REMEMBERING ED BROADBENT: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

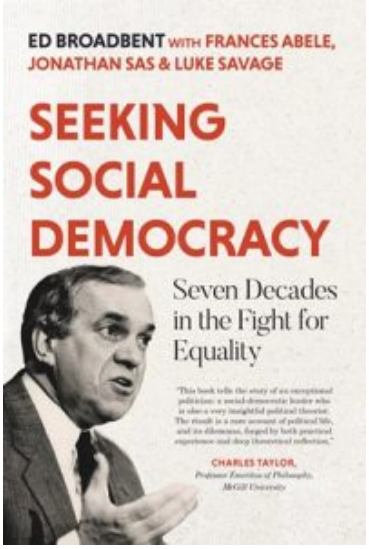
Posted on February 3, 2024 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

By Prof. Alan Whitehorn, Kingston ON, 27 January 2024

Ed Broadbent's life and career impacted greatly upon me, so much so that our lives intersected a number of important times. In the 1960s, he was an inspiring young political theory professor at York University, while I was an undergraduate politics student there. Ed soon decided to go from theory to practice and to explore electoral politics as a New Democratic Party (NDP) candidate for Parliament and became a successful Member of Parliament, winning several elections.



Eventually in the 1970s, he was elected federal NDP leader. In so doing, he was a key participant in numerous federal campaigns and leaders' debates, which I wrote extensively about in both political science books and newspaper articles. After Ed stepped down as leader, he became the high-profile president of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, one of the humanitarian organizations to inspire me to begin my ongoing work on genocide and human rights. Adding to our shared odyssey in the 1990s, I became the visiting JS Woodsworth Chair in Humanities and was delighted that Ed Broadbent was the next appointment to the distinguished SFU chair. During this time and later, we both continued to write about social democracy and global issues.

It was an honour to have known and be inspired by Ed Broadbent. His thoughtfulness, decency and civility in the pursuit of the common good was much appreciated by so many others and myself. His reasoned voice will be greatly missed in this increasingly uncivil and conflict-prone era. But we will take inspiration from his life of public service.

Alan Whitehorn is a former JS Woodsworth Chair at Simon Fraser University and a Professor emeritus at the Royal Military College of Canada. He authored *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP* (1992); co-authored *Political Activists: The NDP in Convention* (1997); and co-edited *Party Politics in Canada* (2000) and contributed chapters on the NDP to a number of Canadian General Election books.

The introductory photo is reprinted from *Policy-Canadian Politics and Public Policy*. It reads, "Though a freshman MP elected from Oshawa in 1968, Broadbent was already a front bencher in Parliament, alongside the NDP's legendary founding leader, Tommy Douglas, right, and House Leader Stanley Knowles, circa 1970 – CBC Archives photo."

There are no comments yet.