

# **BIOGRAPHY – JOHN EDMUNDS, USGE NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

In 2005, at age 39, John Edmunds became one of the youngest labour leaders in Canada when elected National President of the Union of Solicitor General Employees.

The USGE represents more than 12,000 members employed in Departments and Agencies within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada.

John's election to our union's top position capped some 15 years of energy and activism on behalf of USGE members. A skilled tradesperson, he went to work in 1990 as a PIP-9 for Correctional Service of Canada in Kingston, Ontario. (Indeed, inside the USGE, John continues to be affectionately known as 'The Plummer'.)

It was the issue of health and safety – always a priority for the membership – that first drew John into the USGE. He was soon serving on the health and safety committee of Local 00014, which at the time represented staff of the now-closed Prison for Women as well as CSC Ontario Regional Headquarters. By 1992, he was serving on the Regional Health and Safety Committee.

As with many then-'green' members, John received his baptism of fire during the 1991 national federal public service strike. John's efforts on behalf of the membership in this and other matters were recognized in 1993, when he was elected President of Local 00014. By his own admission, the new Local President was flying by the seat of his pants.

However, fly he did. In 1998, a retirement saw John win a three-way race against two older and more experienced candidates to become Alternate Regional Vice-President for CSC members on Ontario. A year later, at the 1999 USGE National Convention, John was elected both Regional Vice-President and National Vice-President.

John was thrust firmly into the limelight when a medical emergency required that he act in his predecessor's place as Chair of the 2002 National Convention. At the next triennial Convention, he was elected National President on the first ballot of a three-way race to hold our union's top post.

As National President, John represents the interests of USGE members on the PSAC National Board of Directors. He also serves on a number of committees and task forces for the PSAC.

John's family time is spent with his spouse, Joyleen, a Correctional Officer at the Millhaven Institution, a maximum-security federal penitentiary located in the Kingston,

Ontario area. John credits Joyleen's strong, continued support for his years of union activities as "the one of the big reasons that I'm able to do this".

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