coming together for mutual support. Yes, I have really wonderful memories. It was a great, a wonderful group of feminists who led the local and we did some good things.

BR [00:17:57] When I worked for CUPE, I always really enjoyed working with library workers.

JD [00:18:03] They're not the timid folks, of the caricature.

BR [00:18:10] After that or during that, you became increasingly involved at the regional and provincial and national levels of CUPE. Who influenced you in that and how did that evolve? I'm thinking Grace Hartman was a role model?

JD [00:18:28] Grace Hartman was president. My first CUPE convention it was Stan Little. That was 1973, and Grace Hartman was elected in 1975. Until many years later, Grace

and I had a sort of a contradictory relationship. I was blown away that CUPE had a woman president, the first female president of a major union in North America, not just Canada. She was a strong feminist. She was a committed peace activist and came from a very progressive history. But it was the seventies and into the early eighties, and I thought Grace was far too moderate, shall we say. We were pushing faster and harder and wanted more fight back campaigns. In my earlier days, when I was far left, she would say to somebody, 'Oh, I really like that, I really like Judy. I think she's I think she's really good. Too bad she's not on our side,' which sort of characterized our relationship, I think. I thought she was a great symbol, but I thought she wasn't militant enough, until I was elected president.

JD [00:19:50] I realized and I walked in her shoes and I realized what she was up against. I mean, it was tough going for me. I was only the second woman to lead a national union in Canada. If it was tough for me, that's when I really realized what kind of hurdles she had to overcome. The book that was written about her after she died, which CUPE helped to fund, was called "A Woman for Her Time." Shereen Bowditch, who was her administrative officer, that was something she said about Grace to the author, Susan Crean, "She was a woman for her time." I think she pushed the envelope as far as she could for her time. Women who came after her were able to build on that and push the envelope further and harder and faster.

BR [00:20:45] Footsteps.

JD [00:20:45] Yeah, walk in those footsteps.

BR [00:20:47] Were there others that you were mentored by during that time?

JD [00:20:52] I was very close to Julie Davis, who eventually became the director of organizing and servicing in CUPE and was my CUPE staff rep. At first she thought I was a tad too radical because I led a bit of a wildcat about a settled, a tentative agreement. We made our peace and we became very close.

JD [00:21:19] What always inspired me most was my co-workers and my fellow activists. That is really through my whole life and the labour movement. That's what has inspired me the most, is just seeing people's courage, seeing their commitment and the work that they do every day, seeing their commitment to fight for their rights, seeing people grow.

JD [00:21:41] Someone said once, if only people could see the union from the inside out rather than the outside in, what a different thing they would see. That's one of the beauties of trade unions that people don't know about, that a worker who no one else might consider a leader becomes a leader in their own workplace and potentially more broadly than that, because of their involvement in struggles, because of what they learn from the union, because of their growing sense of confidence and solidarity when they take collective action. Those are my mentors, really. It sounds corny, but it really is true.

JD [00:22:23] When I was national president, whenever I was going crazy, having to deal with administrative stuff, and my staff knew, get her out, get her out with members, she'll feel a lot better again. It was true.

BR [00:22:39] Just thinking of, as you're heading towards the national at that time, you were president of the metro council?

JD [00:22:47] I was. We had a very active district council in metro Toronto, and I served as president there for a few years. We developed a newspaper called the "CUPE Metro News" that I edited and came out quarterly. We actually had a paper route, a CUPE member with a van and me. We would get them bundled at the printer according to the size of the local. We had our paper route and we managed to do it all in one night delivering them to local unions, because we didn't have the internet then.

BR [00:23:21] It was pre-internet organizing.

JD [00:23:23] It was pre-internet. It was pre-social media. We built the abortion caravan through snail mail. This was a step above that. We did active strike support and political grassroots political action the old fashioned way. We couldn't print out labels for members and stick them on envelopes and mail stuff. Some locals would be willing to give us their mailing lists. Then we would look up the postal code, one by one, do it by hand, for tens of thousands of CUPE members in metro Toronto. It was a wonderful time and it was also a time of the big fights for pay equity in Ontario that were eventually successful in getting a pay equity law.

BR [00:24:10] Yeah, something B.C. could still.

JD [00:24:13] Indeed, indeed.

BR [00:24:14] Yeah. These steps and this activism was eventually leading you to run for national secretary-treasurer.

JD [00:24:24] Right. I was elected to the Ontario Division Executive Board and to the National Executive Board in that same time period. We adopted a little baby, a three week old, so it was a challenging time. Then Gary, my husband, who had worked in the railroad and was a union activist, he decided he was going to go to law school and did. Here we were, a brand new baby. I went on strike for two months. He went off to law school and we made it. We got through it.

JD [00:25:03] It was also a time when I had sort of become more respectable by then. I wasn't facing red-baiting much anymore. I did in the election when I ran for higher office, for sure, but I was becoming more respectable and people would vote for me at conventions. Then in 1989, I ran for national secretary-treasurer.

BR [00:25:26] You were a member of the executive board from Ontario?

JD [00:25:28] I was a regional vice-president. Oh, yes, I was first vice-president towards the end and then a regional vice-president on the national executive board.

BR [00:25:41] Who was division president in Ontario at that time?

JD [00:25:45] Lucy Nicholson.

BR [00:25:46] Right.

JD [00:25:47] I ran against her for president and lost. That was a tough time. There was a lot of red-baiting back then, 'Psst, she used to be a communist,' not said publicly, but certainly said a lot. The other thing that was said a lot was, she has a new child. How can

she possibly take on the responsibilities of this more than full time responsibility of being division president if she had a small child?

JD [00:26:20] I faced the same thing when I ran for national secretary-treasurer. What I wanted to say was, because I succeeded Jeff Rose in the end as president, and Jeff Rose had a child the same age as mine, a year younger than mine, and his wife was a neurosurgeon. I always had to button my lips. It continued after I was president. 'Oh, who's taking care of your kid?' Either Gary or I was. 'Oh, he must be such an angel.' I would say, 'He's a good guy for sure and we really strongly support each other.' What I wanted to say was, 'Why didn't anybody ever ask Jeff Rose, who was taking care of his child? His wife was a neurosurgeon, so she didn't have much time. I didn't, of course.'

BR [00:27:11] Tough, tough for women. You ran for secretary-treasurer in 1989. How did that campaign unfold and what were some of the main things you accomplished once you were elected as secretary-treasurer?

JD [00:27:24] It was a difficult campaign because there were three men who were also running. One garnered just a handful of votes, but the others had very, very well-financed campaigns. Mike Dumler from British Columbia, and his name will come back, local 1000. Can we cut this? Are you able to edit this? John Murphy.

BR [00:28:04] John Murphy.

JD [00:28:04] Okay, so should we start? We'll start that segment over.

BR [00:28:07] Okay. You're running for election for national secretary-treasurer. What was that campaign like?

JD [00:28:14] Yes. So Jean-Claude Laniel announced he was stepping down quite unexpectedly. He had only been there for four years, I think. It was quite the race. There were four people running. One of the candidates only had a handful of votes, but the other two campaigns were very, very well financed. John Murphy from Ontario, from Ontario Hydro and Mike Dumler from CUPE BC, CUPE BC president. A lot of money spent in that campaign. I crisscrossed the country, did fundraising, attended division conventions, slept on people's couches, met as many people as I could. In the end, I won on the third ballot. It was very, very tense. It was very tense. John Murphy from Ontario Hydro was ahead of me on the first two ballots. It was a matter of whose votes will go to who. The gap started to narrow when it got to the second ballot. Then on the third ballot there was this incredible moment where everybody's looking to see what's going to happen next. CUPE Manitoba president and the CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador president walked across the convention hall with cameras trailing them and stood beside me and hugged me. At that point, we knew that we had it. I was elected on the third ballot.

JD [00:29:45] I had to immediately deal with huge financial problems in the union. A vote had taken place immediately. A vote had taken place either before or after, where people, some of the supporters of the other candidates, not Mike Dumler, of course, decided to vote against very, very much needed increase that we needed for the defence fund in particular. It was two very difficult years.

