

She Stirred Us

agitate >verb

1 to make troubled or nervous.

2 to campaign to arouse public concern about an issue.

3 to stir or disturb (a liquid) briskly.

-DERIVATIVES agitation >noun.

-ORIGIN Latin *agitare* 'agitate, drive'.

Lori left us suddenly, just days before she would have been 48 years old.

We miss her every day.

Lori had an unalloyed love and approval of the work of organizing and advocacy. In a time when so many well-intentioned people see social improvement coming from some people doing things *for* others, she relished those times when people came together *with* one another to do things for themselves, speaking truth to power and not backing down. She seemed to love advocacy for its own sake, enjoying the sharp exchange and the victorious outcome, hating to get beat.



We fully realized what a gem Delaware had received, with her arrival here, when she went to work a few years ago to stop the illegal ouster of over a dozen families from an apartment complex in a small town in Sussex. She got the evictions voided and then started looking, in vain in this case, for a way to counterattack on fair housing grounds.

This incident supplied, as much as anything, the impetus to form the Sussex Housing Group, the group which, until then, we had been somewhat timid about bringing together, for fear that it might do more harm than good.

Lori was possessed of an incredibly keen mind and an ardent heart; and these two worked very much in tandem, often in ways that surprised those of us around her. She was an equal opportunity critic, for example, capable of skewering close friends in debate. Conversely, she was known for her ability to sit down with recent adversaries to break bread and socialize without reservation.

She insisted that things be addressed, impatiently, incessantly, relentlessly. Her indignation at the treatment of the people of the Dogwood community in Millsboro forced others to act. How could an entire community be displaced because an owner had degraded the land on which their homes stood? Soon a resident association had formed, and then a housing cooperative was created. When the coop members could not buy the land, she became involved in finding them an attorney to fight for more time on site.

With her friend and colleague from another firm, David Weidman, she invested innumerable hours, all of which went unbilled, to provide legal support to the cooperative's cause. We watched the two of them working faithfully, winning their case, and enjoying the struggle.

An accomplished labor lawyer before coming to Delaware, Lori was our agitator, scratching, disturbing, and stirring us.

She was suspicious of religiosity. Despite this, she exemplified Judaism's insistence on justice and was a daughter mindful of her people's origins as enslaved and exploited migrants.

She was, in the words of Rabbi Heschel, the definition of a religious person, " who suffers from harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair."