



Renée Carrier

1955 – 2010

Renée Carrier, a national of Canada, was the Personal Assistant to the head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Hédi Annabi.

Renée began her UN career as a Secretary in the French typing pool in 1988 and soon after was assigned as an Editorial Clerk in the French Unit of what is now the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. As her friends and colleagues all attest, her “legendary professionalism” led her to a first peacekeeping job in 1991 working for the Force Commander of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Though she returned to UN Headquarters between assignments, she enjoyed life in the field. She served twice in Haiti and once in the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) during her 22 years of service with the Organization.

For Renée, peacekeeping was more than an assignment. When asked why she never married, a colleague remembers her saying, “I am already married to the United Nations.”

“She was the dream employee every supervisor wants,” as one colleague put it, adding. “I always had the impression that her bosses felt they had won the lottery when Renée decided to apply for a position in their team.”

What separated Renée from everyone else was her work ethic. “She stood out for her poise, utmost professionalism and the effortless way in which she resolved even the most challenging difficulties at short notice,” said Under-Secretary-General for Management Angela Kane who worked with her in Asmara, Eritrea. “She never said ‘no’ or ‘that can’t be done.’ Instead, she listened carefully, went back to her desk, only to return soon thereafter with a solution.”

Ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila of Botswana, former head of UNMEE with whom she worked as a Personal Assistant, described her as “peerlessly efficient and dedi-

cated, a valuable friend and colleague and an indispensable partner.”

This dynamo of a woman, who worked closely with Force Commanders and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General was also a loyal friend and helpful colleague to everyone with whom she worked, regardless of rank or level. But it was her ability to engender trust and confidence that endeared her to so many.

More than her dedication to duty and her consummate professionalism, what her friends will remember most were the special times they shared with her and her many acts of kindness. As one colleague noted, she attached great importance to doing the right thing and was uncompromising about it.

Others talked of Renée’s laughter and her love of life: “I remember her goofy sense of humour and her sensitivity about her braces and how she was the world’s worst karaoke singer and would only do it if we gave her white wine first.”

Renée also took pride in being fit and ran long distances both in New York City, when at home, and wherever she was in the field.

Haiti, which she loved, was to have been Renée’s last assignment as she was making plans to retire in her beloved Quebec.

“She had recently bought an apartment and was getting ready to go home and settle down,” a close friend said. “Her friends were in line to spend more time with her and enjoy her company.”

But as another friend who exchanged emails with her some twenty minutes before the earthquake said, Renée would always live on in our memories for her selfless “love for Haiti and the passion for the job she was doing there.”

Renée is survived by her brother Marc and her sisters Andrée and Danielle.