



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION • 44th PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 153 • NUMBER 39

TRIBUTES

THE LATE HONOURABLE JOSÉE FOREST-NIESING

Statement by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

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THE LATE HONOURABLE JOSÉE FOREST-NIESING

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I too welcome Senator Forest-Niesing's family and friends as we pay tribute to a truly valued colleague. We were all devastated by the news of Senator Forest-Niesing first contracting COVID-19, then her hospitalization and then after the good news of her release, her sudden passing. She was an absolutely dedicated, hard-working colleague who embraced all — from all groups and caucuses. There is no question that she is sorely missed. I was indeed lucky to sit beside her for those months prior to COVID-19, and at its outbreak I know she was concerned and was truly careful.

[Translation]

I had the privilege of working with her on several occasions, most recently as part of the Artwork and Heritage Advisory Working Group. Her attention to detail, her ideas and her desire to showcase the Senate's visual arts and heritage were all incredible. She found ways to share all this with a wider audience in order to increase engagement, and she made sure that every part of the country was heard. I hope she was proud of the work she did.

I also want to commend her initiative to publicly raise the issue of the financial crisis at Laurentian University. I am grateful for the time she spent keeping me and others who care about the plight of faculty, students and the community informed. She always kept me up to date on the situation. I believe that the inquiry she launched made a difference to the institution's financial planning and governance. At least that is what I hear from the academic community.

[English]

On a personal note, I will never forget her real joy at the birth of her first grandchild; she was over the moon. Then there was her announcement in this chamber of her discovery that she had Métis ancestors. Her creative determination to make a ribbon skirt was palpable, and I applaud her mother for making it with the material Josée chose. I am so looking forward to seeing it.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to her husband Robert and her entire family, to her friends and community. Her sense of commitment, care, compassion and her unbounded sense of humour and storytelling is missed by all in this chamber, and all who knew her. Thank you. And thank you, dear colleague, for such enriching ideas.
