

**For Joan Lee
In Memorial
August 15, 2008
By Susan Murany**

I bring condolences on behalf of the Gray Panthers National Board and Staff. We are extremely saddened by the loss of Joan who for us was a real treasure. I know others at the national level (others are here today) feel incredibly blessed to have worked with Joan. Her stamp will remain on our policies and activities forever.

My first thoughts upon hearing of Joan's diagnosis were of shock, sadness and devastation. I thought about Arnie, Margie and all here who loved and worked with Joan day in and day out. My second thought was who is going to do all the work?

You know, although Joan was a passionate and effective national board member, her heart was always here in California.

What Joan Taught

1. Issues, issues, issues: it's all about the issues.
2. Never ask of others what you wouldn't do yourself.
3. Activism can be delivered up with a smile, even a laugh or two and that it's not only about our demands, it's how we make those demands.
4. Tenacity is underrated – don't accept "no" if you have to, ask again- very often the same day or even in the next sentence.
5. Never underestimate the power of building relationships.
6. That we as activists should not slide carefully to the end of this earthly life, but barrel out at 150 mph.

On a more personal note, Joan was a member of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. The museum is a cultural one and tells the stories of an oppressed people. Joan pushed me and pushed me to spend time there because she said that as activists, we needed to be nurtured. I finally did spend significant time there (Joan was in the hospital) and her footprints could be found everywhere in that place.

So in Joan's honor, I'd like to read a poem written by Larry Kibby of the Wiyot Nation in California.

A Farewell

Standing in the twilight hours of a new day, long before the dawn of morning, ready to blow on an Eagle Whistle, to send on a final journey, one who has gone before us.

Four times the sound of an Eagle Whistle will echo across the land, awaking the shadows of life as the four winds carry a matter of death to our ancestor's who await the arrival of another who will soon know the answers of life and death.

As the whistle is blown into the four directions, the songs of long ago are heard amongst the tree tops, across the valley floors and through the mountains bringing clouds filled with tears of our ancestor's who know that a life filled with love is coming before them in a matter of death that will live within the universe of life.

Long ago, so many elder's filled the land of our people, but slowly we bid farewell to these old ones, who gave us a chance to live and learn their ways, who gave to us of their hearts, who allowed us to know the truth of times gone by.

Today a tear falls across the land and in the early morning twilight we say farewell for now and know that in time, they will join those who now stand over us and guide us along the path we travel.

For all of life, we live and die, and the Eagle Whistle blows.

- -Larry Kibby, River, Bear River, Mattole, Wiyot Nation, California

Rest in Peace, Joan but keep giving us hell!