



North America's Building Trades Unions Thank Robert Blakely for Lifetime of Work

-Arlene Dunn named Director of Canada's Building Trades Unions-

March 1, 2019 – We are pleased to congratulate Robert (Bob) Blakely, Director of Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU), on his upcoming retirement. Since 2000, Robert has played a critical role in the growing influence of Canada's Building Trades Unions in shaping public policy and giving skilled trades workers across this country a strong voice. From project negotiations to advocating for pensions, benefits and training, Robert has tirelessly worked to build relationships amongst unions, contractors, end users, and elected officials alike.

With Robert at the helm, CBTU has greatly increased its impact on workers' rights including banning asbestos, expanding CBTU's workforce development programs to support women and underrepresented groups in the trades through the establishment of 'Build Together', and countless other accomplishments. Robert was a driving force behind the establishment of the Canadian Building Trades Monument in Major's Hill Park in Ottawa, Ontario. The Monument serves as a reminder of the significance and impact of the construction industry in Canada and a way to honour construction workers killed or injured on the job. Aside from the building trades family, Robert's accomplishments would not have been possible without the love and support of his family, Geraldine Rajotte and children Andrew Blakely, Nicola Dakers and Douglas Dakers.

"Bob is a personal friend and staunch supporter of skilled trades workers across Canada. Without his vision and tireless commitment working with the Canadian Executive Board as well as Provincial and local councils, the building trades would not be who they are today," said Sean McGarvey, President of North America's Building Trades Unions. "Bob has devoted his entire adult life to construction workers and all workers in Canada. His impact will be felt for generations to come and all workers, whether they were a friend or never knew his name, benefitted from his life's work. Bob will now assist in a smooth leadership transition because with every end comes a new beginning, and with Bob's support and guidance, I am very pleased to announce Arlene Dunn as the new Director of CBTU, effective March 4th."

Arlene Dunn has worked for over 25 years in the building trades, starting with the Labourers' International Union of North America in New Brunswick. Looking to broaden and diversify her labour relations perspective, she moved to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador to assume the role of Executive Director of the Hebron Project Employers' Association. Arlene later went on to serve as the Executive Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Building and Construction Trades Council. For the past three years, Arlene has served as the Deputy Director of the CBTU, working with affiliates across the country to further issues important to the building trades.

"It is my pleasure to announce Arlene as the new Director of Canada's Building Trades Unions, making her the highest-ranking female in not only the unionized sector but in all of construction



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world-wide” said McGarvey. “Arlene will no doubt build on Bob’s legacy to grow and strengthen CBTU and I look forward to her participation, guidance and counsel in all operations of North America’s Building Trades Unions.”

Arlene is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick and recently completed Women in Leadership studies at Cornell University. She diligently represents active and retired building trades members and works with CBTU affiliated unions to provide equal opportunity to under-represented groups and the next generation of apprentices who have an interest in the skilled trades. Arlene brings her passion for people and their quality of life to her work every day. In furtherance of her life’s work, Arlene has worked to establish a fully comprehensive Substance Dependency Rehabilitation Program for the members of the Newfoundland and Labrador building trades, currently serves on North America’s Building Trades Unions Opioid Task Force, and is working with Health Canada on a national initiative to raise awareness, reduce stigma and educate the public about the opioid epidemic.

North America’s Building Trades Unions are pleased to have Arlene assume this new leadership role and look forward to the continued growth of the building trades as a proven leader in workforce development, health, safety and the enhancement of opportunity for working families across Canada and the United States.

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North America’s Building Trades Unions: North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU) is an alliance of 14 national and international unions in the building and construction industry that collectively represent over 3 million skilled craft professionals in the United States and Canada. NABTU is dedicated to creating economic security and employment opportunities for construction workers in North America by safeguarding wage and benefits standards, promoting responsible private capital investments, investing in renowned apprenticeship and training, and creating pathways to the middle class for women, communities of color and military veterans in the construction industry.