



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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**THE LATE JANINE SUTTO, C.C., C.Q.**

Statement by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

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[Translation]

### THE LATE JANINE SUTTO, C.C., C.Q.

**Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to a great lady from Quebec, Janine Sutto, also known as “Notre Dame du Théâtre.” She died peacefully yesterday morning at age 95 surrounded by her loved ones.

Born in Paris to an Italian father and an Alsatian mother, Janine moved to Montreal at an early age. Her career began in her teenage years and continued for 75 years, a feat worthy of our admiration. A true icon of Quebec theatre and television, Janine Sutto made more than 70 appearances in dramatic works and television series. She was truly integral to the very early days of Quebec television and cinema.

Janine was a stage actor. In 1968 she performed in the premiere of *Les Belles-soeurs*, by Michel Tremblay, in the role of Lisette de Courval. She ended her career at age 92 in the musical *Belles-Soeurs* at the prestigious Théâtre du Rond-Point on the Champs-Élysées, in her native Paris. Her immense talent enabled her to transcend the ages and adapt as technology changed her art form over the years, from radio dramas in the 1940s to the web series of today.

She received countless accolades, including being named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1986 and a Knight of the National Order of Quebec in 1998. In 2014, Ms. Sutto received the Governor General’s Performing Arts Award. In April 2015, she was the first woman to be made an honorary citizen of the City of Montreal.

Beyond that, Janine Sutto brought laughter and tears to an entire people and all of Quebec. She left her mark on us with her love for her art and her love for her twins: Catherine, who had trisomy 21 and died in 2011, and Mireille Deyglun, who followed in her mother’s footsteps and also became an actress.

What struck me about Janine was her passion for her craft and her work ethic. She loved to act. She wanted to move people, to draw out emotions, no matter which ones, and she acted in dramas and comedies with such finesse and clarity. She used to say that anyone who was not passionate about their craft, with its ups and downs, should do something else.

This great lady, who was small in stature, will be remembered for a long time. She wanted to move her audience and she had an impact on several generations; she wanted to touch the hearts of the young people she mentored, because she believed that they were “our future selves” — and she was quite right. To Janine’s friends and family, and to those who love Quebec theatre, film and television, I extend my sincerest condolences.

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