



EARLY SPRING

GOOD NEWS SERVICE #62: MARCH 2019

Editorial: Recently some friends who have carried bright light within our grey times have left us. Randy chose, this time, to share some of their words with you.



1. Paul Dewar:

The following words were posted on Paul Dewar's Facebook account shortly after his death on Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019:

Dear Friends,

The time has come for me to say goodbye. While I have left this place physically, I have some final words I'd like to share.

I want to say thank you. My whole life was filled with the kindness of the people of Ottawa, but never did I feel the true depth and generosity of your love more than this past year. You were a constant source of comfort and solidarity for me and my family. I am so grateful for all that you have done.

I told you that I thought my illness was a gift and I genuinely meant that. In this time in between, I got to see the wonder of the world around us. This reinforced my belief that inherent in our community is a desire to embrace each other with kindness and compassion.

In my time on this earth, I was passionate about the power of citizens working together and making a difference.

I wanted a Canada where we treat our fellow citizens with the dignity, love and respect that every one of us deserves.

I wanted a world where we reduced suffering and increased happiness. A world where we took better care of each other.

I had the privilege to travel and see that despite our many unique differences, we are all ultimately driven by the same desires for community, belonging and fairness.

It is easy sometimes to feel overwhelmed by the gravity of the challenges we face. Issues like climate change, forced migration and the threat posed by nuclear weapons. It's hard to know how to make a difference.

The secret is not to focus on how to solve the problem, but concentrate on what you can contribute – to your country, your community and neighbours.

Start from a place of compassion and be grateful for all that Canada has to offer – especially the natural beauty that surrounds us, and the music that brings us so much joy.

True change can only come when power is transferred to young people unburdened by cynicism. That's why I used what energy I had left this year to create Youth Action Now. Hopefully, it will help unleash the power of the young people in our community to make a real difference. I hope you will be inspired to be a part of that project and continue my work.

Ottawa, don't stop now. Let's show our strength together. Let's embrace the vision of Algonquin elder William Commanda for an authentic and organic future, rooted in the wisdom of the Indigenous people upon whose land we reside.

Let's exemplify how to save our biosphere, right here, with the protection of our beloved Ottawa River and Gatineau Park.

Let's make more art. Let's play more. Let's embrace each other in these days of cynicism and doubt.

Let's welcome those who need a safe home. Let's empower those who have been left behind.

Let's nurture and grow with peace, love and unity. Let's join hands and hearts to see the beauty in ourselves through the soul of our city.

In the stoic stillness of my journey,
I have found my way to peace.
May you keep building a more peaceful and better world for all.
Let this sacred ground be a place for all.
Let the building of a better world begin with our neighbours.
May we dream together.
May we gather our courage and stand together in moments of despair,
and may we be bound together by joyous celebration of life.
We are best when we love and when we are loved.
Shine on like diamonds in the magic of this place.

SMILE AND PLAY...
LAUGH AND DANCE...
GIVE AND SHARE...

My love to you always,
Paul



2. Patrick Lane:

Murray invited the late Patrick Lane to contribute to his 2015 book Minutes to Midnight: Why more than 800 Order of Canada recipients call for Nuclear Disarmament. Part of his submission was an excerpt from a 2013 address to UBC graduates in Kelowna:

“Back early in December 1958, I was 19 years old, and living with my wife and baby boy in a two-room apple-picker’s shack a few miles down the road from here. I had a job driving dump truck for a two-bit outfit that was working on a short stretch of highway just down the hill where this university was built so many years later. I remember leaving the shack and walking out to stand by the highway in the wind and snow. I stood there shivering in my canvas coat as I waited to be picked up by the grader operator in his rusted pickup truck. The sky was hard and grey, its only gift that winter day was ice disguised as fragile bitter snow.

“As I stood there in the false dawn, I looked up for a moment and as I did an iridescent blue butterfly the size of my palm fluttered down and rested on the sleeve of my coat just above my wrist. It was winter, it was cold and I knew the Okanagan Valley where I had lived most of my young life did not harbour huge, shiny blue butterflies, not even in summer. I remember stripping off my gloves and cupping the insect in my hands, lifting that exquisite creature to the warmth of my mouth in the hope I could save it from the cold.

“I breathed upon the butterfly, with the helplessness we all have when we are faced with an impossible and inevitable death, be it a quail or crow, gopher, hawk, dog or child. I cupped that delicate butterfly in the hollow of my hands and ran back to the picker’s shack in the hope that somehow the warmth from the morning fire in the woodstove might save it, but when I reached the door and opened my hands the butterfly died.

“The day the beautiful creature died in my hands, I looked up into the dome of the hard cold sky and I swore to whatever great spirit resided there in the dark clouds that I would live my life to the full, and, above all, I would treasure beauty. I swore, too, that I’d believe in honesty, faithfulness, love and truth. The words I spoke were the huge abstractions the young sometimes use, but I promised them to myself and now, more than half a century later, I stand here in front of your young minds, your creative spirits, your beautiful lives, and I can tell you that I have tried.”

The Good News Service is written and produced by Murray Thomson, OC of Ottawa (mothom@rogers.com, 613.224.8155) and Randy Weekes of Lanark, ON (randylweekes@gmail.com). We welcome your suggestions for new items of good news.