JD [00:30:19] I had always been this social activist and union activist and wanted to do all kinds of things, but my job was to fix the finances of the union and make sure that we had a balanced budget. We had to cut some programs, tried to do it by hurting as little as

possible. I had to build the confidence of the members that finances were in good hands if we were going to get the dues increase that we needed. Fortunately, we were able to do that. We did turn the finances around, and so we got a good increase at the next convention.

JD [00:30:59] Jeff Rose announced just literally months before the convention that he was going to be stepping down, so I was running for president without much notice. That one was quite a bit easier. The decisive one was really the one two years before.

BR [00:31:15] It was easier to run for president.

JD [00:31:17] It was. It was sort of almost a settled, I didn't take it for granted. I always campaigned like I was the underdog, but I think someone else ran, but I think it was about 90 to 10. The previous election was about the direction of the union. The person who ran for president who was ahead on the first two ballots went on to become an executive vice-president of Ontario Hydro. When I think back, I mean, many people think back, I think they realize the union would have gone in a very different direction.

BR [00:31:56] What were some of the themes of your presidential campaign? What were some of the things you were promising to do?

JD [00:32:04] Coordinated bargaining. B.C. was already ahead and Quebec was, but most provinces, there was not a lot of coordinated bargaining happening, CUPE locals bargaining autonomously. We needed that greater strength. Cutbacks and contracting out and concessions were raining down on us from every direction so a major thrust was building really effective campaigns against contracting out and privatization. I was always committed to ensuring that we kept equality on the front burner, so we did regular campaigns, 'Up with women's wages.' Even though all workers were being attacked, we couldn't let the gains we'd made for equality slide backwards. We had to keep moving forwards.

JD [00:32:56] It was also about building strong community coalitions, very much like we had done back in my local union, at metro library. Mutual support, not one way support, not expecting the community to be there for us when we needed them, only. Us being there for them and them being there for us because we had common interests and certainly around health care, around education, around everything, the privatization that was happening. Absolutely, we had common interests, so that was a big theme that we have to build those alliances.

JD [00:33:35] It was also very much, we didn't use these terms yet, it was also very much about building stronger locals. We did a lot of organizing the unorganized. We were committed to continuing to organize the unorganized and CUPE grew by about 10,000 members a year and has continued to. But it was about building that internal strength. You know, we could get a lot of people out sometimes to demonstrations, but did we have the rock solid strength in our locals to be able to resist concessions, to be able to resist privatization and cut backs, the strength to take on whatever it is, from fighting a grievance to bargaining a contract to fighting a cutback? It was it was a few years later that we started talking in terms of organizing the organized, but that's very much what it was about, that we have to consciously and everything we do in the union be thinking about the immediate thing, but also thinking about how does this strengthen the union?

BR [00:34:33] Organizing the organized was a big theme.

JD [00:34:35] Yes, it was.

BR [00:34:36] Presidency. What kind of steps did the union take to implement that idea?

JD [00:34:43] First of all, there was a bunch of resistance. There was a lot of resistance to lots of things along the way. There always is resistance to change and there were certainly people who'd been around the union for a very long time and used to doing things one way. In this case it was about servicing versus organizing. We tried to say, 'No, no, we still need servicing, of course we do.' We still need staff reps who will bargain contracts with locals and file grievances, but we need to be talking about how we do the servicing and that we involve members in whatever we can so that we are genuinely building the union's strength and so that workers don't see the union as a third party. There's workers, there's the employer, and then there's the union. No, workers and union, workers need to get to a place where they see them as the same thing. That's the way we will have the strength to take on whatever is coming at us.

JD [00:35:43] We had to do a lot of explaining and a lot of sort of internal education. It was really about revamping our education programs so that we gave people the skills to do that kind of internal organizing in a local, not just how you file a grievance, how do you develop collective bargaining demands, but how you involve members so that sometimes with grievances it's filing, sometimes you can do collective action. If the right isn't in your collective agreement, maybe we could fight for it too, but other ways. It was about looking at everything. It was also about saying coalition building is something we're doing better and better at the national level, we're doing better and better at a provincial level. We need to be doing it also community by community, both because it will mean that our locals are stronger and have better support in the community and also because we're a union that is committed to the greater social good. That's what CUPE's always been about, a leader on the front line for public services and for social justice.

BR [00:36:48] You were national president from 1991 to 2003.

JD [00:36:52] I was.

BR [00:36:54] During that time period on this point about coalitions, I think a major theme of your time as president was working with community.

JD [00:37:01] Yes.

BR [00:37:01] There were big national issues at that time around the North American Free Trade Agreement.

JD [00:37:06] Yes.

BR [00:37:07] For example with health care.

JD [00:37:08] Medicare and water and power.

BR [00:37:10] Maybe elaborate a little bit, please, on that kind of coalition work. What some of the obstacles to that might have been both in the labour movement and otherwise?

JD [00:37:22] I think CUPE members took to it because we thought it was really important to have national campaigns so that people weren't taking on these fights one by one, and so that we could put them on the public agenda and build awareness amongst Canadians about how serious the threats were. When we launched our first national medicare campaign, it was, 'Oh, you guys are crying wolf.' They weren't seeing the problems, yet privatization was chunks, one chunk after another. These things don't come all at once because then there would be huge resistance. They come bit by bit, province by province, hospital by hospital, one service here, one service there, higher MSP premium.

JD [00:38:11] We thought it was important to pull all of that together so we launched our national medicare campaign with a two hour TV telethon featuring Shirley Douglas. We had people watching from across the country, including a bowling alley in P.E.I. This was about giving health care workers especially, but CUPE members, the confidence and the inspiration that we could do this and we should do this. Canadians supported them because we had people phoning in and pledging their support. The most important piece was then moving to giving tools to locals on the locals' provincial divisions' councils on the ground across the country. If it was strictly national coalitions, it's only talking heads, maybe get media clips. We needed to do this organizing on the ground and that's what all of our national campaigns were about.

JD [00:39:07] Water. When we first went to convention with a policy paper saying our water is not for sale, I think that was 1997, it's like 'Water. What do you mean? Nobody's ever going to try and sell off air or water.' Actually it was already happening. We had already seen some major privatization in several communities and threats of them elsewhere across the country, including the new water facility, the Seymour water filtration plant, which was going to be originally a public- private partnership. They were popping up everywhere, but they weren't being pulled together and understood. We had brilliant researchers, and communications folks, and they looked at what had happened in other countries with water like in the U.K. when Margaret Thatcher privatized water. Tens of thousands of people were cut off water, the aged, people with disabilities, no access to a vital source of life and health. We brought in those examples and we built campaigns in one community after another.

JD [00:40:18] Then we did the same thing with Hydro, especially where we were seeing big threats. In Ontario the Conservative government decided to sell off, to break up Ontario Hydro and then Hydro One, which was the transmission part, to sell it off to the private sector. We decided in this case to launch, there was a lot of community organizing about it, but we also decided to take them to court. CUPE and the Communications Energy and Paper Workers Union took the Ontario government to court and we stopped the privatization of Hydro One.

BR [00:40:57] It was huge.

JD [00:40:58] It was huge. It was the most popular thing we ever did. I got more letters and emails from the public about that. We did that even though the local, the CUPE local at Ontario Hydro, had supported the privatization because Premier Mike Harris, one of the most rightwing premiers the country's ever seen, promised them that they could keep their jobs. I certainly had challenges and resistance along the way. We definitely did. That was one of them. We had duelling press conferences where we said we cannot allow the biggest electrical utility in the province--it would have been the biggest, even bigger than the CN Rail sell off. Most people don't realize we once had trains that were in the public

domain. It was massive and the right thing to do. Even though it caused--yeah, we cracked a lot of eggs in that one, but it was the right thing to do.

BR [00:42:01] Just switching just a little bit during your time there as president of CUPE national, which was the largest union in the country. That's majority female membership.

JD [00:42:08] Yes, it is.

BR [00:42:11] Much of the leadership of other unions and of the labour centrals was male-dominated.

