



Kyle Ogle of Stanley, Wis. hugs his mother Amy Ogle of Minneapolis during the Workers Memorial Day event at the Duluth Labor Temple Monday morning. Amy lost her son Kelsey Hagenson in an accident on the Bong Bridge last year. Bob King / rking@duluthnews.com

On Workers Memorial Day, mother recalls son who died in Bong Bridge worksite incident

By [Brady Slater](#) on Apr 25, 2016 at 10:00 p.m.

It's been seven months since Amy Ogle lost her son to a worksite incident during reconstruction on the Bong Bridge.

At Monday's Workers Memorial Day ceremony at the Duluth Labor Temple, Ogle talked about her son, 18-year-old Kelsey Hagenson.

She recalled a text message Hagenson sent her just after starting his job as a carpenter's apprentice that read, "I've finally found what I love to do."

Two months later, in the early morning hours on Sept. 21, he was struck and killed by a forklift while he mixed concrete on the Bong Bridge linking Duluth and Superior.

"He was a hard worker," Ogle said. "He always was. He worked on a farm through high school and loved to work outdoors."

Hagenson was from the central Wisconsin community of Stanley.

Ogle, 41, carried a pot of hyacinths given to her by the Duluth AFL-CIO Central Labor Body. She'd been invited to the ceremony and came from her home in Minneapolis.

"I'm blessed to be a part of this," she said. "I'm overwhelmed; it's a great honor."

The ceremony honored Hagenon and labor advocate Ed Kranz, 68, who died suddenly last November.

The Hastings, Minn.-based Kranz worked as an administrator for the law firm of Sieben Carey and was well-known in labor circles from Duluth to the Twin Cities for being gregarious and a character, said Anthony Rubin, a Duluth-based attorney for Sieben Carey. During the U.S. Postal Service employees' annual food drive in Duluth – when letter carriers pick up donated foodstuffs along their route – Kranz always would have a barbecue for them when they returned to the the post office at 2800 W. Michigan St.

"Ed had a passion for working folks," Rubin said.

A planned tree-planting was put on hold due to the uncooperative rain and wind Monday. The labor body broke from its 27-year tradition of planting flowering and apple trees in favor of an oak to symbolize Kranz's steadfast support. The tree will join others in the park behind the Labor Temple on London Road.

Workers Memorial Day dates back to 1989 in the United States, coinciding with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's voluntary safety and health program management guidelines that encouraged employers to do more to protect their employees.

"We take very seriously our workers getting home to family and loved ones," said Craig Olson, president of Duluth Building Trades.

Ogle said her family is involved in both insurance claims and a lawsuit against Wisconsin-based bridge contractor Lunda Construction in connection with her son's death. Still, no lawsuit has been filed yet with Wisconsin circuit courts.

"I know it was early in the morning, but you still have to be alert," she said of the incident that happened shortly after 7 a.m. "Everyone should know what they're supposed to be doing; everybody should be properly trained."

In March, OSHA came down hard on Lunda; one OSHA official called the company's safety record "dismal." OSHA placed Lunda in its Severe Violator Enforcement Program, which requires specific OSHA focus on the company, after it discovered five serious safety violations during its investigation into Hagenon's death – the latest in a series of infractions and three deaths involving the company since 2012.

Monday's ceremony featured union workers of all stripes and an entrance from the Duluth Fire Department's honor guard. Retirees mingled with active workers prior to the ceremony, enjoying a free pancake breakfast.

One speaker called loss to unsafe working conditions "shameful," while heads bowed in agreement.

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