

SCHOLARSHIP HISTORY

The scholarship was founded in memory of Al McLeod, former President of Local 001 of the Energy and Chemical Workers Union (now Unifor Local 975).

In October 1982, the members of Local 001 went on strike against their employer, Consumers Gas. Three days into the strike, Brother McLeod agreed to do a television news interview with a well-known news reporter. The interview did not go well. Although they provided him with prepared questions, they were not used. In fact, as soon as the camera was turned on, the reporter unexpectedly started into a bitter attack on Brother McLeod, accusing him of taking 700 people on strike for nothing, while there were people in the city without jobs.

When the interview was shown that evening on the news, not only did they show the reporter's verbal attack on Brother McLeod, they also edited his responses to make the interview sound worse.

Brother McLeod was terribly upset with the interview. It embarrassed him, not only on television, but in front of the company and his members, many of whom did not realize how he had been set up.

On the day after the interview, Brother McLeod addressed the Ontario Council delegates of the Energy and Chemical Workers Union, and explained the strike and asked for their support. A day later, Brother McLeod died of a massive heart attack as he was leaving home to meet with his strike committee.

Most people feel that it was the pressure of the strike and the vicious nature of the interview that caused the heart attack.

The "Al McLeod Fund" was set up in Brother McLeod's memory and in recognition of his dedication to the Union and his members. It has been awarded every year since.