JD [00:42:16] Yes.

BR [00:42:17] How did you navigate that and what kind of support networks did women union leaders put together at that time?

JD [00:42:24] It was tough. There was a lot of sexism inside CUPE for sure, and especially long time directors who thought, 'Who's this uppity young female?' I said, 'young,' I was in my forties, but comparatively young, uppity young female who thinks that she's going to give us direction. But there was a strong women's movement within the union movement. There were strong equity committees.

JD [00:42:56] Uphill battle for sure, but nothing like being in the Canadian Labour Congress and being the only female head of a union at that table for several years. Eventually, a number of women were elected as presidents in other unions, and we had a critical mass, but for several years, I was the only one. There were women in affirmative action positions. The six biggest unions all had their top officer and a senior woman leader. Nancy Riche of course was the vice-president and then secretary-treasurer. Nancy and I bonded. We bonded literally, holding hands sometimes under a table in meetings when things were--that was tough. That was tough. A lot of table thumping, a lot of polarized debate, people not listening to each other and a lot of swearing.

JD [00:44:00] I remember Nancy Riche in one of these meetings, not in the full executive council, which is huge, but in a smaller meeting of (unclear) unions, she swore. One of the guys says, 'Excuse me, sister, I wish you wouldn't use words like that.' Now, this was--Bob White was there, Buzz Hargrove, Leo Gerard. I mean, they swore like troopers, but when Nancy did, uh uh. Women weren't supposed to do that.

JD [00:44:32] Bob White was incredibly supportive to women. He loved strong women. He was, aside from Nancy, he was my strongest ally there. Bob was the kind of guy--I remember when I was first elected, I called up some of the other union leaders just to talk over issues. When I was president, I would pop into the offices of the staff right next to me. What do you think about this? Can we talk about that? I thought these are my peers. I'd pick up the phone. 'Oh, well, it's just, that's easy you just, you know--it was treated as a sign of weakness if you wanted to get advice or consult or share experiences. I kind of learned not to do that, but Bob White would call me for advice. I called him for advice, had dinners with him regularly, just an amazing, a wonderful human being. One of my best memories of him that really showed what this man was about, in 1992, it's six months after I'm elected president, we have a province-wide illegal strike in New Brunswick, 20,000 workers, not just broader public sector, but also a lot of direct government employees. The government was threatening to decertify the entire union. It was the toughest, the most terrifying set of bargaining I had ever been in. I was new. In the end, we won. We

negotiated our way out of wage controls and it was a historic victory. Towards the end, Bob White had just been elected president, and I'd flown out to convention overnight to speak to the convention, then flown back. When I got back, they said why don't we invite Bob White out to speak at a big rally? You and Bob can speak at big rally. I called Bob and said, 'We'd really love you to come to this rally. He said, 'Well, Jude, I'll do whatever you ask me to do. But let me tell you this, kiddo. You and your team know what you're doing. You're going to win this thing. When you do,' (I have goosebumps remembering this.) 'When you do, I want people to know that you and your team won this, not that Bob White rode in on his big horse and fixed it all.' That's really profound. The top labour leader in the country, a man, who people said had a big ego, but who always said to me, 'You need an ego big enough to do this job, but no bigger.' which is another priceless expression. That he would say that, is the ultimate way of supporting a woman leader.

BR [00:47:20] Yeah, he was amazing. It's true.

JD [00:47:22] Yeah.

BR [00:47:26] You're well known as a powerful and inspirational orator, and so could you maybe expand or talk about why strong public speaking is an important leadership skill for union leaders? How did you develop such a strong speaking style? Any tips on how to inspire?

JD [00:47:50] I was doing public speaking in elementary school. Actually, from kindergarten on, when we had weekly assemblies in my elementary school, somebody each week had to give the Lord's Prayer or the salute to the flag or lead in singing O Canada and because I always seemed to be a pretty outgoing, extroverted kid, I got picked to do it. I guess that was my first experience of public speaking. Strange, but true. I took part in debates. I guess when the teachers realized I could do public speaking, they sent me to a special course or classroom, I don't remember, about debating.

JD [00:48:43] It's not that I ever learned it somewhere. I think some people are able to bring the passion and the feeling they have inside, out. Other people have the same passion inside and believe all the same things, but it's harder for them to express what's going on inside. What I say to people is, the advice that I give, is that you have to speak from the heart. You have to think about what matters to the people you're talking to. Think about what really matters to you, and find ways to connect on those things.

JD [00:49:25] It's not all about statistics. If you go do a statistic, tell the story first. Gather those stories, and that's what I did a lot of. When I travelled the country, I heard people's stories and then I told those stories when I went elsewhere, because those stories were so inspirational, they gave me strength and I found that they could really give other people strength.

JD [00:49:51] It's really easy when you're in the labour movement or in politics to get stuck to printed sheets of paper. It happens to all of us because we're rushing around and we don't have--communications people I've worked with both in the labour movement and in government will say that I am, my red pen is sharper than anyone they've ever worked with. I would rewrite. If other people wrote my speeches, I rewrote them a million times because they needed to reflect what I wanted to say.

JD [00:50:26] I think fundamentally it's about practice. It's about starting with something small. We would always say, think about one thing you want to say, it can be one minute,

and go to the microphone. Practice it, have some people stand beside you and you'll build your courage and it'll get easier. I didn't always say it will get easier. I said, 'And then the next time you can speak for longer.' After that you can do this, then after that you can do that, because I was always nervous when I spoke. Sometimes I was terrified, but I learned once I started, I loved it. Some people hate it. Some people hate knocking on doors. I loved knocking on doors, and I loved public speaking because of the connection that it gave, the connection I was able to have with people.

BR [00:51:22] That's exactly it, making a connection and telling stories.

JD [00:51:25] Yeah.

BR [00:51:26] Thank you for that. During your tenure as national president, both the Vancouver Municipal Regional Employees' Union here in B.C. and the B.C. Hospital Employees' Union rejoined the house of labour, rejoined CUPE later, outside of the house for a period of time. What was your role in that and how was it accomplished and how significant was it that these workers came back?

JD [00:51:51] Oh, it was it was huge. The VMREU was 5,000 inside municipal workers in Vancouver, an active local, lots of committees, involved in the community, but outside the Federation of Labour and outside the Canadian Labour Congress. I don't actually remember how the approach happened first, but yes, I was directly involved in those discussions and negotiations. It's about--people think of merger talks, corporations merging--this is really about listening and learning and trying to understand the organization and how it works and who its members are and what they need. Then trying to figure out how CUPE can better meet those needs and persuading them that it makes more sense for us to be together. That's what we did with VMREU. They were ready. There was a lot of internal debate in VMREU, it was far from unanimous, but there was a big appetite for getting more involved in the labour movement. A really important way to do that was to be part of the same union that represents the overwhelming majority of municipal workers in British Columbia and across the country.

JD [00:53:10] With the Hospital Employees' Union, they had been part of CUPE originally. When CUPE was created in 1963 when NUPE and NUPSE merged to create CUPE, the Hospital Employees' Union were part of one of the founding unions. They were a provincial self-servicing local and they had all of their own staff. They didn't have CUPE staff reps working with them. They did all of their own servicing and their own strike fund. Those were pretty complicated negotiations because when they left, they were in CUPE when the union was created in '63, they left in 1970. They were told when they left that they would, if they ever came back, be able to have a different dues structure than other unions because it had been promised to them from the beginning and they would continue to do their own servicing. There were a number of tricky things that we had to overcome, but we got there. I think really what that was about was HEU was a super active progressive union fighting for better health care to protect their members and fighting for better health care.

JD [00:54:30] CUPE National was campaigning for medicare. It was a big, serious, important priority. When I ran for president, it was one of my main commitments was we will lead a national campaign around medicare. They saw what we were doing and they liked it. They wanted to be part of a national organization so that they would be stronger and we would be stronger. That was really fundamental, about health care workers being united in order to fight for health care workers and to fight privatization.

BR [00:55:01] Agreed. It was a big change. It was important.

JD [00:55:04] It sure was.

