

In Memoriam: Susan Farley

by Ellen Ryan,
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Susan Farley, 2007 MURA Gerontology award winner, passed away a few days before graduation. On the long-awaited day, her undergraduate diploma in Gerontology was conferred in a private family ceremony by Chancellor Red Wilson and President Peter George. Earning a degree in Gerontology meant the world to Susan, and she had achieved scholastic distinction despite rapidly declining health.

Early attempts to pursue university studies were thwarted by balance and motor problems associated with the onset of Multiple Sclerosis. Over the past decade she pursued a degree in Gerontology part time where she was a joy for her instructors and a caring, enthusiastic participant in group projects with fellow students. She was committed to study, compassionate about the challenges experienced by vulnerable older adults. She definitely enjoyed the privilege of learning and engaged us with her wonderful sense of humour.

For my seminar on Successful Aging with a Disability, Susan enriched everyone's learning by describing her varied community experiences with people with disability, especially from the yoga classes she taught for individuals with MS. For her course project, she created a choir with nursing home residents and led them in a holiday concert where they provided entertainment for family and staff, despite their vision, mobility, and cognitive impairments.

In memory of Susan, I am making my donation to the MURA endowment fund for Gerontology awards and dedicating my new book: **Ability Speaks: Talking With Persons with Disability**.

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