

Acknowledgement for Joan WINGFIELD, by Dave Sweeney, Australia

I am sorry that I am unable to be with you in person today to reflect on and acknowledge Joan's life and efforts and to share stories and the fire.

The one good thing about the nuclear industry is that in resisting it you get to meet some very fine people. Joan was certainly one of these.

I met Joan in the early 1980s against the backdrop of Western Mining Corporation pushing for the development of the Olympic Dam mine at Roxby Downs.

WMC was headed by Hugh Morgan who was in the vanguard of the mining industry's push to overturn promised national land rights laws.

It was a time of backroom deals, corporate self interest, broken promises, demo's and heavy handed coppers – just like today.

Joan was lit from within and quickly won a reputation among anti-nuke activists as a passionate and articulate advocate for her community and country.

She was someone to be respected and someone who could also apply the blow torch to her fellow travellers if they annoyed or failed her.

For those of us who passed the first test Joan was a staunch ally and a valued friend.

Our friendship was cemented through travelling to take the story of the human, cultural and environmental impacts of uranium mining to audiences in Europe.

We shared platforms at the World Uranium Hearing in Salzburg in 1992 and buses and meetings across Germany and beyond in the times that followed.

I have great memories of Joan from these times: relaxed on walks through the Black Forest, waving the Aboriginal flag from the Bundestag and always connecting and communicating.

She was skilled, tenacious and generous.

She carried the sadness and the legacy of separation and dislocation and as times got tough this got harder and we increasingly lost touch.

But I – and very many people in the anti nuclear movement across Australia and around the world - never lost a special place for Joan.

In a crooked world Joan spoke straight. To a shadowy industry Joan burned bright.

Her efforts were greatly valued and she was admired and loved.

May her spirit soar and then rest easy.

Dave Sweeney

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