BR [00:55:06] For both those unions. While you were president of CUPE National, there were NDP governments here in B.C. in the nineties and in other provinces. What was it like to work with the B.C. NDP governments of Mike Harcourt and Glen Clark and for a small time Dan Miller, Ujjal Dosanjh?

JD [00:55:28] Yeah, I didn't have much contact directly with Dan Miller and Ujjal Dosanjh, except in the context of some national medicare campaigning when they were at premiers' meetings. We met and were sort of trying to get them to stand up, with the Prime Minister and with various premiers across the country. We did have direct contact with the Harcourt Government and Glen Clark.

JD [00:55:55] The one I remember the best. Well, I do remember the time when school board workers were legislated and being at a provincial council meeting where CUPE members were protesting. I remember that. But there's a very positive one that is--my greatest memory is this. Canadian Airlines was in big trouble. I think it was '97, '96, '97, constant warfare between the two airlines. The head of Canadian Airlines said they were about to go under. He was going to start bringing the planes down out of the sky unless CUPE made major concessions--really, really tough. Previously, national presidents had not jumped into bargaining, very rarely, but I did many times when the stakes were really high and when either I was asked or when I thought that they could use somebody from outside. In New Brunswick, it was to help kick open doors with the premier who wouldn't talk. The government wouldn't talk to us anymore because it was an illegal strike. In this case, this employer, the boss was just intransigent. I flew out and spent several days with them. At the end of the day, they did end up giving up some wages, but we worked really hard to get the federal government and the provincial government to put up some money to reduce the impact of the cuts. The federal government refused. We went and met with Glen Clark. There'd been some discussions back and forth and in the end he agreed to put up, I think the amount was 25 million, I don't quite remember, but it meant that low wage workers were protected. That was huge. It meant that the planes kept flying, so to speak. I remember being holed up, it was the first time I was in the B.C. cabinet office, didn't know I'd ever be back there again. Once we had an agreement, he didn't let us out of his office, as is the case with all tough bargaining, right? You don't let people walk away in case they change their minds. We were in there. Adrian Dix was his chief of staff and Geoff Meggs was his communications director. That's when I first met them. We had a press conference the next day. That's what settled it. That was huge. It was about saving jobs and putting your money where your mouth is.

BR [00:58:52] Can you contrast a bit or compare the labour movement's relationship with that government with, for example, the Bob Rae government? That's the same time period.

JD [00:59:03] Yes. It was excruciatingly painful at what was called a social contract in Ontario. We started out with such great hopes. Nobody ever expected the NDP to get elected in Ontario. They didn't either. It was a total shock. The voters surprised everybody. I still remember being in convocation hall when they were being sworn in and seeing close women friends of mine, trade unionists, feminists. There were 23 trade unionists in that caucus, and they started out really strongly. Many other provincial governments were cutting and slashing and they didn't go overboard, but they did modest increases in spending and investing in infrastructure but they were under enormous--it was a recession.

They were under enormous pressure to start slashing spending. I think they got really bad economic advice. They got advice from many people but the advice they accepted, in my opinion and the opinion of the rest of the labour movement and progressive economists, was mistaken.

JD [01:00:26] They started out saying, we're going to fight unemployment. Other people are fighting the deficit. We're going to fight unemployment in the recession. By the second budget they were single-minded about fighting the deficit and started freezing funding for municipalities, cutting funding for social programs, and then starting to say, we need to meet with public sector unions because we need some kind of agreement.

JD [01:00:55] The first time we met with them about this, after listening to the Premier, I said, 'Well, you know in B.C., health care unions have just negotiated an accord with the Harcourt government. Glen Clark was finance minister. The health care accord, three year agreement, a very modest wage increase in exchange for job security. Health care is going to be restructured significantly. Many jobs will move from hospital to the community. People will get retraining. They'll have a guaranteed job. It was agreed on and it worked. When he first started talking about some kind of agreement, I said, 'When we talk next, we should look at what they did in B.C.'

JD [01:01:41] The second meeting, the premier says to the heads of the public sector unions and some private sector, 'We're about to hit a debt wall. Finances of the province are going to crash. We're going to reach a point where the banks won't lend us money anymore. We have to act immediately and drastically.' I brought copies of the B.C. health care accord with me and gave them out. He starts talking about social contracts in Europe. Well, if this is what you mean by social contract, premier, we're more than willing to talk. Our health care workers tried this last year with the provincial government. They were turned down. With your government, we're more than willing to talk about this but you have to understand health care workers bargain provincially, but most of our other folks don't. We don't have the power, the division president or the national president, to impose anything, but if we could set a pattern in health care we can play a role in persuading people that these patterns make sense in all of the other places where CUPE works. It won't happen overnight. 'Premier, this is a quick fix, it can't be a quick fix. It won't work that way.' 'Well, we don't have the time.' 'If we don't take the time, it will never happen.' Back and forth, back and forth.

JD [01:03:01] By the third meeting that we had, they really weren't listening anymore. 'We have to act immediately, drastically. Our finances are going to crash.' I thought we were still going to have more meetings, but within a few days they announced they were--We said, 'You have to do it sector by sector.' They call a meeting of hundreds of people, public sector employers and unions, public sector unions from across the province, big and small, all in the same room to have a discussion. To use the premier's theme, 'We're all in the same boat now,' which is a song that he wrote and loved to sing. The bottom line was we're cutting \$7 billion out of a \$17 billion deficit and we're going to do it now. I could talk about this for a long time. It was excruciatingly painful. The bottom line is they didn't listen.

JD [01:04:02] We might have been able to make it work, I can't say we could have, we might have been able to make it work if it had started a year before and if it was a genuine social contract. In the end it was a 5% rollback. They said no, a wage freeze. Our members would have accepted a wage freeze, but it was a wage freeze with 12 unpaid days off a year. I remember saying, 'Do you think we're stupid enough to not understand that 12 unpaid days a year amounts to a 5% wage cut?' We tried for weeks and weeks

still to see if it could work. In the end, our members said, 'No way.' If you had a wage freeze and job security, we're willing to give this a try and do the negotiations, CUPE has local autonomy, do it sector by sector or local by local. We're willing to go in that direction but it can't be imposed. In the end they legislated a social contract.

JD [01:04:58] The divisions inside the labour movement were enormous. The OFL, the Ontario Federation of Labour ended up voting not to support NDP candidates in the next election if they voted for the social contract. The recriminations went on for years. For a lot of our members, they lost hope that change was possible. They had such great hopes, and they lost hope.

BR [01:05:28] That government lost the next election.

JD [01:05:30] They lost and some people tried to blame CUPE but their numbers were at 22% before the social contract talks began. They'd gone from 38% at the election to 22% and then after the social contract plummeted to 16%. Most polling said really you should be focusing on growing the economy and stimulating the economy, not on fighting the deficit. They were getting very worried because it wasn't just \$2 billion of wage cuts. This seven point-- this was also billions of dollars of cuts to health care, education and social spending. People were hurting because their families were hurting.

JD [01:06:10] I keep coming back to Eugene Kostyra, who was my executive assistant for a couple of years and the former finance minister in Manitoba, a lifelong New Democrat, very smart, wise and very modest man. He met with them several times because he was a former finance minister and he cared deeply about them succeeding. He tried to say to them early on, what you need to be focusing on, he said, is your legacy. It's kind of a fluke that you got elected. I'm sure he said it gently, but it was kind of a fluke and you probably won't get re-elected but you need to be thinking boldly about legacy projects for which the NDP will always be remembered. You might not win the next election but if it makes a difference in people's lives, then it's there for the future. It's something other right wing governments can't take away. His second piece of advice was, 'Don't ever abandon your base.' Unfortunately, their legacy was the social contract and they abandoned their base.

BR [01:07:21] Back in B.C., the government was re-elected in 1996.

JD [01:07:25] It was, yes, it was.

BR [01:07:30] There are still legacies from the Barrett administration that are still in place.

