

3/26/18 Funeral Tribute for Carolyn Jacobson – Health Advocacy –Remarks by Carol Rosenblatt

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to honor Carolyn by discussing her work in health care advocacy, an area that occupied much of her time, energy and enthusiasm during the 15 years that she served as a consultant and special assistant to the president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

First I want to express the deepest sympathy from CLUW president Elise Bryant who cannot be here today.

Carolyn knew women's health education not only could save lives, but was a great way to demonstrate to women that CLUW and the labor movement understood their needs. Women would become empowered about their own health; CLUW chapters promoting the campaigns would attract new members. Carolyn knew this was a winning combination and she was right.

In 2001 she originated and directed CLUW's Contraceptive Equity Project to make sure that unions knew they had a right to demand contraceptive coverage in their health plans if the plan covered other preventive drugs and devices. Carolyn was thrilled when, as a result of the project, the largely male Masters, Mates and Pilots Union added contraceptive coverage for its 6,800 members and spouses. The project succeeded in assisting millions of union families secure contraceptive equity in their health plans.

Carolyn's next campaign for CLUW was Working Women ROCC (Reaching Out against Cervical Cancer) and then CLUW's Cervical Cancer Prevention Works project that worked to reduce cervical cancer rates, promoting increased cervical cancer screening and annual follow up for union women and their families. The message that Carolyn spread, is that unlike other cancers, cervical cancer is totally preventable. Carolyn pumped up interest by connecting to two young survivors, Christine Baze, who used rock music, and Tamika Felder with fund raising walks to get the word out. She rolled out the Pearl of Wisdom campaign to heighten cervical cancer awareness and prevention in the labor community.

In 2015 CLUW adopted the Spread the Word campaign, another project that Carolyn directed, an awareness effort for women about coronary artery disease which kills more Americans than all cancers combined and is the #1 killer of women in the United States.

Just before illness sapped her of energy, Carolyn worked with HealthyWomen, a non-profit health information source, to conduct a survey of CLUW members' health information needs and generated health posts monthly on CLUW's website based on the survey results.

Through it all Carolyn used her knowledge, skills, creativity and unlimited energy to publicize, educate and train CLUW members, chapter leaders and unions about the importance of

preventive health care. She secured funding for programs, produced materials, posted prolifically on CLUW's website, created articles for publications, inspired chapters to get active and acknowledged them enthusiastically when they did, spent endless hours on the phone in personal contact, established a wide network of health care activists and allies, coordinated panels and workshops throughout the country for national meetings and chapters.

She never said no.

Carolyn once reflected, "I came from a family that was very steeped in social justice. It was really important to not only do well, but to do good."

Her life accomplished that.

On a personal note, Carolyn was a wonderful friend, long time colleague and next door neighbor. Her death leaves a void in my life.

She will be sorely missed.

In the words of Elise Bryant, CLUW's president who describes Carolyn this way, "Activist, unionist, educator and hell raiser, we give thanks for the spirit, intelligence and passion Carolyn brought to everything she put her hand to. Like our foremothers Sojourner Truth, Mother Jones and Olga Madar, her spirit marches on!"

Thank you.