

## **Nomination letters for Judith Snow**

- John McKnight – Chicago, IL. - ABCD
- John O'Brien – Lithonia, GA
- Bill Worrell – Toronto, ON
- Marlyn Shervill – Windsor, ON
- Jay Klein – Tempe, AR – Arizona State Univ.
- Patti Scott – Franklin Park, NJ - Neighbours
- Joe Wykowski – Portland, OR – Community Vision
- Al Etmanski – Vancouver, BC – PLAN
- Simon Duffy – Sheffield, England - Citizen Network
- Peter Clutterbuck – Toronto, ON
- Tom Kohler – Savannah, GA – Citizen Advocacy
- Savoy Howe – Toronto – News Girls Boxing Club
- Leanne Pearman – Alexander Heights, W Australia
- Sheldon Schwitek – Kalamazoo, MI – Arc Community Advocates
- Angela Amado – Minneapolis MN – Institute of Community Integration
- John Lord – Waterloo, ON - A New Story
- Tim Vogt – Bellevue KY - Starfire
- Susannah Joyce - London, ON - Realizations
- Budd Hall – Victoria, BC - UNESCO co-chair
- George Ducharme – Manchester, CT - Communitas
- Pat Beeman – Manchester, CT - Communitas
- Jackie Dearden – Nottingham, England
- Janice Fialka – Huntington Woods, MI
- Rich Feldman – Huntington Woods, MI
- Gillian Grable – Atlanta, GA – U of Georgia
- Stephanie Fitzgerald – Foothills, AB
- Rose Galati – Mississauga, ON
- Heather Simmons – Wishaw, Scotland
- Shaun Nethercott – Detroit, MI – Nethercott Unlimited
- Gary Bunch – Toronto, ON – York U retired
- Kate Becher – Mississauga, ON
- Micah Fialka Feldman – Syracuse – U of Syracuse
- Beth Mount – NYC, NY – Graphic Futures
- David Hasbury – Franklin Park, NJ - Neighbours
- Mike Green – Denver, CO – ABCD
- Jeff Dobbin – Toronto – P4P
- Adam Cahoon - Toronto
- Michelle Friesen - Windsor, ON
- David Hollands – Toronto, ON – ROM
- Judith McGill – Toronto, ON -
- Lynda Kahn – Toronto – Inclusion Press

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John McKnight  
(847) 864-8633  
Website: [johnmcknight.org](http://johnmcknight.org)

Sent: Thu, May 6, 2021 4:04 pm

## Letter of Nomination

The Honorable David Crombie

I wish to nominate Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

I have known Ms Snow for over 30 years and she is clearly the wisest and most influential person in the disability field in the United States where I have worked with her over the years.

As CoFounder of the Asset Based Community Development at Northwestern University, I have travelled for years to work with local neighborhoods and small towns in the US. Our purpose has been to assist those communities engage all their residents in community building. One of the persistent problems has been the absence of people with disabilities in the collective life of these communities. As we worked on this problem, our most effective motivator for inclusion was Judith Snow. No one has been her equal in inspiring our local leaders to adopt inclusion practices. She was so effective that recognition of her ability spread to communities across the United States. We supported her in her efforts here and I believe that Ms Snow had more effect on the inclusion of

people with disabilities than any U.S. citizen working in the field.

While she has had tremendous effect in Canada, I feel she should also be recognized for the singular power of her work in the United States. We are in her debt forever.

John McKnight

CoFounder, Asset Based Community Development  
Institute

Senior Associate, The Kettering Foundation

**John W. O'Brien**, D.Phil., ACSW  
58 Willowick Drive  
Lithonia, GA 30038

The Honorable David Crombie, Chair  
The Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

**Nomination of Judith Snow**

Dear David Crombie:

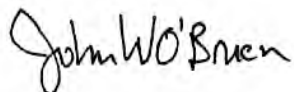
Judith Snow made a life for herself and a life for others from her experience of quadriplegia and her creative resistance to the typical social responses to her need for extensive personal assistance. These devaluing patterns landed her in a Chronic Care Facility while she was working in a paid role to improve accessibility at York University after completing an MA in Psychology there (the story is told from her allies point of view in *From Behind the Piano*, published by Inclusion Press). Life long resistance to debilitating medical models of service resulted in internationally significant social innovations: a method for convening a diverse Circle of Support, the means to negotiate and control an individual budget to pay for assistance, practical ways to recruit and manage a 24/7 system of personal assistance, ways to plan that center on a person's gifts and dreams, and dozens of hacks to overcome physical and social barriers.

