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TRIBUTES

THE LATE HONOURABLE JOSÉE FOREST-NIESING

Statement by:
The Honourable Bev Busson

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

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THE LATE HONOURABLE JOSÉE FOREST-NIESING

Hon. Bev Busson: Dear colleagues and family, how can one describe a loss that is indescribable, explain an event that is unexplainable or accept a fact that is so unfair as to be unacceptable? Here goes.

Since the first time that she rose in the Senate, I was always afraid that if we spoke on a subject, I would get a time after her. She was such a hard act to follow. Senator Josée Forest-Niesing was one of the most amazing people I have ever met, and I have met a lot of extraordinary people.

She became a senator about a month after I did, but from the very beginning I was her biggest fan. When one is appointed to the Senate, I think we all feel unworthy. Senator Josée Forest-Niesing set the standard. She had it all. She was elegant and beautiful, but many of us are blessed with that DNA. She was smart; this is an occupational necessity. She was well educated, as many of us are. She was kind, as we all strive to be. She loved her family with a passion. Don't we all? Her ethics and principles were above reproach; we all strive to meet that standard.

Josée had all of that, but she also had that quality that is difficult to define and impossible to falsify. She was special. When she walked into a room, she did not have to dominate the

conversation. Her presence did that for her. Her passion for truth and her dedication to her country were subtle but obvious.

She was tenacious about the things that mattered to her. First and foremost was her family. She always had pictures on the ready to reinforce the pride she had in her husband, children and grandchildren. Professionally, gender equality, French language rights, Indigenous issues and the modernization of the Senate were passions for her. We spent many a night analyzing what had just happened in the Senate over a glass of wine or two, and we spoke often about the Senate of the future.

In the week prior to her passing, she even virtually joined a Senate meeting from her bed, wanting to make a difference to the end. I am so honoured that this amazing person chose me as a friend. She died far too soon and had so much more yet to give. We have all lost an outstanding Canadian. Her family has lost an amazing wife, sister, daughter, mother and grandmother, and I have lost a true friend.

Her legacy is a standard I continue to strive to be worthy of. I suspect that she and the other angels in heaven will be planning the modernization of heaven, probably wearing ribbon skirts.

We will never forget you, dear friend. You will forever be a hard act to follow.
