

Margie Metzler, August 15, 2008

My name is Margie Metzler, and I have worked with Joan Lee in the Gray Panthers for the past three years. This has been an incredible opportunity for me: to learn about public policy, about the Legislature, and about advocacy. Watching her in action, I was amazed at how many communities she joined or allied with during the course of her many campaigns for social justice, peace, women's issues, etc. and I came to realize that **community** was key to everything she did. Joan believed to her core that **It Takes a village**: to raise a child, to change a law, to stop a war. She believed that we "are all in this together", and that those of us who can are responsible for those who can't be totally responsible for themselves at all times, people who in fact *can't* always pull themselves up by their own bootstraps because they *don't, in fact, have bootstraps*. People like seniors, of course, or the disabled, or children.

I would like to take a quick survey. As I name a community, please stand if you are part of that community or an advocate.

- **Seniors**
- **The Disabled**
- **The Universalist Unitarian Society**
- **Labor Unions**
- **Educators**
- **Nurses**
- **Healthcare advocates**
- **Peace Activists**
- **Political activists**

I notice that many of you stood more than once. I would have. So would Joan.

Many of you know that while Joan was in the hospital, there were three very special people who helped Arnie and Joan navigate through the complexities of Joan's care, even though she had excellent coverage. They were Bill Durston, Candidate for Congress and a Kaiser Emergency Room doctor, his wife, Diane, and Mary Ellen Asebedo, who is a hospice nurse. All of them were incredible, visiting Joan, calling all of us, demystifying all the processes Joan had to undergo, and comforting all of us.

We lost a remarkable friend, mentor, and leader last night. Joan Lee died peacefully after a battle with cancer.

Bill wrote this about our Joan:

Joan was well known and respected in the greater Sacramento area for her grassroots activism on issues related to seniors, universal health care, workers rights, world peace, and other progressive causes. She was a leader at the state and national level with the Gray Panthers. She was also a mentor and a personal inspiration to me.

Joan faced her own illness and impending death with the same courage, dignity,

grace, and humor that characterized her approach to the many causes she championed on behalf of others. When she learned that she had metastatic cancer, she did not express fear that she would die, just frustration that she could not continue her work.

Joan will be sorely missed by all of us who knew her.....

Please join me in taking inspiration from the remarkable example of Joan Lee, in committing to continue the work that she reluctantly left unfinished, and in reflecting on the fragility of human life and the importance of appreciating every moment that we have with family, friends, and loved ones.

Sincerely,
Bill

Bill Durston, M.D.