

# Day of MOURNING



## Speaker Profile – Genevieve Cragg



Just three years ago, on February 11, 2021, Genevieve Cragg's life was irrevocably altered when she received the devastating news that her son, Charley Cragg, had perished in a tragic workplace accident at the age of 25.

Publicly sharing the details of Charley's death and her trauma is not easy, but she believes it's necessary to change safety protocols and outdated attitudes.

Genevieve explains that Charley didn't die doing something he loved like skiing or surfing, he died on the job due to unsafe practices and negligence in the workplace.

Despite his familiarity with marine environments, it was Charley's first time working on a tug boat, gaining job experience to further his goal of joining the Coast Guard. But the company's lack of compliance with safety regulations and requirements left the crew unable to navigate during the severe storm with high winds and freezing temperatures they had been sent out in.

When the tug became disabled, it could not escape the path of the barge it was guiding. Charley and his captain did not survive.

"I've often heard the expression – everyone knows that working on a tugboat is dangerous," recounts Genevieve. "Dangerous is working in unsafe conditions for an employer who has no regard for safety over profit."

Driven by her son's memory and the pressing need for reform, Genevieve has become a vocal advocate for comprehensive safety training and strict enforcement of regulations within the maritime industry.

"This incident was 100 percent predictable and 100 percent preventable," she asserts, underscoring the need for a new safety culture within the uninspected class of tugboats. She advocates safety that goes beyond compliance to include rigorous training and a genuine commitment to safeguarding workers.

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WorkSafeBC, Transport Canada, the Transportation Safety Board and RCMP conducted separate investigations into the incident. The company and its director were charged with offences under the Workers Compensation Act, based on the RCMP investigation, and pleaded guilty on three charges. Sentencing is scheduled for early summer. They were also fined by Transport Canada, and WorkSafeBC orders have been issued.

"Charley and his captain, Troy Pearson, paid the highest price with their lives for change to happen." To honour their memory, she urges all related government bodies and industry to understand current gaps and work together to embrace a purposeful set of changes to provide safety for mariners in the future.

This tragedy has propelled her into championing the cause of workplace safety to ensure no other family endures the agony she has faced. "We are left—like debris at the side of a highway," she describes, with a profound sense of loss.

Genevieve's message is clear and poignant. "To all workers and mariners, I implore every one of you, please be safe. The work you do is vital and honourable, thank you. But as a mom, dad, wife, husband, sister, brother... or child, please come home, we need you."

Through her personal tragedy and fervent advocacy, Genevieve seeks not only to memorialize her son but to inspire a movement towards a safer future for all workers.

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