Because Judith was a genius at networking, her social innovations are internationally influential. In company with activists for inclusion and self-directed supports she organized families, including many families with members living with intellectual disabilities, supported the emergence of self-advocacy among people with intellectual disabilities, collaborated with Asset Based Community Organizers, and inspired educators and disability service workers through uncountable lectures and workshops. She had a special call to ally with and learn from non-speaking people.

Judith was a world class thinker, theorizing disability in terms of gifts often hidden by devaluing narratives and exclusionary practices. John McKnight, Professor Emeritus of Social Policy at Northwestern University and co-founder of Asset Based Community Development, counts Judith among his most influential teachers. She maintained strong connections with colleagues at the University of Nottingham, the University of Bolton, and the University of Arizona. She was a skilled lecturer, often provoking her audiences with a carefully reasoned claim that "There is no such thing as disability" delivered from a chair she controlled by puff and sip switches. *Great Questions: Writings of Judith Snow* ([inclusion.com](http://inclusion.com)) offers access to her thinking.

I have no doubt that my friend Judith belongs in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



May 19, 2021

The Honourable David Crombie, Chair  
Selection Committee  
Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons

**Re: CO-sponsorship of Nomination of Judith Snow, Canadian Disability Hall of Fame,**

Dear Sir,

As co-sponsor of this application, I see that many letters that have been submitted speak to the incredible multitude of ways and places that Judith made such meaningful and profound contributions for change. I will add a few extra details, with a more local focus.

It is with mixed emotions that I write this nomination letter for Judith Snow's induction into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Mixed emotions because on one hand I so fervently believe she deserves this recognition as a courageous pioneer, a leader who inspired many for fundamental change, a deeply compassionate human being who supported so many in their life goals, including many who were not "disabled", a person who negotiated impossible situations into possible solutions, and a deeply loving artist.

And as I write this letter, I am also feeling deep sadness, as I contemplate what to write, reviewing all my memories of my long-time friend. I miss her very much.

I first briefly met Judith Snow in 1988. I was the Coordinator of the National Self-Advocacy Project, working with persons labelled as "developmentally disabled" to support each other to speak for themselves and advocate for changes they needed in their lives. Judith was occasionally visiting a colleague in an office across the hallway. We then began to see and work together over the years in various conferences, and events. As Judith began publishing and speaking, I was using her material.

Judith moved into my neighbourhood, and we developed a strong friendship. By that time, my work had taken me into other areas of community development, but Judith was always interested in any and all work related to strong communities. We collaborated on work I was doing with street youth. It was then that Judith asked me to join her Circle. Later, she asked me to be the Circle convenor, a role which I fulfilled for 15 years, as convenor and active member.

Judith's Circle meetings were always lively, passionate events. Sometimes we dealt with the numerous challenges and barriers that a woman like Judith would face, as she constantly pushed the limits of what was possible for her in her life. Sometimes we would be asked advice about some new and often unique adventure that Judith was contemplating. Advice that was sometimes ignored, as was wont of Judith who had her own ideas about how to proceed. But circle meetings were always gatherings of friends and supporters, community-building events.

Judith moved into the neighbourhood of Etobicoke-Lakeshore near LAMP Community Health Centre, where I was employed. She became an active LAMP Board member and served as Treasurer, and later as Secretary. She was also an active promoter of community activities in her housing co-op, and the broader community. She became a well-known Etobicoke-

Lakeshore resident, always having an impact wherever she went. In other words, Judith, the internationally known personality, was also actively involved in her immediate community.

