In Memory

Carla Goldstein

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In Memory

Joanne Fuchs was a co-founding Editor-In-Chief of CIRCLES - The Buffalo Women's Journal of Law and Social Policy. On the weekend of February 19, 1994, Joanne, along with two of her friends, Ruth Ritchell and Joe Antonecchia, went for an adventurous walk across frozen Lake Erie. They planned to walk from the American side to the Canadian side on a beautiful, sunny winter's day. They made it almost all the way across, but ice gave way to water, and all three died.

This issue of CIRCLES is dedicated to each of them, for their adventurous spirits, and especially to Joanne, because Joanne helped give birth to CIRCLES. It was her energy, her enthusiasm, her insight, her dedication and hard work that transformed the idea of "starting a women's journal" into being a reality.

Creating CIRCLES was fraught with difficulties. There were political disagreements, personality conflicts, funding problems, creative blocks, deadlines unmet, and meetings with low attendance. Joanne had the grace and good sense to help us all negotiate through, around, and over the tremendous obstacles that stood in the way.

Her smile was infectious, and there wasn't much it couldn't inspire. Joanne was a great animal lover, and her pal Gus (a beautiful shepherd) guarded us through the night in our basement office as we tried to get the first issue to press.

Joanne worked to found CIRCLES because she ardently believed that women's voices, experiences, and perspectives were not fully represented in legal academic life. Yet, her time was not solely devoted to advocating for women. Joanne worked to break down barriers for people with disabilities. She worked at the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities, at the Disabilities Law Clinic at Albany Law School, and at the University of Buffalo Disabilities Clinic. At her most recent job, she helped advocate for victims of AIDS and employment discrimination.

Joanne took on a lot. In addition to her academic work and employment, she was a primary force in her family's life. She came from a big family - six children all together - and she spent significant time tending those relationships. She helped care for her father, who had a disabling stroke during Joanne's first year of law school.

Those of us who knew Joanne are so grateful to have been in her life. She fed us with her love, her patience, her great sense of humor, and when we were lucky, her blond brownies - among other of her culinary delights. For those who didn't know her personally, but read this journal, you know a big part of her. Her spirit lives in these pages which speak of struggle and of triumph. We will always think of her, and hope to be guided by her steadfast integrity in all that we do.

by Carla Goldstein