JD [01:07:34] Exactly. That's what Eugene was trying to say to them. He gave he gave a number of examples of what other provinces have done, as other people have over the years. It was in NDP provinces where health care premiums were eliminated, where public homecare programs weren't eliminated, public auto insurance, the ambulance service, agricultural land reserve. I don't think we knew about that at the time. Those are legacies that live on.

JD [01:08:11] It was really a failure to listen and it was fundamentally not recognizing that unions and governments have different roles. Unions and political parties have different roles. We were staunch supporters of the NDP in CUPE, the other public sector unions, not so much, but we were strong, strong supporters. They expected us to do what they wanted us to do because we supported them. They just couldn't accept that our first obligation is to our members and they wouldn't accept that in CUPE's case, the national

president or the division president doesn't get to override collective agreements. Autonomy, some people say it's CUPE's greatest weakness, other its greatest strength. Whatever, it can be both, but the reality is it exists. People need to be persuaded, not forced. We didn't have the power to do what they wanted us to do, even if we had wanted to.

JD [01:09:17] They stopped listening. They believed they were going to, I think it was sincere, they believed they were going to hit a debt wall and the finances of the province would crash and that they had to act quickly. They wanted to show us videos from New Zealand where animals were put down in the zoo because the country was facing a major financial crash. No, we're not watching a video, but we have some ideas about alternatives. You could invest in infrastructure, you could do a wealth tax, we had a lot of alternatives which they would not listen to and proceeded down that road. It was it was tragic.

JD [01:09:55] Then the Mike Harris government came in at that time. (Bill Vander Zalm and Bennett, they were very right wing, too.) They were super right wing. They slashed and burned and everything the NDP had brought in that was progressive was destroyed. The lasting legacy was the social contract, sadly.

BR [01:10:27] Well, another right wing government that slashed and burned was the B.C. Liberals launched a full out assault on labour after.

JD [01:10:37] Absolutely.

BR [01:10:38] being in government in 2001. What did that mean for CUPE National and CUPE, and what stands out for you in that time?

JD [01:10:54] This is backtracking but when I was first elected to the NEB was in the time of Operation Solidarity. B.C. was always like this shining example to the rest of the country. Quebec had enormous mobilizations like that, but this was people, the whole labour movement and community groups. I know there were lots of strains. You learn that afterwards, within the coalition, but I remember Jeff Rose, the president flying out to B.C. immediately after he was elected, to be part of Operation Solidarity.

JD [01:11:34] It was devastating. We knew, we had seen pieces of this happen in other provinces, and now it was happening in a province where the NDP had been in power several times, where they had done all kinds of progressive stuff, including stuff you were involved in, Blair, about highways and employment equity and the health care accord. One thing after another, and with the strokes of a few legislative pens, collective bargaining rights were just wiped away for teachers, for health care workers. On and on it was going to go. From the beginning, the national union pledged its complete solidarity, to CUPE B.C. and to HEU in taking on those fights.

JD [01:12:33] I remember being out here for some of the big marches. One of the first, there was the legislation against the teachers and then the legislation against health care workers, which was really unprecedented to strip--other governments have rolled back wages, including the Rae government--but stripping collective agreements of fundamental rights like the right to negotiate around job security or in the case of teachers, class size. That was enormous.

JD [01:13:08] I remember, being in B.C. on summer holidays because we had a place on Mayne Island, we used to come out here, seeing the first big announcements starting to roll out about the layoffs. Then after we moved here, after my family and I moved here, standing on the steps of Vancouver General Hospital when workers were on provincewide illegal strike, hearing Chris Allnutt, then the secretary business manager, talking bravely and people cheering, and just having this horrible sick stomach, feeling in my stomach about what was going to happen. As we know, they were not only legislated back to work, they took a 15% wage rollback. After that, the contracting out started, the biggest layoff of women workers in Canadian history, 8 or 9,000 women, a large majority of them new Canadians or people of colour. They were making 18 bucks an hour and good benefits and a pension beforehand. They were cut to ten bucks an hour and had to, of course, apply for their jobs all over again. Yeah, it was horrifying to watch it unfold. At the time I remember feeling powerless. I could go to a picket line and join the demonstration, but powerless to do anything about it. That was hard.

BR [01:15:02] Those were particularly Bills 29 and 94.

JD [01:15:06] That's right.

BR [01:15:08] You've described the devastating impact. What kind of fight back was CUPE organizing about those? I guess it was very difficult once the legislation was passed.

JD [01:15:21] Other unions were, there were big rallies happening and support from the Federation of Labour. CUPE and HEU working together. The labour movement really came together strongly around it, but it was the law. It happened. I think there was discussion of a general strike. I wasn't here for those discussions, but in the end of the day it happened. With the Campbell government it was not going to be undone. That was clear. It was not going to be undone.

BR [01:16:02] In that time period, right after being president of CUPE National, you moved to British Columbia, What tempted you to move to B.C. and what campaigns or work did you get involved in?

JD [01:16:16] Well, Gary was from Montreal. He grew up in Montreal. I grew up in Sarnia, Ontario, and then lived in Toronto. We thought about it, are we going to go to Montreal? His French is pretty good. Mine was, eh. Toronto, it was not his home. We decided we loved British Columbia. We already had a cabin on Mayne island. We had really close friends here already, people that we had known from Toronto and Montreal. They were out here, and we love the province, so we just decided we would move to British Columbia.

JD [01:16:59] I jumped in immediately. I was 53. First, I had a big identity crisis. What do you do with an identity crisis? Some of us do. You fill yourself with frenetic activity, so I got involved in COPE, the Committee of Progressive Electors in Vancouver, not the COPE it ended up evolving into. The earlier COPE was really involved in fighting for a wards system in Vancouver so that you could have different parts of the neighbourhood with different varying incomes represented and not have wealthier income overwhelming the vote, because councillors had to, and still have to campaign citywide.

JD [01:17:43] I got involved in a wards campaign and we organized. Tom, Thomas Berger was appointed to oversee this, have a commission on it. We organized 17 community meetings in order to mobilize people for a wards system, so I got to know the city in a

hurry, which was wonderful. Then I sat down, I had dinner with my friend David Chudnovsky and Ruth Herman one night about a week after, two weeks after I arrived, catching up. David was considering running for MLA. I've had other people say, 'Have you thought about running for MLA?' Jack Layton had wanted me to run federally, but it was too late to get started and I didn't want to live on, I'd lived on the road and in hotels for 14 years. I wanted to come home at night. I decided to throw my hat in the ring for MLA in Vancouver Fairview for the NDP nomination, had a great grassroots campaign, but I lost. There were no spending limits. The fact that I was a former union boss was used against me, sadly. It happened. Then it really was, what am I going to do with the rest of my life?

JD [01:19:03] HEU came looking. I thought about it long and hard. This is like going from the frying pan into the fire, but I loved health care. Health care had always been my first love. In the trade union movement, we all have a need to be needed, and I needed to be needed. They asked me to apply for secretary business manager, I did, and began in March 2005.

BR [01:19:36] As secretary business manager.

JD [01:19:38] Which is chief negotiator or chief spokesperson. Yeah.

BR [01:19:45] That union, as you've described it, had always been a particular target of the Campbell government.

JD [01:19:49] That's right.

BR [01:19:51] Can you elaborate at that point on what the legislation was then in place, and what it was meaning for HEU members who were in large part women of colour.

JD [01:20:01] Yes, they were.

BR [01:20:04] How challenging was it to then go out and reorganize these contracted-out workers?

JD [01:20:09] The layoffs had by then all happened. Virtually all of them had happened and people were having to reapply for their jobs. Union activists were—if they knew you were a union activist, you were shut out. It was an enormous organizing effort, enormous and tough. Our organizing team at HEU was remarkable. The staff organizers, the members who were brought on as organizers, who reflected South Asian women, Filipino women, people who reflected the members who had lost their jobs and that we were trying to reorganize. Constant fights at the labour board, some really tough stuff with other unions that were signing backroom deals, which was a very painful period for the labour movement, but CUPE and the Federation of Labour stood up for us. In the end, HEU reorganized the overwhelming majority of those workers.

