

Testimony for SCR 10

Senator Jackie Winters was and continues to be a monumental figure in my life. Many people who have interacted with her can call her a mentor, but I felt lucky to have worked for her and to be guided by her steady leadership over the years.

I frequently think about the lessons she gave in state history, leadership, and policy making. She allowed me to help her with policies that were very close to her heart: justice, human services and health care. She would often challenge norms in her ideas and envisioned the future in the long term rather than the immediate. I can travel around the entire state and see projects and programs that are there because of her wisdom. Her skill in diplomacy and relationships allowed her to become one of the most effective legislators I have ever met. She truly cared about her community, and when I say community, I mean all of Oregon.

Not only was she a leader in policy but she was a role model to women and people of color. She broke barriers that included many firsts, which made it possible for her peers and younger generations to see themselves in similar positions. I don't know if I can express how much it means to a young woman of color to see someone like Senator Winters in a position of power and authority who commanded so much respect. Representation matters and what Senator Winters represented was an opportunity for many of us to aim higher and see ourselves as worthy of having a seat and a voice at the table.

She always inspired me to work harder, think longer term and to have a little fun. I could always count on her to provide wisdom in difficult situations, even if I didn't know to ask for it. To this day I still wonder what words of wisdom Senator Winters would have for me as I navigate the bumpy waters of life. I can hear her calling me babe, giving me one of those looks and then smiling with me as she explains (hopefully with a piece of that amazing chocolate pecan pie she made).

I am glad that the Senate is honoring the Gentlelady from Salem, she was a larger than life figure who deserves every honor bestowed upon her. It was a privilege and an honor to have known her. I urge unanimous passage of SCR 10.

Andrea Chiapella