

TRIBUTE

Nora Bredes: 'Politely but Firmly, Nora Spoke Up'

Of the many events Nora Bredes organized in her 12 years as director of the Susan B. Anthony Center for Women's Leadership, one that was powerfully symbolic was the annual Susan B. Anthony Legacy 5K. Nora was a runner herself, going out daily, rain or shine. For the Legacy 5K, a benefit for the center, she chose a route from Anthony's house downtown to the chapel on the River Campus. She encouraged people to sign up in teams, to reflect the teamwork she believed generated so many strides (so to speak) for women's rights. And she ensured that as participants approached the finish line, they'd hear Vocal Point—the University's only female a cappella group—singing on the steps of Strong Auditorium, adding one more heart-squeezing element to the event, and ensuring that women's voices would be heard—literally.

Nora died in August, at age 60, from breast cancer. She had already assembled a fresh team of guests for this year's Stanton-Anthony Conversations, a round-table discussion on an issue related to women's leadership that Nora organized each Meliora Weekend. Each year she also led the Susan B. Anthony Legacy Dinner, a celebratory event honoring the spectacular young women who had already made a difference on campus and in the community as student leaders.

Nora worked tirelessly behind the scenes for women's inclusion. Did a list of University events feature only men? Politely but firmly, Nora spoke up. Were only men consulted on key decisions? Again, Nora spoke up.

She fought especially hard to increase the number of women in elected govern-



ACTIVIST: Bredes fought for women's inclusion as director of the Susan B. Anthony Center for Women's Leadership.

ment, not simply to provide full representation for half of humanity, but because the conversation literally changed when women were included (she was happy to provide the research proving it). Women worked more for consensus. Women were more likely to strive for long-term rather than short-term solutions. Women interrupted less and listened more.

Nora drew on the powerful example of Susan B. Anthony to demonstrate how a seemingly impossible goal is not, in fact, impossible when it is the right goal.

—Honey Meconi

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