JD [01:21:25] It was hard going. It was like one member at a time, incredible fear, but also some of them had earned eighteen bucks an hour before and now they were at poverty level wages so they were strongly motivated.

JD [01:21:43] Three big companies, Sodexo, Aramark and Compass, initially. I remember dubbing them 'The Big Three.' They said, what does the big three mean? I explained that in the auto industry, it's now five or six, but it used to be the big three automakers. It was always, who's going to settle first? The big three gave them a sense of, 'Yeah, we're

important. We work for the big three.' The challenge was, who can we get an agreement with that can set a pattern, the best possible pattern. We were bargaining with Aramark at the same time that our Sodexo workers went on strike. We ended up getting a first agreement. I believe that they were by the end of that agreement, they were going to get up to \$13 an hour but the benefits were pathetic still. Just really, really hard.

JD [01:22:37] I remember sitting in a circle with Sodexo workers. I remember sitting in a circle at HEU with them and talking about, next time we have to do this differently. Next time we have to have built community support. I told them a story of being involved in a committee for cleaners' rights in Toronto. Gleaming towers in the financial district, where every time the contract changed, these Portuguese women cleaners were out of work and had to reapply for their jobs. I said we built a community campaign, and the Portuguese community especially went to churches, and eventually we got the law changed. I had that idea in my mind.

JD [01:23:21] Then we also heard from Marcy Cohen, who was our research and policy director. She'd been to England. She'd met with a union, UNISON, the biggest union in the UK who were directly involved in a living wage campaign in the city of London where they had London United, (say BC United, sorry) but London United was this enormous gathering, sometimes thousands of people of trade unions, community groups, that had huge assemblies and decided on the priorities they were going to work on together. That was where we got the idea of a living wage campaign and we decided to launch a living wage campaign. The first city to sign on was New Westminster.

JD [01:24:10] I had no idea I would eventually be an MLA for New Westminster. Then it just spread like wildfire. This was about going out and saying, and this was the theme of all the buttons: 'Work should lift you out of poverty, not keep you there.' We went out and built support on that basis for these workers. They were the ambassadors. They were the messengers. They were the ones that went to health authority boards who went to wherever they would be heard in order to carry that message. It not only helped to generate support for them, but this living wage campaign really took off. There's now full time staff who work on living wage for families. Hundreds of employers in the province have signed on to it.

JD [01:24:56] It actually started in a meeting room at the HEU where we talked about a living wage. We went around the room and this is another one of those goosebumps moments. We went around the room and said, 'What would a living wage mean to you?' I remember one woman, a Filipino woman, saying, 'A living wage would mean,' she says, 'Right now I get up in the morning before my kids are awake. I go to my first job. When I finish my first job, I go to my second job. When I get home at night, my kids are already in bed. A living wage would mean I could see my kids.'

JD [01:25:36] A Chilean political refugee, a refugee after the coup in 1973. He was a very left wing guy. I thought he was going to say something about capitalism. He said, 'My daughter is very talented. She's a really wonderful singer and a musician. A living wage would mean I could let her have music lessons. I could afford to pay for them.'

JD [01:26:03] Those were the stories, those were their stories, and those were the stories of the living wage campaign. At the end of the day, they just worked so hard. They poured everything they had to it. All the staff, all the activists and these members especially, and built that campaign across the province. They kept going, after we had an NDP government. I guess we'll come to that.

BR [01:26:34] First, in 2007, there was a ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada that Bill 20 was unconstitutional.

JD [01:26:41] Yes.

BR [01:26:42] What were some of the highlights of the effort to achieve that victory?

JD [01:26:47] Well, that court case was filed before I was there. It was a matter of do we keep going forward? Do we take it all the way to the Supremes and we made the decision it was worth it. It was going to take considerable resources, but it was worth it. Unions previously had not been successful. We were saying that collective bargaining rights are charter protected rights and that they shouldn't be able to just open up, tear open some provisions of a collective agreement, and then use that to--everything that followed.

JD [01:27:24] I remember sitting in the boardroom because the Supreme Court, of course, is on different time zones and 3 hours difference than we are. Joe Arvey was our lawyer. He was in Ottawa. We were all sitting by the phone waiting with speakerphone, waiting for him to call. He calls and almost in a whisper, he says, 'We won.' We exploded. Then the word went through the building. Then the building filled up with media. It was such a jubilant time. It was just, it was so joyous. It took us a while to really realize, what did this mean? In our case, unlike in the case of the teachers, where the Supreme Court said, 'Go back and negotiate,' they restored the provisions in the collective agreement around class size. They didn't do that for us. They said, 'We're going to give you a year, we're going to give the government a year to bring itself in compliance.' What it meant in general was collective bargaining rights were now charter protected rights. It wasn't just individual rights, important as they are, and we've all fought for those under the charter. This was that collective rights were charter protected rights, which was groundbreaking in labour history, in legal history.

JD [01:28:49] We still had a very tough time in negotiating with the government because the Supreme Court had not restored our language. We had to go and negotiate compensation and whatever changes we could get. The labour code was not changed and the labour code still denied health care workers, only health care workers, but it denied health care workers the right to negotiate over job security, sorry, successor rights. It denied them successor rights. We still had a number of hurdles to overcome, but it did mean that we could go back to the table and get some significant compensation for our members and move on to the next chapters, which still continued for some time.

BR [01:29:38] An incredible precedent for unions right across the country.

JD [01:29:41] Yeah.

JD [01:29:55] How long do we have? We've been here for a while.

BR [01:29:59] Hour and a half, but we're getting there.

JD [01:30:01] Yeah, we are.

BR [01:30:01] I guess I'll wait for Sharon. I think it's going really well.

JD [01:30:06] It's fun. Yeah. I've also just been writing about it. I've not saying anything. I've said it to you, but I'm not sort of broadcasting it. It's all very fresh in my mind also, because I've been reading a lot of it. They were just incredible women, those leaders of the living wage campaign. So brave.

JD [01:30:46] What do we have? Where are we now?

BR [01:30:48] We still have a few things, MLA, minister.

JD [01:30:51] Right.

BR [01:30:52] And some of the final wrapping up questions.

JD [01:30:59] Do you edit this down, or how do you do this?

BR [01:31:03] They edit sections like this. Your actual questions are documented and they do a transcription.

JD [01:31:12] Okay. Okay.

BR [01:31:14] Then eventually, I think excerpts or maybe the whole thing will be posted eventually.

JD [01:31:21] Oh, okay. Okay, great.

BR [01:31:23] Okay. Okay.

JD [01:31:25] I'll just have a bit of water.

BR [01:31:26] Did it get picked up? Okay. Thanks. Sorry. What is that? Okay.

JD [01:31:31] Okay.

BR [01:31:32] Yeah, we were chatting, but, um. After that great agreement and other things, you left the HEU and you ran in the provincial election in 2017, becoming the MLA for New Westminster. Then you were appointed to the John Horgan Cabinet as Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. What are your reflections on your times as minister and MLA?

JD [01:31:57] I loved being an MLA and I especially loved the community part of it. Somebody asked me to describe what it was like, someone from the labour movement. What is it like? After I'd been there, MLA for a while, I said, 'It's kind of like being the chief steward for the community.' People come to you with their problems, you help them with whatever programs, regulations, laws are in place that can support them. If the regulations or the programs aren't on their side, you still try and find a way to help them. It's the most vulnerable people in the community who come to the MLA's office I learned. Lots of other people feel they have other recourse, or they have the confidence to pursue it themselves, but it's the most vulnerable people and people struggling with mental health issues, even if they're not diagnosed. Housing was enormous. Housing was the single biggest issue that people--evictions, renovations, rent increases, people on social assistance--a lot of very vulnerable people. A lot of that work is done by the constituency assistants and then they

bring you into it, to make calls that need to be made. That part of the work was sometimes frustrating because the Liberals were in power.

JD [01:33:39] We were often able to get things for people and include, bus routes, bus routes that were changed. That was a couple of our biggest victories. People say really? Bus routes? They matter a whole lot. If the bus is now stopping at the bottom of the hill and you're a senior or a person with disability, no, if it's at the top of the hill and you're a senior person with disability at the bottom, it matters a lot where the bus stop is located. Those kinds of issues.