Her re-discovery of her artistic endeavours led her to establish a ground-breaking artist guild Laser Eagles. Based on the possibility that being an artist does not depend on one's physical abilities as defined by our society, or that being an artist requires that one communicate in a manner that would be considered "typical", the guild was founded on the relationship of deep listening between the artist and a designated "tracker". Members of the guild were fervently loyal to this work, often making complex arrangements to make sure they could participate in the weekly sessions. The first chapter was established in Judith's local community. This work continues today.

Judith was a cherished friend and a colleague. We both shared a vision for a profoundly changed world. Her contributions are numerous and continue today to resonate.

I cannot think of anyone more deserving of your consideration for this recognition as Judith Snow, who I and many others miss dearly.

Sincerely yours,

Bill Worrell  
[B\\_worrell@hotmail.com](mailto:B_worrell@hotmail.com)  
647-470-6658

May 13, 2021  
The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair of the Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame  
6 Garamond Court, Suite 265  
Toronto, Ontario M3C1Z5

Dear Honourable David Crombie:

**Re: Judith Snow Nomination to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame**

I have recently retired as the Executive Director of Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports. It was in this capacity that I first met Judith Snow.

In the mid-90's, Judith was very involved with the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO). From the IFCO website found at [individualizedfunding.ca](http://individualizedfunding.ca), its work is described as being:

*"...made up of a variety of different members who are working together to make individualized funding more of a reality in Ontario. We are committed to moving individualized funding forward for every aspect of life for those who would choose and could benefit from this avenue of support."*

Judith was very involved in strategically planning IFCO's next step with the Ministry, research and resource papers that needed to be written, assisting with the design and implementation of a Workfest on Individualized Funding. This event brought together people who lived with various disabilities, their family/support network members and supportive agencies to talk about transformation and what is needed to support people who want a meaningful life in their neighbourhood and community. Judith was a leader as an agent of change ensuring that people who did not want to be institutionalized in congregate settings like LTC facilities and group homes were not. Judith, along with all those involved with IFCO, wanted people to have real choice. That would mean a change in how funding for supports worked in Ontario.

*"THERE REALLY IS NO DISABILITY: People are always contributing something. The work is to see the value and potential in what they are contributing and build that through relationships into community and economic opportunities." Judith Snow (IFCO website)*

Judith also supported the work of other grassroots organizations such as People First of Ontario (self-advocacy) and Family Alliance Ontario.

In the early 2000's, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) invited people who live with a developmental disability, family members and grassroots provincial groups like IFCO to review a potential assessment form that they wanted to use to determine how much funding someone would receive for their supports. The Assistant Deputy Minister sat beside Judith. She had the assessment draped across her arm and hand. She asked him to turn to a

certain page where a section said “you need to know if I am having sex and how many times I am having sex in a weeks’ time in order to get funding for support from your Ministry?” Are these questions that your bank asks you when you need money?” He looked at her, walked to the podium and stated that he was pulling the document. He looked at Judith who gave him a quiet nod.

Judith did an extensive number of ‘training and education’ events across Ontario including Windsor and Essex County. She spoke often about the importance of support circles. She had personal experience of what can be achieved knowing the dreams and the life that a person with a disability wants. It was Judith’s “Joshua’s circle” that not only supported her to get out of a nursing home but earned her an Order in Council. She was the first person in Ontario to receive Individualized Funding. This enabled her to live and be supported in her own home with the people she hired. People and families could not help but be inspired by her story and her advocacy for others living with a disability. Judith believed in people who were part of a circle of support that are not paid but are involved because they know and care deeply about you and what you want in life.

Judith wanted people to dream and dream big. She would say “don’t let anyone tell you that because of your disability you can’t dream!” One gentleman told Judith that he would have to live in a group home, that he couldn’t have his own place and pay a mortgage because he had a developmental disability. As his parents looked on, Judith began asking him what he needed. When he outlined what he wanted his life to look like Judith asked his parents if they tell their other children they can’t achieve something they wanted. They said no and vowed never again to be trapped by disability. Today this gentleman has his own house and makes his mortgage payments. He lives with a high school friend who is recently divorced and needed a place to live. He provides support in exchange for rent.

