

# From the NSTU President



## Standing Together

As I sit and write this column, it is June 11, William Davis Memorial Miners' Day, also known as Davis Day.

This annual day of remembrance is observed across Nova Scotia to commemorate the life of William Davis, a coal miner who was killed during a strike in 1925. It is also a day to honour all miners who have lost their lives in Nova Scotia's coal mines.

For many Nova Scotians, particularly those of us with roots in Cape Breton, Davis Day carries deep meaning. It is a reminder of the sacrifices made by ordinary working people who stood together to demand fair treatment, safer workplaces, and dignity on the job.

In 1925, miners in Cape Breton were engaged in a bitter strike against the British Empire Steel Corporation. Living conditions were harsh. The company had cut off electricity and water to mining communities to pressure workers back onto the job. On June 11, William Davis joined fellow miners in a protest at the company's power plant in New Waterford. During that protest, he was shot and killed by company police.

His death became a rallying cry not only for miners, but for workers across Canada. The courage shown by Davis and countless others helped strengthen the labour movement and contributed to many of the workplace rights and protections we often take for granted today.

I mention Davis Day here because it serves as an important reminder that progress rarely happens by accident. Many of the rights and protections workers enjoy today were secured because people were willing to stand together and advocate for change. The labour movement has always been strongest when people recognize that collective action can improve not only their own lives, but the lives of future generations.

That spirit continues today. Whether we are advocating for safe and healthy workplaces, manageable workloads, appropriate supports for students, professional respect, or fair working conditions, we build on the legacy of those who came before us. The strength of our union comes from members who are willing to raise concerns, support one another, and work collectively toward a better future for public education and for all Nova Scotians.

June is also Pride Month, a reminder that the work of building inclusive communities requires the same spirit of solidarity that has driven positive change throughout our history. NSTU members continue to support school environments where all students and staff feel welcomed, respected, and valued. By embracing diversity and promoting belonging, we help ensure our schools remain places where everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

In June, we also recognize National Indigenous History Month, a time to honour the histories, cultures, contributions,

and enduring strength of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. It is an opportunity to reflect on the truths of our shared history and the ongoing work of reconciliation. Like all meaningful progress, reconciliation requires learning, understanding, and a commitment to action. As educators, we have an important role to play in helping students deepen their understanding of Indigenous perspectives and experiences, while fostering respect, empathy, and meaningful relationships within our schools and communities.

Whether we are creating inclusive classrooms, advancing reconciliation, advocating for safe and healthy workplaces, or supporting students through their challenges and successes, the common thread is people. It is the willingness of individuals to care for one another, stand together, and work toward something greater than themselves. That same spirit connected the miners who fought for better working conditions a century ago, and it continues to guide the work of educators across Nova Scotia today.

As another school year draws to a close, I encourage all teachers and specialists to take a moment to celebrate the incredible work you do each and every day.

Throughout this year, you have done far more than teach curriculum outcomes. You have helped students discover their strengths, overcome obstacles, and build confidence in themselves. You have provided encouragement when it was needed most, celebrated achievements both big and small, and helped shape the citizens, leaders, and community members of tomorrow. The lessons students carry forward from your classrooms extend far beyond any curriculum document.

Your impact extends beyond your students as well. You have been mentors, collaborators, and sources of support for your colleagues. You have shared your expertise, offered a helping hand during difficult times, and contributed to the strong school communities that make our profession so meaningful.

Public education is stronger because of your contributions. Our communities are better because of your contributions. And just as those who came before us worked to build a better future for the generations that followed, your efforts continue to strengthen our schools, our profession, and our province.

Thank you for all that you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter G.', written in a cursive style.