

Louisa Moya
Doris Anderson Memorial, May 12, 2007

I got to know the wonderful, spirited, funny, and brilliant Doris in 2004 through Equal Voice, the multi-partisan organization whose goal is electing more women in Canada. As many of you will know, this cause was very close to Doris's heart.

The first time that I met Doris was in an Equal Voice meeting held at the home of one of our members, Kloran German. Doris, Peggy Nash, Libby Burnham and I were the rag-tag team put together to raise money for Equal Voice. When we had concluded the business part of our meeting, we sat down to dinner and a glass or two of red wine – also close to Doris' heart.

Over dinner Doris told us a story that I wanted to share with you because it is true to her unassuming and humble style.... In 1992, Doris was invited by her good friend Governor General Adrienne Clarkson to attend a reception at the Canadian Museum of Civilization during the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. After the official ceremony, Doris was invited to attend a VIP luncheon. She sat down at her table where there were still a few empty seats. As the time for the luncheon drew nearer, Doris remarked that she couldn't believe that someone wouldn't bother to show up for lunch with the Queen. How rude! That was, of course, until the Queen entered the room and was ushered to her seat ... next to Doris! In true Doris style, she couldn't understand why she had been chosen to sit next to the Queen. Needless to say, they had an interesting conversation although I understand there were a few differences of opinion in the area of politics!

Shortly after meeting Doris, I invited her to speak to Equal Voice Youth – a national group of politically engaged young women – that makes up the youth wing of Equal Voice. Over 30 young women came to hear Doris speak. I gave a preamble about Doris and her many incredible achievements on behalf of Canadian women – she made grimacing faces and rolled her eyes through my introduction.

Doris shared her struggles as a woman in publishing in the '60s, her work with the Status of Women, and her role in bringing about the Women's Ad Hoc Committee that managed to get women's equality written into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms – despite some heavy hitters in Ottawa trying to block her progress. These stories were all told openly and with a wonderful sense of humour.

In conclusion, Doris told us about her long-standing battle to get more women elected in Canada. She expressed her utter frustration and exasperation that after many years of trying – she still hadn't achieved her goal of getting equal representation of women in politics. Doris told us that over a long period of time and after much research into voting systems around the world, she had come to the conclusion that the only way to make significant headway was through electoral reform. Specifically, she believed that by implementing proportional representation, a voting system that allows voters to choose both a local representative and from a party list, would result in more women being elected in Canada.

Everyone left the meeting in awe of Doris and her achievements and the incredible impact that she has had on the lives of all Canadians. We were determined to help her in her cause. In fact, after Doris left that night we created a pact in my kitchen – that ten of us would run in the next ten years. And I'm happy to report that we are already two down and eight to go!

After that night Doris and I were instant friends. I loved to hear her stories (some of which I can't share due to their racy content). And she loved to hear what we were up to – from hosting similar events with accomplished female politicians to appearing on Breakfast Television in our hot pink "Voters are Hot" t-shirts to encourage young women to vote in the Federal election.

The last time I saw Doris was in her condo in Toronto. Despite feeling under the weather, she was interested to hear all about my recent presentation to the Ontario Citizen's Assembly in favour of proportional representation. She wanted assurances that regardless of what happened to her, that myself and others would continue to fight for equal representation of women in Canadian politics.

In the short time I shared with Doris, she had a huge impact on me and many other young women.

To Doris I say – those of us whose lives you touched will keep up the fight. And if we achieve only a fraction of what you did, we will have done something truly remarkable.

In her current role as Director, Chapter Development of Equal Voice, Louisa Moya works with members to establish local chapters across the country. Vice President of a Riding Association in Toronto, she has worked on many election campaigns at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.