

Eugene Kostyra Memorial Fund

A bit more about Eugene:

Eugene Michael Kostyra was born on June 19, 1947, to parents Albert and Jean Kostyra (Winnipeg).

Eugene attended Ralph Brown Elementary School, Isaac Newton Junior High School and St. Johns High School. While Eugene did not initially complete high school, he went on to obtain his GED and, after retiring, received an honorary high school diploma from St. Johns, where he is celebrated as a distinguished alumni.

Eugene first worked as a clerk-typist and later as a journeymen electrician, before getting involved in the labour movement and the New Democratic Party (NDP) – movements to which he would go on to dedicate much of his life, working tirelessly to make life better for people and build a more just and equitable world.

Eugene first ran for the NDP in 1981 and was elected as the MLA for the north-end constituency of Seven Oaks; he was re-elected in 1986. As part of Howard Pawley's government, he held numerous Cabinet positions, among them Culture, Urban Affairs, Housing, Industry and Finance.

Eugene later served as the Regional Director for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in Manitoba, and then as a senior advisor to Premier Gary Doer, heading-up the government's important community and economic development committee of cabinet.

Throughout his career, Eugene worked in senior roles on countless election campaigns and served as a trusted advisor and mentor to many NDP politicians and activists. Eugene provided critical support to numerous important community projects, and generously shared his experience and expertise with unions, community organizations, co-ops and credit unions. He was also often called upon to provide strategic advice to new / transitioning governments and other sections of the party.

Eugene was a loving, caring family man and friend. He loved hosting friends and family at the Outback at Vahalla Beach, family dinners, road trips, sharing music and attending live concerts, cheering for his Manitoba sports teams, raising a glass of Crown Royal, organizing bocci ball tournaments, travelling and serving-up 'the world's best margaritas' to guests in Mazatland.

Eugene passed away on May 3, 2020, and is lovingly remembered by his wife, Jeri Kostyra (nee McKee); son, Ryan Kostyra (Angela); daughter, Tabitha Kostyra; grandchildren, TJ Meikle, Peyton Kostyra; brother, Ray (Jane) Kostyra; niece, Chelsea (James) McKee-Trenchard; nephews, Michael Kostyra of Alberta, Brant Karmen of British Columbia, Darryl Karmen of California; sisters-in-law, Judie McKee, Winnipeg, Maureen Carroll-Friedman of Florida; and numerous loving cousins. Eugene was predeceased by parents, Albert and Jean, and his son, Aaron Jon Meikle (Kim), Pineridge, MB.

Eugene will be forever missed and cherished by friends, family and colleagues who are grateful for his love, support, dedication and guidance.