
Susan Moody

1943 ~ 2007

By Deborah Howery

One Saturday last June, my dear friend Susan Moody called me and said "Debbie, I think I am dying." Her health problems, which were serious and many, in addition to her chemical injury, which complicated and in some cases, prevented treatment for those other health problems, seemed insurmountable. We talked for hours that night, and ended up laughing and joking before we hung up. She thanked me for making her laugh that night, and I told her that I was sorry that that was all I could do for her, listen and make her laugh. She had done so much for me, at a time when I was feeling very low. She said that was all she expected, not solutions, just someone to listen & take her mind off the myriad problems for a while, someone to relax with. That's what friends do, and Susan excelled at that, gave us all a wonderful example of how true friends take care of each other. We talked about her problems and fears, and as typical of her, she steered the conversation to my problems as well. That is the way she was; no matter how sick, no matter much pain or trouble she was in, she was always interested in helping the other person. I am very grateful for that conversation, because 2 weeks and 2 days later, I received another phone call informing me of her death.

Susan was married, had two adult sons, four grandchildren, two brothers still living, and a deceased brother and sister. She was a political activist and feminist, and worked as a medical secretary, as well as a legal secretary for the Farm Workers Legal Services before she became too ill to work.

Susan's family and work history taken from her [obituary published in the Rochester Democrat And Chronicle](#), courtesy of Barbara Rubin and LaVonne Ellis

I first met Susan a couple of years ago, on the CIS list. We started emailing each other, and eventually started talking on the phone. From her emails, I had thought Susan was young and in fairly good shape, except for her CI, because her messages were always so sprightly and full of energy. I was surprised to find that she was actually in her early 60's and quite seriously ill. In spite of her severe illnesses, she was so bright, quick to laugh, sweet, with a sincere desire to help others

always. She cared very much about all her CI friends, and she had many. I felt an instant connection with her from the first email, and am by no means alone. Most people who knew her say they experienced the same connection with Susan. She was a very dear and true friend to many of us, someone who genuinely cared about her friends. No matter how ugly things got for me, I always knew there was someone in Rochester, New York who cared about me.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Susan had been ill for many years of her life. She suffered from polycystic kidney disease, and the dialysis that kept her alive until her kidney transplant is what caused her chemical injury. After the transplant she had to take immuno-suppressive drugs for the rest of her life, which contributed to her breast cancer. She endured surgery to remove the tumor in her breast with only a local anesthetic, due to her inability to tolerate general anesthesia. (She suffered from prolapses, and a number of other illnesses. Her husband of many years, who cooked, shopped and cared for her when she became terribly ill after the transplant, left her a few years ago. So, really too sick to take care of herself, she had to learn to cook again, shop, clean and take care of finances, but did manage to hire someone relatively fragrance free to help with it all. She managed to do all that, and still spent many hours counseling the EIs that she met on her email support groups.) Anyone who seemed to need her help she contacted and did all she could to support, counsel, and befriend them. No wonder everyone who knew her loved her. She was an amazingly selfless loving person, who treated others with respect, kindness, understanding and honesty. In spite of all she suffered, she

was cheerful and had a wonderful sense of humor, and was very appreciative of any little thing her friends did for her. Everyone I have talked with who knew her loved and respected her, myself included. Her passing left a large hole in many of our lives; she is sorely missed.

Deborah Howery is a gifted bonsai gardener who writes about coping with chemical injury and disease.