She taught people and families about the kind of personal support one should expect and she outlined the respect and dignity that support workers should deliver.

Judith’s influence was profound. She lived the life. When she spoke, you knew that she understood the issues facing people with disabilities and that the changes were personal (one person at a time), regional, provincial, national and international.

Judith was a person who, along with her circle, fought to not be institutionalized. She pushed people, families and systems to change. She spent her life ‘paying it forward’!

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marlyn Shervill".

Marlyn Shervill



May 11, 2021

Dear Honorable David Crombie,

It is an honor and a pleasure to be able to write this letter of support to induct Judith Snow into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. Judith was a unique woman who, early in life, developed a social awareness and personal commitment to others. She has demonstrated both to us and others throughout the world a creative, dynamic passion and leadership ability to assist others to include all people as participating citizens of communities.

While we believe without a doubt that Judith Snow should be permanently recognized for her extraordinary contributions to enriching the quality of life for people with physical disabilities, her life impacted the lives of so many more people throughout Canada, North America, and the world. We strongly believe that Judith Snow was a genuine hero of humanity. In some ways, it also seems a little odd to us to be writing this letter of support to induct Judith Snow into a disability hall of fame. Even though Judith only had movement in one thumb and from her neck up, those of us who knew Judith well never actually thought of her as having a disability. In fact, her many leadership skills, contributions, accomplishments, interpersonal skills, and immeasurable gifts made her one of our society's greatest leaders, mentors, teachers, and heroes.

We had the pleasure of knowing Judith personally and professionally since 1986, when we met at an international conference where she was presenting on issues regarding inclusion of all students in classrooms. Over the nearly 40 years that followed, Judith was instrumental in shaping and re-shaping the way we have developed and acted on our professional and personal goals. Over the years we all worked together on a variety of international projects and have co-taught classes together. Judith was a remarkable person and a leader who is highly respected by a variety of people representing many constituencies in both the public and private sectors.

While Judith's contributions had an effect on people all over the world, her home and heart was in Canada and specifically Toronto. As an example of this, in 1994, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) received a sizable grant award from the United States federal government to develop a National Technical Assistance Center on home ownership and control for people with disabilities. Faculty and administrators at UNH were actively recruiting people to apply for the project coordinator's position, which required an individual to coordinate all aspects of this center including its qualitative and quantitative research components. Judith Snow was on the top of our list of potential candidates, and she was offered the position. Judith declined to accept this position, citing her interest in remaining in Toronto to pursue similar efforts "at home." Instead, Judith agreed to be a strategic planner with this six-year project. Judith challenged us to improve upon many aspects of this effort, and her perceptions were always provocative and insightful. She acted as a responsible and dedicated team member whose contributions in designing and implementing planning and program evaluation activities were invaluable to the overwhelming success of this initiative.

Judith's abilities directed her to not only learn and change with new information and technology, but to offer others direction in making changes in ways that were extremely impressive. She had a unique ability to work with members of boards of directors, be an active and respected member of a management team, work with people in leadership positions within an organization, and facilitate positive interactions with partner organizations. In addition to her long list of professional achievements, her personal accomplishments have motivated many

individuals throughout the world. As one can see in reviewing the numerous documents she authored, Judith had extensive experience working throughout the world on critical issues facing all people. Judith's ability to inspire others is evident in the fact that two of us founded innovative support organizations, motivated in large part by how she lived her life, and lessons learned from her.

We have strong positive feelings about the impact Judith made on our lives. She was always constructively assertive in dealing with us and others, and although she was always persistent, we never found her pushy or closed-minded. She had much enthusiasm and energy and was able to use these in supportive avenues. We remember Judith as a highly ethical and responsible person, friend, and colleague. We want you to know that one of Judith's best traits was her ability to gain a commitment from people around the world to assist her in whatever she wanted to accomplish. The three of us offered this kind of commitment numerous times because Judith asked and because she was truly our friend and partner in the work we all do.