JD [01:34:06] New Westminster is just an awesome community of progressive, very progressive at the council level, at the federal level, provincially. It's a lot of pressure because the NDP or the CCF have held that seat for 70 odd years, except for once. It's because the elected folks earn it. There are community events all the time which I also loved. You find after you've been elected, everybody voted for you, right? Even if you got, first time round, I think I got 49% of the vote. But everybody had voted for me. They're all, you're their representative. It feels really good and they support you. It's not a place where, in between--they were hard fought elections, but in between, it's generally pretty cohesive.

JD [01:34:58] I was the health critic, which was wonderful. Yeah, it was wonderful, frustrating as hell, but also wonderful and we were able to achieve some things. I hated that we had to go to Question Period to talk about how long somebody's wait time was for cancer and how their condition had become now deadly as a result of the wait times. That's sometimes what we had to do. Other times it was about getting other kinds of tests, diagnostics in time. One of the things I am proudest of was working with a community of childhood cancer survivors and their families, because there was no clinic for them, there was no longer really any support for them. We worked together and campaigned and lobbied. Eventually there was a new clinic created for childhood cancer survivors.

JD [01:35:55] When people say you can't achieve anything in opposition, there are things you can achieve for sure. I worked really closely with unions and with community groups, and that's where this issue of what role each has, what role a party has, and an MLA has, and what role the community has. To me, they were my lifeline. They fed me, the ambulance paramedics, CUPE ambulance paramedics, they fed me the questions to ask of the health minister in budget estimates, and so did. I relied on the community in a big way. The successes were a product of us working together.

JD [01:36:38] Then comes 2017. Of course, we don't know what's going to happen because it's minority, nobody has a majority. There's that period of waiting and waiting to see what the Green Party -- to see the outcome in Courtenay-Comox. I was having major dental surgery and I'm watching the TV screen up above me. All of a sudden the news flashes across the wire that we'd won in Courtenay-Comox but I can't talk to the dentist. I'm wired, can't talk, but in the booth next to me, a New Democrat says, 'Hey, the NDP just won in Courtenay-Comox.' I was, okay, good, now we're on the road. Then we signed that agreement with the Green Party.

JD [01:37:27] Then we were going over for the swearing in, and literally on the ferry the next day, I get a call from the premier. I'm with Brynn Bourke, who was my constituency president, now head of the B.C. Building Trades. We're buying some fruit at a fruit stand July 17th, and he says, 'Hey, Jude.' 'Hi, John. Hi, boss.' 'How are you doing? How are things going?' 'Fine, John.' I'm thinking, please get to the point, put me out of my misery. He says, 'I'd like you to be B.C.'s first and Canada's only minister of mental health and

addictions. He started saying why he thought I would be good for the job. I said I'd be honoured, Premier. Then the next day there you are, literally the next day being sworn in, in Government House. Yeah, just a very, very special day.

JD [01:38:28] Then immediately after that, the house, the legislature is open to the people. It's a grand statement and it's a grand event. Anybody can come. I was swarmed by people who needed help with mental health issues and addictions. It was overwhelming. I had one staff person assigned to me but we lost track of each other because there were so many people crammed in there. I was in a corridor with people lined up wanting to talk to me. Some people who were involved in mental health and addictions care, other people who were wrestling with issues themselves. Other people who had family members. Now we have somebody we can talk to. Pouring out their hearts to a perfect stranger. They never let me travel anywhere, go anywhere without a staff person again because of course, I couldn't take that. These were all people who needed to be followed up on, and it was impossible.

JD [01:39:31] It certainly made it clear that the statistics are a lot more than numbers. The numbers say one in five people in British Columbia is living with a mental health issue and around the same number living with some kind of substance use issue, not quite, not as high, but high. Well, there it was, living proof. Our supporters jammed into the legislature. I started out, I wanted to--you read the briefing binders. You've got to go in orientation day about what it means to be a cabinet minister and rules and regulations. Then there you are. It's a brand new ministry so we're doing it from scratch. I said I need to hear from people on the front lines first. That's what I want to do. We should meet with hospital CEOs first, the heads of the health authority. You know what? I kind of want to hear from the frontline people first. Most of them thought that was fine. A couple got their noses majorly out of joint. I had to say to them, the people I've negotiated with, too, I had to say to them, I very much want to meet with you and hear from you, but the frontline staff are not going to say what's really on their mind if their employer is hanging over their heads.

JD [01:40:51] I was on the Downtown Eastside, I was on the Surrey strip, the former Surrey strip, and a homeless strip in Surrey. I was visiting First Nations communities. I was visiting overdose prevention sites. I was meeting with people in recovery homes just to do a deep dive really quickly. I learned really early on that the community, especially around recovery, around substance use and addictions, is totally divided, totally divided from people on one end of the spectrum who say the only answer is harm reduction and safe supply and access, regulated or otherwise, to substances that people use, to people at the other end who say the only answer is abstinence from day one, 12 step program. Very, very divided. Professionals less divided but a lot of providers and a lot of users and users and user groups very, very divided. We both had to deal with this very controversial issues, very divided stakeholders, an overdose crisis, and the lack of a system.

JD [01:42:21] People understand what we mean now when the government says in B.C. we have to build a--we're building a child care system where there wasn't one before. There's smatterings of services and programs, but not a system. The same is true for mental health and addictions. Very much so. Public and private providers, not for profit, paid, all over the place. We knew that we had to build, begin building a comprehensive system for mental health and addictions at the same time as responding to an overdose crisis and working to save lives immediately.

JD [01:42:58] Somebody likened it very early on for me to, and said, 'Think about the job you've been given, Judy,' or probably said minister, because they did at the time. 'If I think

about the job you've been given, it's kind of like trying to fly a badly damaged aircraft through a category five hurricane.' I thought that was it was very apt.

JD [01:43:25] We did a big focus early on, on overdose prevention and on harm reduction because people have to be alive in order to access treatment. It was not about saying that was the only solution. In fact, what I said over and over again was we need to get rid of the word 'or' in our language it has to be 'and.' It has to be prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, counselling, it has to be and, and, and. We have to have all those tools in our toolbox and it has to be an integrated system. The same things aren't going to work for everybody. That was a tough go with a lot of stakeholders.

JD [01:44:10] Resources of the government are stretched. You know, we had a lot of things on our plate as a new government. NDP hadn't been in power for 17 years. A lot of fixing up to do, a lot of platform commitments, child care, housing, transportation, green B.C. plan, commitments on many different fronts, as well as mental health and addictions.

JD [01:44:38] We made a good start and we actually were able to reduce the number of overdose deaths by a third, after we had been in office for 18 months. It went up the first year but once we started getting more programs, it went down to 66% of what it had been. Every death, still a tragic death, but the trajectory was in the right direction. Then the pandemic hit. It just it meant strangely—we all know supply chains were broken—the supply chain for drugs was also broken, which meant more toxic drugs were out on the street, drugs that were mixed with more wrong combinations, more fentanyl and then increasingly other types of drugs as well. People didn't have access to health services anymore, or significantly reduced because of social distancing. Recovery homes couldn't take as many residents. Overdose prevention sites couldn't. Nobody could. Things as we know, got steadily worse.

JD [01:45:56] We did, however get to a place after the pandemic to get support for initiating a safe supply program. That took a lot of work and it was controversial, but we did it. We started that program. We were able to put a lot more recovery beds in place, including a lot of youth recovery beds, doubling the number of youth recovery beds, access to affordable counselling, which was new because so many people can't afford \$250, \$300 an hour to see a counsellor. Putting in place more affordable counselling, more youth centres where people, young people struggling with mental health and addictions can just walk in on the street and get seen and get support and peer support—a lot of really innovative stuff. Of course what overshadowed it was the number of people dying. As is always the case, the good news stories don't get covered very much, but the death toll does, as it should.

