



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **THE LATE HONOURABLE CLAUDE CASTONGUAY, C.C., G.O.Q.**

Statement by:  
The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Monday, December 14, 2020

## THE SENATE

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[Translation]

### THE LATE HONOURABLE CLAUDE CASTONGUAY, C.C., G.O.Q.

**Hon. Diane Bellemare:** Honourable senators, Quebec lost a leading figure in the province's economic and social development history when the Honourable Claude Castonguay died on Saturday, December 12 at the age of 91. Quebecers all knew him as the father of health insurance, but he actually did much more for Quebec. He taught at Laval University and worked in the public and private sectors, where he raised public awareness about the actuarial science field. He left his mark on the Laurentian Group Corporation as its CEO and on many other insurance institutions. He mentored many people, including Senator Saint-Germain, and others through the Raoul Dandurand Chair, of which he was the founding president.

Claude Castonguay was a quiet revolutionary, a social architect and one of the builders of modern Quebec. He advised political parties, wrote reports that led to the creation of the Quebec Pension Plan, and chaired commissions of inquiry. He was also involved in the review of the Constitution. He earned all kinds of recognition for his contributions, including about a dozen honorary doctorates.

I had the pleasure of knowing him when I was a fellow at CIRANO. His daughter Joanne introduced us. We often had lunch together to discuss matters of public policy. He wrote the foreword to my book, *Créer et partager la prospérité : Sortir l'économie canadienne de l'impasse*, which was published in

2013. My husband and I had the privilege of visiting his home on the Magdalen Islands where he spent many summers. He set up an art studio there for him and his wife. He loved painting and he loved crossing the Atlantic on winter cruises to write.

I was deeply impressed by this accomplished man. We had the chance to talk about the Senate several times. As you know, he was appointed to the Senate in 1990 by former prime minister Brian Mulroney to help resolve certain impasses in our august institution. He soon realized that our world was not a good fit for him, as he found it to be too adversarial and partisan. He warned me.

The Honourable Claude Castonguay proved that one can change the world without partisan politics. He had the stature, composure, diligence, passion and credibility needed to advance his ideas in the public domain.

Claude Castonguay really cared about Quebec, his family and everyone around him. Quebec's economic and social well-being was his primary motivation. He continued to reflect on ways to improve Quebec's social fabric right until the end. He recently suggested rethinking our model for caring for the elderly with a decisive shift towards home care. As Senator Carignan was saying, he announced to his readers in *La Presse* on November 1 that he no longer had the energy to write.

My deepest condolences go out to his wife, Marie, as well as his children, Monique, Joanne and Philippe, his grandchildren and all his loved ones. I'm sorry I didn't have time to say goodbye and thank him.

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