CUPE turns 50! HEU was there at the beginning

Five decades ago today, in Winnipeg, two public sector unions, along with the Hospital Employees' Union, came together to create the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

The National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the National Union of Public Sector Employees (NUPSE) merged to create an organization that was 78,000 members strong.

Fast forward 50 years, today we stand at 627,000 Canadians united from coast to coast to coast.

At the time of CUPE's founding, HEU itself was nearly 20 years old and had been a long-standing NUPE affiliate. And at the 1963 founding convention of CUPE, HEU's business manager Bill Black was elected vice-president of CUPE.

Today, HEU is the B.C. Health Services Division of CUPE.

CUPE's contributions to gender equality in the workplace, workers' health and safety, and retirement security are just a few items in a long list of CUPE's achievements over the years. And every day we break new ground across the country. It would be safe to say that we've lived up to the hopes of our founding members.

To get a glimpse into our past and see just how far we've come, take a look at CUPE's first year in action as seen through the very first issue of, *The Journal* <http://issuu.com/cupe/docs/journal-1964-october-octobre >. CUPE's main publication at the time. As you'll see, many things have changed, but many of the important challenges we face have stayed the same.

At CUPE's national convention in October, CUPE will be launching the next 50 years of union activism that will help make life better for everyone. As we take those next steps, let's make sure to celebrate the five decades of victories that preceded them and the strong legacy that will guide our work moving forward.

Happy 50th anniversary CUPE!

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