JD [01:47:05] Before I left we began negotiating with the federal government over decriminalization. That was a hard one to nail down. I believed that we were going to do it before the writ was dropped. That was my goal. The federal health minister thought it was doable and we had our people starting to work on it, but they just dragged their sorry butts. The political risk, they were going into an election, too. They weren't willing to take the political risk, even though it was B.C. asking for an exemption.

JD [01:47:41] Okay, you're not going to do it elsewhere. We don't control that. We're saying give an exemption to B.C. so that people who have small quantities of drugs in their possession for personal use, not trafficking, personal use, won't be charged criminally. Then we can start to lift the stigma and have this seen as a health issue, not as a criminal issue. It took another year and a half before we actually got that exemption. Now, of

course, the Liberals are just hammering the NDP on it every day. Oh, they're not Liberals anymore. Sorry, they're B.C. United.

BR [01:48:15] B.C. United. All that work you did paid off in the end.

JD [01:48:23] It did.

BR [01:48:26] You're still no longer Minister, but all that preparatory work.

JD [01:48:28] Absolutely, and this last budget, I was thrilled. Jennifer Whiteside is a dear friend of mine, the current minister of mental health and addictions. She was at HEU when I was there. She became secretary business manager. She became MLA in New Westminster and she's now the minister of mental health and addictions. It's not that she follows me around. This is a strong, powerful, progressive, capable woman who's doing an amazing job. I couldn't be more thrilled that in this budget a billion dollars was announced for mental health and addictions programs to build that very comprehensive system of care that we really need from beginning to end. It is going to happen.

BR [01:49:13] So urgently.

JD [01:49:14] It sure is.

BR [01:49:18] What have you been involved with since retiring as MLA in 2020?

JD [01:49:25] I'm a volunteer and I'm a bit of a mentor and a sister elder, I think. When I first met Melanie Mark, who was the MLA for Vancouver Mount Pleasant and the first First Nations minister in B.C. history and First Nations Cabinet minister, after we had chatted for a while, she started calling me an elder. At first I was a bit taken aback. I was in my sixties for sure, late sixties, I guess, but nobody ever called me an elder before. Then she explained to me later, that it was a sign of respect. It was about wisdom and respect. I now kind of have assumed that role, I think.

JD [01:50:14] I get invited to speak at women's conferences. I got invited to the CUPE national women's conference, 600 women from across the country. They were rocking. I got to talk about -- I love tell stories and talk about CUPE history. I got to tell them about the history of women's struggles within CUPE. They were ready, they were just itching to get going. That was wonderful. I get invited to speak at some other women's conferences and give advice to political action committees and CUPE about how to be effective when you lobby government.

JD [01:50:54] Also there are just a number of women who call me for advice which I'm happy to give. A lot of people have my phone number. They just sometimes--it's just a safe place to talk through--this is what I'm struggling with right now. What would you have done or what advice can you give, and that kind of stuff.

JD [01:51:16] My biggest volunteer commitment is on the board of the Canadian Mental Health Association for B.C.. I get to carry on doing advocacy without the stress that comes with being in charge, which is quite lovely. We're really doing cutting edge work, like developing the civilian response to mental health crises, which as we all know is very badly needed--had a few pilot projects. Now the government has given funding for another dozen or so. This is going to be a mental health professional and a peer support worker, someone with lived experience who goes out to respond to a mental health crisis. We

hope to really build that as a model across the province, because in the overwhelming majority of cases of mental health crises, a police response is not what's needed. Sometimes it's absolutely the wrong response. There's some really cutting edge work happening. I love that work and I love the people I work with. Mental health crosses, it just crosses boundaries--very diverse group of people, all of whom have something in their own family that has moved them to do this work.

JD [01:52:37] I helped to build a new political party in New Westminster called Community First New West a year ago. Other folks here were also involved in. Under the law there had been sort of a team of people who ran together, progressives, New Democrats, but they weren't a political party. Under legislation our NDP government brought in transparency, accountability. If you're, if it walks like a duck and it talks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a political party. We created a new political party, Community First New West, which was really important and was very successful in the election. I volunteer for the local daycare centre, fundraising for the local childcare society on Mayne Island, stuff like that.

BR [01:53:26] Always busy.

[01:53:26] Yeah, and I'm writing some stories.

BR [01:53:29] Okay.

JD [01:53:30] I'm writing some stories.

BR [01:53:33] What words of wisdom do you have for someone who's just become active in the labour movement?

JD [01:53:39] Who has just become active?

BR [01:53:42] Just becoming active.

JD [01:53:43] Just becoming active. Figure out what it is that you really care about, what's driving you. There are a lot of things. There's a world of opportunity in the trade union movement and there are so many things you can get involved in. Just figure out what that is for you. What drove you to go to your first meeting? What drove you to keep going back to meetings, or to volunteer for this or volunteer for that, and see what educational opportunities are available. I never went to education courses as an activist growing up. We just thought we could do it, and we did it.

JD [01:54:25] There are such tremendous educational opportunities. Going to conventions is a place--it changes your world to meet people who do a variety of different jobs. CUPE is such a diverse union and represent--we're a cross-section of the country, of the province and of the country. I say 'we' because CUPE is my home and it always will be. It's where I grew up. Then just pour yourself into that. In my day, we didn't think about careers in the labour movement. People tend to do that a bit more now, both in the labour movement and in other social movements. There are more jobs available in social movements than there used to be and maybe more in labour as well. I think the most important thing is what are your values, what is it you believe in and have that drive you. You can't be a one person show.

JD [01:55:25] Mainly I've been asked to give advice to women, but I think it applies to everybody. The successes we had as women in CUPE or in the labour movement or in society were because we built a movement, because we built a network, because we were connected. In my experience of the women's movement, I could see over the years, there are two types of women leaders: one who says, I got here on my own devices and I'm pulling up the ladder behind me; and other people who say, I'm part of the movement, I'm part of social change, my role is to kick doors open for other people. I think that's an activist role to find what matters most to you, what you're best at, but always remember that this is, you have to do it with people. That's what unions are all about. It's what their strength is. People will see you as a leader if you do that. If you throw everything you have into what you're fighting for and they know you believe in it, but also if they know that it's not about self-aggrandizement, it's about them, it's about workers.

BR [01:56:46] Okay. A little bit before 2 hours.

BR [01:56:50] Yeah. One more question.

JD [01:56:52] I go on for far too long, I know.

BR [01:56:53] There's a lot of questions remaining. Why is it important for younger activists to learn about labour history?

JD [01:57:01] Because there's so much to learn and because it can help. Every new generation--who was it who said it? I think it was Martin Luther King's widow, Coretta King, I'm not sure, who said every generation has to fight again for freedom. It's absolutely true that every generation of trade unionists has to fight again and has to learn new ways to fight, but they can also learn so much from struggles that have gone on before. I'm so excited that folks like you and Sharon are involved in this project and other unions because it is about bringing that history alive for people.

JD [01:57:52] We will repeat the mistakes of the past if we don't learn from them, but we also can learn a whole lot about movements and struggles that have gone on before us. It's such a rich history and it's still so unknown. It's a tragedy that it is unknown, the history of the labour movement in this country. People learn about strikes--it's really pretty much all they know, about strikes. It's pretty much all that they know, most of the time. We have an opportunity to learn from that rich history of the labour movement, which is about fighting for workers, but it's also about fighting for the greater social good. That's the message we also have to carry out to the people of the province and the people of the country. Labour history can help us to do that.

JD [01:58:43] We wouldn't have had medicare today if, obviously it started with Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan, but it also took a labour movement across the country to push federal governments on that issue. Weekends, that bumper sticker, 'It's unions who brought you the weekend.' How many people know that?

JD [01:59:11] How many people know that CUPE took a case to the Supreme Court of Canada about same sex pension rights for its employees which was one of the landmark cases that helped get us to a point where same sex marriage became the law in this country? People are shocked when they hear that. All of those things are part of our history. Thank you so much for helping to get that history out there.

JD [01:59:41] Thank you so much for your whole career and for this great interview.
Thanks a lot.

JD [01:59:46] Thank you, Blair.