



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Newton, Mrs Joyce Ann OAM

SPEECH

Tuesday, 16 October 2018

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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| Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP | Question No. |

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (19:55): It was with much sadness that I received news last Thursday advising of the passing of Mrs Joyce Newton. Joyce led a full and giving life, a life claimed too early by the cruel ravages of motor neurone disease. Joyce, together with her husband and soulmate of 45 years, Greg, have been loyal friends and valued advisers not just of mine but of many, many people, including many parliamentarians for many years.

Joyce had a personal brand of commitment that always went well beyond what one would typically expect of the average person. But there was nothing average about Joyce Newton. Whether in her professional career as a teacher at the Maleny State School, or later, when she really stepped up the pace after resigning from the education department, Joyce was always driven to go that extra mile. Her boundless energy and passionate commitment are legendary on the Sunshine Coast, especially in the community of Maleny. From the swimming pool committee to the Girl Guides, the soccer club, the P&C, the hospital auxiliary, a kindergarten playgroup and the blood bank—they all relied on Joyce for years, as did the National Party and, later, the Liberal National Party in Queensland. Branch meeting after branch meeting, convention after convention, election after election—Joyce would be there, as always, in the front line, rallying the members and rallying the community. And, as a candidate and later as a member of parliament, I knew that Joyce's views were not only highly informed but they were ones of great conviction, and so you always listened and took note.

It was actually Joyce's husband, Greg, who I first met, and that's only about eight years ago. Now, the last word you would use to describe Greg Newton would be 'soft'. Greg's a tough bloke and has a hard exterior, a touch of wildness, maybe, and he shoots straight—straighter than any dairy farmer I've ever met. I was delighted, therefore, to meet Joyce, because Joyce Newton took no cheek from her husband, Greg, and you could say that Joyce knew how to tame Greg, if you like, but not in a way that would quieten him; in a beautiful way, because Greg could still completely be himself. And, to me, it reflected a love and devotion between Greg and Joyce that I have admired and I always will. And that devotion we saw more and more as that tragic, tragic condition took hold of Joyce. The devotion shown by Greg said it all.

It was after more than 36 years of dedicated service to the cause of conservative politics in Queensland that Joyce was awarded honorary life membership by the LNP. Earlier this year, in recognition of a lifetime of tireless work in the Maleny community, she was awarded with the Medal of the Order of Australia. It was a sign of Joyce's selfless character that these awards delighted but humbled her.

To me, Joyce was a person with enormous experience and a big intellect, yet she remained highly inquisitive and keen to learn the views of others. Joyce was a person who fearlessly wore her beliefs on her sleeve, yet she was naturally humble and never sought to be the centre of attention. Joyce was a person who was good at organising, great at managing, yet was also prepared to selflessly do the hard work. And it's in that spirit that I acknowledge the remarkable life of Joyce Ann Newton in this House today.

The SPEAKER: It being 8 pm, the House stands adjourned until 9.30 am tomorrow.

House adjourned at 20 : 00

Tuesday, 16 October 2018

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks) took the chair at 16:00.