

February 3, 2022

Dear Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Senate Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery Committee:

My heart is both heavy with sadness and filled with joyful appreciation for Kathryn Weit, formally recognized in SR201. The testimony by many whose lives she touched shared February 1, 2022, during your committee meeting was just a drop in the proverbial river. As was noted, courageous Kathryn never really retired nor flinched from challenges such as a two-week Colorado River trip. It included navigating the Class 10 Lava Rapids, the highest degree of difficulty in the Grand Canyon. She sought the highest degrees of difficulty throughout her career, and the impact was to successfully transform systems, families, and individuals' lives.



Kathryn afloat (intentionally!) in the little Colorado River

I met Kathryn in the fabled chicken coop at the Arc of Oregon as the Staley Settlement was birthing the brokerage system. I immediately and since, felt the compassionate power of her mission. She was unassuming and humble, but never quiet in her resolve to change things for the better. Her net was wide in capturing the energy for advocacy and when she talked, we listened. Wisdom doesn't come out of every mouth, but it certainly did hers. As did some appropriately placed expletives. She continues to whisper in my ears, the conscience of service to vulnerable human beings. Although Kathryn stands alone in the imprint on services for people with IDD in Oregon, she lived her life with and for others. In her spirit, the people she mentored will continue to affect change in our State for generations to come.



Kathryn and her river rats, entering Grand Canyon cave

Her expanse of knowledge was only exceeded by her generosity of spirit. In truth and in fact, she invested her life in others so we might all live better. Who are we if we are not doing that? She stands as an example of a life well lived and a person we must emulate to really make a difference.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Theisen, Executive Director