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TRIBUTE

The Honourable Maria Chaput

Statement by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

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TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE MARIA CHAPUT

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, I'm pleased to rise today to pay tribute to our dear colleague, the Honourable Maria Chaput.

Dear colleague, I want to congratulate you on your 13-year parliamentary career in this chamber. Your genuine commitment to serving our country has been evident.

You courageously and steadfastly promoted linguistic duality in Canada and fought for respect for both official languages, English and French. You made a point of instilling the values that are important to you in your work and initiatives. It has been a lifelong commitment for you to assert language rights and promote official language minority communities.

I was fortunate enough to see first-hand how you understand the issues facing francophone minority communities and to see how you were able to get everyone to agree on important topics as a member and chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages. You earned the respect and esteem of all senators.

Under your leadership, from 2006 to 2013, the committee carried out relevant studies that addressed the real needs of official language minority communities. I cannot name them all, but I will share two of them: *Francophone Arts and Culture* :

Living Life to its Fullest in Minority Settings and Internet, New media and Social Media : Respect for Language Rights.

Your Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act (communications with and services to the public), introduced for the fourth time in the Senate, is proof of your great determination to bring the act in line with the new social realities and demographics of official language minority communities.

You are an excellent warrior and a magnificent unifying force. Franco-Manitobans hold you in high regard, as do all associations and organizations that represent official language minority communities. You've helped bring the Senate closer to these communities.

Dear colleague, you are a person of integrity who is dedicated, committed and determined, and you always show respect for others. Thank you for everything you have done for your community, for your colleagues, and for Canada. Your contribution and devotion to la Francophonie are invaluable. Dear Maria, I want to express my deep admiration for your dedication and my sincere affection for you.

Honourable senators, I am sad to see an exceptional colleague and friend leave this place. I will miss you, Maria. I wish you a very happy retirement with Louis, and your children and grandchildren.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!
