

## CFUW President Inaugural Speech CFUW AGM, June 25, 2016 – Karen Dunnett

Here we are at the end of the AGM and conference, and at the beginning of a new biennium. Usually this is when the theme for the next two years is announced. Right now I am leaning toward keeping our tagline: The Power of Women Working Together. It resonates with me. Tomorrow the board will help me to decide if we will stick with that.

I joined the University Women's Club of Moncton in the 80's and moved through many executive positions including president. My kids rode their trikes around the curling club arena while we sorted books for the book fair raising scholarship money; I became part of our club study group working on such things as the provincial legislation around youth and the law.

Then I attended a national AGM and I was hooked on the bigger picture that CFUW represented; so much so that I enthusiastically supported our club hosting a national AGM –it would give my club members a chance to experience what I had.

Later I became a Regional Director for New Brunswick and then VP Atlantic; setting up our first Website and using a PowerPoint presentation to run my first Atlantic Regional AGM business meeting.

My nature is to figure out how things work, and that applies to CFUW too. It has led me to sit on a number of national committees - the Ad Hoc committee on governance, the Finance Committee, the Risk Management Committee, and the Advocacy Committee.

I was the first chair of the newly formed Board Human Resources committee (2012) and with that committee developed our national Respectful Treatment policy. I have been a workshop presenter at our National AGMs. In 2014, I attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting in New York as one of the CFUW delegates and have participated in an IFUW Friendship Tour to Turkey. As you have seen at this AGM, I am finishing my term as VP Membership.

These experiences, along with my years as a working partner in a private business, give me the confidence to accept the honour of being your president.

At this time in Canada and the world, we are seeing a building momentum in government, society and the media focussing on the inequity and violence women can face.

It feels like this is one of those times in history when we can help society leap forward. We need to use our organization to accelerate the momentum and ensure that all girls and women have equal opportunities and equal access to quality education within a peaceful and secure environment where their human rights are respected. – That is our vision.

In 1919 women used their skills and the communication tools of their time to forge our organization, and were successful in improving the lot of women.

Together with staff, we, your new board, [*have all the board members*] along with the RDs [*have RDs stand up*] - women from clubs across the country - have committed to using our skills and knowledge to push that momentum, to shine a light on our vision. In doing so we can be proud in knowing we actively participated in making the world a better place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We will need to use the communication tools of this century to reach out to women and expand our networks to maximize the change. That is our commitment. We will strive to exemplify The Power of Women Working Together.

Let us begin.