

Eulogy for Bonnie Soucie, read by Louis Rodrigues, OCHU First Vice-president

I am honoured to speak today about Bonnie Soucie, on behalf of the locals and the leadership of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions of CUPE, and all of the healthcare local unions across eastern Ontario.

Bonnie was a dear and cherished friend to all of us.

CUPE's healthcare local unions in Pembroke, Renfrew, Almonte, Arnprior, Perth, Smith's Falls, Brockville, Winchester, Alexandria, Hawkesbury, Cornwall, Kingston and Ottawa have sent representatives here today.

All of us are a part of OCHU Area 5 and Bonnie played many important and dynamic roles in the leadership of our area and of our union over many years.

We loved Bonnie very much.

We loved her dedication and her impish sense of humour.

We loved how her eyes sparkled when she was pulling your leg.

We loved her stubbornness when she thought something was the right thing to do.

We loved that Bonnie always knew where she stood on issues and that she was brave and fierce in defense of the things she believed in.

We loved that her heart was always so close to the surface.

Bonnie Soucie was a wonderful mom to Amanda, Jessica and Rachel and a devoted partner to Henry.

We are so sorry to all of you for this tragic loss of your dear mom and partner.

Thank you for your generosity in sharing her with us and with the world.

Bonnie was a good friend to many, many people.

Bonnie was a great nurse.

She was a truly great union leader and advocate.

She took care of her members.

She cared about you.

She fought as hard as she could for you.

Bonnie took care of people at the Perley and she also thought globally- she knew that the workload problems of staff at the Perley and all across long term care could only be addressed by increasing the numbers of staff.

And that only by doing that would the quality of care of the residents improve.

This was her passion.

Bonnie was one of the strongest advocates for the residents in long term care that I have ever met.

Last year she organized rallies and events promoting a minimum of 4 hours of care for seniors across Ontario, including a bbq just outside this hall, that many of you attended.

These were just the latest events in her push for legislation and increased funding.

Bonnie chaired the long term care committee of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions and she pushed OCHU and she pushed CUPE to work harder and do more to try to improve the quality of care for residents in long term care and to address the backbreaking workloads of the staff who look after them.

Bonnie was thrilled when legislation supporting four hours of care was introduced in

2016 and passed 2nd reading in 2017.

One of the things that we can do to remember Bonnie is to pick up that torch.

We can promise that we will not stop pushing until we achieve a minimum 4 hours of care in long term care.

This was, outside of raising her family and nursing, Bonnie's life work.

Her friends and co-workers remember her today and always for her selflessness and for her compassion.

A number of people over the years called Bonnie, at their wits end, thinking that life was hopeless and Bonnie took them to the hospital and stayed with them saw to it that they were taken care of and let them know that life would get better and that they were not alone.

And life did get better for them.

Bonnie had hardship and suffering and tragedy in her life. And she had laughter and joy and happiness.

She was complex, she was human.

But sometimes things are just overwhelming and even the strongest people despair.

Today many of us ask ourselves whether we could have done more for Bonnie.

All that we know for sure is that we loved her deeply and that we loved having her in this world with us.

And we know that we will miss her very much.