

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2011**

## **A memorial for Jack**

Friends, you have gathered together today for a very sad but unique moment in the history of our country and our political system. We have lost a great Canadian, a leader in his prime of life one deeply engaged in a political journey of historic proportions.

To all Canadians, he was a recognition and a hope of what we can be as a people. He was brave, but humble, a powerful person, but a man for every Canadian.

I had the opportunity to know and work with Jack Layton through two decades. When I first met him, as a fellow director on the Federation of Municipalities, his passion for progressive issues was apparent, whether it was social equality, the environment, or community development.

When we started at the FCM, it was an organization looking for purpose. When Jack left there, having served as the President, it was a highly successful dynamic part of Canadian society, with a unique Green Fund and a gas tax rebate serving every single community.

This kind of success got many peoples attention and eight years ago Jack won the contest for leadership of the Federal NDP. From the bottom up Jack transformed the Party, with his consensus building approach, with his tremendous organizational skills, his unfailingly sunny disposition, and his unwavering belief in progressive values.

Jack, we mourn you and miss you terribly. Your struggle was and remains our struggle to build a better Canada with no one left behind. Your vision was clear, your message virtuous, your life work stands as a beacon for all of us.

Let no person say that you did not care deeply for all of your life, your friends, family, career, your fellow Canadians. I know you loved life in all its ways, society, music, the land in its beauty. But I also know that in your heart burned a desire to create a better world for all people, a desire that transcended the frailty of life.

We mourn and grief for you today. Tomorrow, we can hope to carry forward with a measure of your spirit guiding us. Regardless of political stripe, as Canadians we are deeply grateful for your life.

Torn from this world before your time is a tragedy, for all of us. Your life however has been a glorious effort for which we will be ever grateful.

Denis Bevington Member of Parliament