

Gil McGowan

President, Alberta Federation of Labour

Gil McGowan is a longtime political and labour movement activist with a committed track record of standing up for working people. He was elected President of the Alberta Federation of Labour in 2005, following 10 years working as Communications Director for the AFL.

During his time as Communications Director, McGowan engineered many highly regarded campaigns and projects. He handled communications and public relations for a number of high profile labour disputes, including the Safeway strike, the Edmonton Paramedics strike, the Shaw Conference Centre strike and the Edmonton A-Channel strike. He is the author of three booklets on unions and the Alberta economy: *Now More than Ever* (1999); *Missing Out on the Boom?* (1998) and *Crumbs from the Table* (1997).

His work at the AFL has garnered him numerous national communications awards, including for his work on union newspapers, radio ad campaigns, research booklets and public relations campaigns. McGowan is the former Editor and Assistant Editor of the AFL's award-winning newspaper, *Labour News*.

He is also a former Vice-President of the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

In addition to his experience in labour communications, McGowan also has a strong track record of political activism. He is an experienced political organizer and strategist, having worked dozens of political campaigns of all types. Of particular note is his work between 1996 and 2003 with Friends of Medicare, where he acted as Communications Coordinator and was a lead organizer and strategist for campaigns against Bill 37 and Bill 11 (bills aimed at legalizing for-profit hospitals in Alberta). In this role, McGowan organized some of the largest rallies in Alberta history, including major rallies against Bill 11 in Edmonton and Calgary.

McGowan has worked on the central campaigns for the Alberta NDP during the provincial elections of 1997 and 2000, handling strategy and communications. McGowan's involvements go beyond labour and politics. He is active in his community in a number of ways. He recently stepped down as Chair of the Planning and Development Committee for the Strathcona Community in Edmonton. His tenure as Chair coincided with a high-profile debate about the future of the Whyte Avenue area, and McGowan led community efforts to preserve the character of the area, sometimes in opposition to developers' plans.

Before joining the AFL, McGowan was a journalist for *Canadian Press* and the *Edmonton Journal*. He has a B.A. in History from the University of Alberta and a Master in Journalism from Carleton University in Ottawa.

McGowan is married with three children. He is a member of Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Local 1118 in Edmonton.