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THE LATE DAVID STUART BARBER

Statement by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, periodically one reads a headline that carries one back through decades, bringing memories of one's youth and various stages in adulthood. Such was the case when I read the July 28 *Winnipeg Free Press* headline "One of the good ones."

That "good one" was none other than David Barber, a brilliant visionary in Winnipeg's film scene. His sudden passing has left a huge hole in Winnipeg's film and arts groups.

Indeed, David's impact on Canada's film sector and that further afield was truly significant too, remembered by the many tributes that flowed in immediately after his passing. He was called "a fosterer of filmmakers" and "a champion of local and Canadian cinema."

Dave was a programmer and the force of the Winnipeg Film Group from 1983 until his passing. A mentor to many and good friend to even more, he knew what films were being created, what festivals were happening and which films would be of interest where. He was a consummate connector supporting film artists, a constant promoter of Canadian film and a true builder of Winnipeg's film community. His eye for excellence never wavered, his support of independent film was resolute and his deep passion for his calling was ever-present. Self-effacing, his kindness was well known, and his sense of humour was deep.

From the time he was a child, his powers of observation were keen. I knew him from the time he was a very little boy. His family lived a block over from mine. I was at school with his oldest brother, and our parents were close friends. David and I reconnected when I moved back to Winnipeg. He was fully ensconced as the force of the Winnipeg Film Group. I was thrilled when he received the first ever Making a Difference Award from the Winnipeg Arts Council in 2007 — an award much deserved, as was his Diamond Jubilee Medal.

We frequently met at arts events and our local grocery store and always had time to catch up. His sense of fun, friendship and insightful grasp of multiple policy issues permeated every conversation. He was truly a quiet, deep, committed and knowledgeable soul.

The theatre at Winnipeg's Cinematheque has already been named the Dave Barber Theatre, and no naming has ever been more fitting.

Dave, the community is hurting but ever so grateful for your many accomplishments and steadfast dedication. My thoughts and condolences go to your brothers and their families.

Thank you, my friend, for your pioneering work and ever-present support of so many.
