

In the Senate, Joan has been my mentor. Her great service as Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has been noted and acknowledged by government, opposition and independent senators throughout the years. I learned a great deal by just trying to follow in her footsteps. Her most recent, massive effort as Chairman of the Special Senate Committee on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide put the icing on the cake of her years of conscientious, intelligent and compassionate service in this chamber.

Senator Neiman's departure will be a sad loss, not only — and particularly — for the government side of this chamber, but for the chamber as a whole. May I add my own good wishes and those of my wife, Marg, to Joan and Clem and their family. To Joan, I wish good health and many years of life in which to enjoy a well-deserved retirement.

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Senator Neiman, I wish the very best for you. Everything has been mentioned except for one thing.

I have known you as a result of our association in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which we have served for so many years. You were chairperson of the Human Rights Commission for many years. Your work all over the world on these issues may not have been known in Canada, or even in the Senate, however just last weekend a female parliamentarian from Geneva, who was aware that you had chaired the Special Senate Committee on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, kindly asked me to send her 10 copies of your report. This illustrates that your work is known not only in the Senate and across Canada, but also within certain international institutions. You are well remembered there. You will be well remembered by me. I wish you good luck.

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, Senator Joan Neiman seems so young, so vibrant, so energetic, so intellectually engaged, that I was surprised today to find that her retirement was quickly approaching. I just simply cannot believe it.

I have had the privilege of sitting with Senator Neiman on a number of committees and in caucuses. At all times, Joan's was a voice of moderation, a voice of reason, a voice of great tactical skill, a voice of intelligence and, above all, she was always courteous, even to those with whom I know she violently disagreed, including me.

Having said that, honourable senators, Joan is no angel. My roots in the Liberal Party go back to the early sixties when Joan and her husband Clem were considerable and aggressive political forces. While we shared many views about the Liberal Party and the importance of it, on many occasions we found ourselves on different sides and supporting different personalities. However, throughout that whole period, our personal relationship was good and sound, and always pleasant.

The Neimans were — and are — considerable political activists, deeply committed to the public affairs of Canada at each level of political activity. Theirs is one of those great stories which, as alluded to by Senator Stanbury, is rarely told about the political life of our country and the life of our party.

Joan goes on to a well-deserved retirement, but I do not think it will be a rest. I think it will be the start of yet another, equally new, exciting and energetic career. I want to thank both Senator Neiman and her husband, Clem, for the pleasure of their company.

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon: Honourable senators, I also should like to take this opportunity to wish Senator Neiman well. I had the privilege of spending more time with her over the past year than I would have liked. However, I was truly impressed with her tremendous legal knowledge, her tremendous experience, her tremendous dedication, her tremendous flexibility in bending to other people's strong convictions which were in contradiction with her own, and her ability to listen to witnesses with an objective mind, consequently championing a report which I have had the privilege of presenting in the medical community.

As I mentioned in my previous brief remarks, I had the privilege of presenting the contents of this report across the country in a telemedicine conference to medical schools as well as to many of our health care institutions. All comments I received about the report were very complimentary. I have received several letters requesting copies of it.

We had some very difficult times in the committee trying to keep our scribes on course, and trying to get a working consensus in order to come out with a reasonable result. The success of that report is Senator Neiman's success. It was her ability to hold things together as a chairperson that made it all work.

Senator Neiman, I, too, wish you very well. It was a great pleasure and honour to work with you on this committee. I hope you have a wonderful retirement, and I hope to see more of you.

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, I did not realize what a great seatmate I had until today. I took Senator Neiman for granted until now, and now I hate to see this great and dynamic person leave. Everything we heard about her today is true. Senators do not lie.

Joan, I will miss you. You have been a great companion, although we did not always agree.

With regard to the report of the committee on euthanasia, which she chaired so well, I was prepared to give her a hard time about it because I thought she would recommend that we start killing people, which I was dead against.

As Senator Prud'homme said, Senator Neiman was the chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the parliaments of the world. She has often raised the issue of the imprisonment of parliamentarians around the world. She fought to have them released. She worked at that for many years and did an excellent job of it.

In light of her work in that area, I told her that if she wanted to recommend that we start killing people, I would give her a hard time. Thank God that my doctor friend, Senator Keon, after working so hard to save lives, would not recommend that we start to kill people. I wish to congratulate Senator Neiman for her hard work on that committee.