



Source Episode #6

Women Leaders in Education Presents Shelley L. Morse

Episode Highlights

Join Julieanna Mawko as she connects with Shelley L. Morse, CTF/FCE Past President and recipient of the 2022 CTF/FCE Special Recognition Award.

In this episode of the Women Leaders in Education podcast series, Shelley discusses her leadership journey from the classroom to the decision-making table at the local, provincial, and national level.

At the 2022 CTF/FCE Annual General Meeting, Shelley received an award recognizing her meritorious service to education and the teaching profession at the provincial, national, and international levels.

How did you get involved in the union and what motivated you to pursue leadership roles?

SHELLEY L. MORSE (SLM): I started getting involved in the union in my first year of teaching and I stayed involved in the union throughout my career and spent 37 years doing that work.

As a teacher, I started in leadership positions, so once I got my feet wet as a school representative and serving on committees, I took on other leadership roles within my local union. Then I went to Provincial Executive of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU), which is the provincial body that oversees everything in the union between our Annual Councils. During my involvement on the Provincial Executive, I had no visions of being the President, but as time went on and things began to change, I thought, I think I want to be in that job.

What barriers exist for women pursuing leadership roles and how did you overcome them throughout your career?

SLM: There certainly were lots of barriers, because in 1985, there weren't a lot of female leaders. We were in a profession that is 73% female, but most of the leadership positions, in administration and in the union, were held by men. It was really difficult to break in and it took some time, but I stayed at it. I was taught as a young child that hard work and determination will get you what you want.

So, I kept plugging away, kept serving on committees. Let the people, the men who were the ones that were controlling whether or not you got these positions, know that I did have things to add. I did have value. I did know the work that I wanted to do and I just needed an opportunity to do it.

What advice do you have for women members who want to pursue leadership in their teacher organizations?

SLM: My advice is to do the work, to get to those decision-making tables, and to show your value and what you have to offer.

There will be hurdles and there will be barriers, but you work around those. You keep talking to people, you keep getting support from others, and you keep moving up the ladder until you are where you want to be.