

Testimony: Carol Suzuki, March 4, 2024 re: SCR 212

For the record my name is Carol Suzuki and I am here today in my personal capacity and not as a staff in the Senate President's Office.

This May, I will have worked in the Oregon Legislature for 30 years. Sen. Cliff Trow was my first boss. I started as an intern in his office during the 1993 session. Later, I would work for him when he became the Senate Democratic Leader in 1996. He gave me the opportunity to become the Operations Director for the office – a position I held for almost 27 years, before moving to the Senate President's Office.

I'd like to share a brief story, my husband former Rep. Brian Clem I first met through our mutual Trow connection. Brian was Sen. Trow's LA, and I was Senate Democratic Leader Dick Springer's LA in 1995. We didn't get together for several years later but married in 1999.

Brian and I gambled that year, we had predicted that the legislature would adjourn around the 4th of July as it had for some time, but instead, it went longer and longer and eventually the Legislature sine died on our wedding day, July 24, 1999, at around 2 PM. Our wedding was being held in Hood River later that afternoon. Sen. Trow was one of the few people among our friends in the Oregon Legislature to make it in time for our wedding. That was the kind of man he was.

Sen. Cliff Trow will always hold a special place in my heart. He was a warm and generous man who led with quiet leadership, and with an unwavering belief in democracy and the democratic process. I miss him and know that I was so fortunate to have in my life.

I'm also honored to submit into the record testimony from the incomparable Sen. Mae Yih of Albany. Together Sen. Yih and Sen. Trow represented the citizens of their districts with great pride and distinction. I am very lucky to have served as staff in the Senate at a time when these two Oregon legends were still in office.

I'd like to read into the record, a letter Sen. Yih submitted to the Albany Democrat Herald newspaper on January 4, 2024, one day before Sen. Trow's celebration of life was held in Corvallis.

It is titled, "Cliff Trow made a positive difference."

The late Oregon Gov. Tom McCall once said, "Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky. They are individuals who say, 'This is my community, and it's my responsibility to make it better.'"

I am just one of many Linn and Benton County residents who will always regard Cliff Trow, who passed away on Oct. 31, as a true hero, because few individuals devoted more time and effort to make this area and the state better than Cliff Trow did.

I first met Cliff four decades ago and had the privilege of serving in the Oregon State Senate with him for 20 years. Representing adjoining state senate districts, we had the opportunity to work together on a large number of issues. While we didn't always agree, I can testify that Cliff was a legislator of high intelligence, and a man of principle, integrity and moral strength.

Cliff and I also both served on the Ways and Means Budget Committee, where he was a tireless and eloquent advocate for adequate funding for quality education and for services to the disabled.

Cliff was also blessed with a wonderful marriage to Jo Anne, who made history herself as the first female vice president in the history of Oregon State University.

As we mourn Cliff's passing, let us take solace in the fact that he made a positive difference for the many OSU students he taught and mentored, for his community, and for the state of Oregon.

Mae Yih, Oregon state senator, retired

Albany