In conclusion, we will offer as part of this letter and nomination an article entitled the "The Wonderful Life of Judith Snow" which the three of us contributed to. This article written shortly after her untimely death offers a brief glimpse into what our world would be like if this amazing hero of humanity had never lived.

We will be happy to amplify any of our comments upon request and provide you with additional information as you and the selection committee give Judith Snow's nomination to be inducted in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame your serious consideration. Thank you for this opportunity.

Jay Klein  
Recently Retired, Associate Clinical Professor and  
Project Director, APAcT, at Arizona State University

Patti Scott  
Chief Executive Officer  
Neighbours Inc and Neighbours, International  
New Jersey

Joe Wykowski  
Strategic Housing Consultant  
Executive Director Emeritus, Community Vision  
Portland, Oregon

May 17th, 2021

The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair of the Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Dear Mr. Crombie

I'm delighted to support Judith Snow's nomination to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. Judith was a formidable intellect curious and unrelenting in her search for disability justice, disability rights and disability inclusion. While her many endeavours were innovative and critical, it was her philosophy of giftedness that continues to have the greatest impact. Indeed it is the gift that keeps on giving.

Judith described a gift as, "anything that one is, or has, or does that creates an opportunity for a meaningful interaction with at least one other person." It is those meaningful interactions, she argued, that are the connective tissue of a healthy society. Indeed that enable society to function, not just for disabled people, Judith said, but for everyone.

Judith's philosophy of giftedness provided the intellectual framework for the shift from segregation to inclusion that began in the late 1970s. It offered a common sense reason for closing institutions, segregated schools and sheltered workshops. And for ensuring that the gifts of disabled people were no longer hidden or dismissed. Equally important it offered a compelling argument for removing the barriers (physical, intellectual, emotional and cultural) that prevent disabled people from participating in society as full contributing citizens.

Judith has been described by many as the Julia Roberts of the disability community. I think she was more like June Callwood. She had a magnetic personality. Still today her name, and her body of work is referenced with

affection and admiration. Her name comes up regularly on zoom calls with people from around the world. Judith is well loved. Her love on the other hand was more like mother love. Demanding, encouraging yet accepting when we failed to live up to her expectations. She helped us challenge assumptions and attitudes that saw disability as a condition that needed to be cured and fixed. She assured us that people with disabilities are already whole and should be valued for who they are. She touched our hearts and our minds whether we were disabled or family and friends or policy makers.

Others will write listing Judith's more tangible contributions. They are considerable and significant. She also had the gift of imagining what society would be like if everyone belonged and everyone contributed. This quote illustrates her vision: "If the dreamers are liberated, if they are brought back into the arms of society, they become the architects of the new community; a community that has a new capacity to support everyone's needs and interactions." That is what Judith did for the disability community. She provided the architecture for the society we want. It's a vision that continues to be relevant as we consider the Canada we to build back better after Covid.

Choosing this brilliant Canadian thinker and doer as a member of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame will help ensure her rich legacy and body of work lives on.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Al Etmanski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Al Etmanski CM, OBC, MSM  
co-founder Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network

The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair of the Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame



13th May 2021

## **Why Judith Snow deserves to be in the Hall of Fame**

Dear Sir

I am writing to you from the United Kingdom hoping you will consider adding the amazing Judith Snow to the *Canadian Disability Hall of Fame*. In my opinion Judith Snow is one of the most important disability leaders and thinkers of all time and her international impact has been considerable.

I was lucky enough to meet Judith in person on two occasions as a *Harkness Fellow* (1994-95), based in Colorado. She had been asked to come to the state by the state's leadership on intellectual disabilities, and she spoke to a wide range of people from officials, professionals, families and of course many people with disabilities. She was well known, loved and respected and she had a great impact on progressive work in the state. Her central message was challenging and profound: She asked us to reflect on the gift of disability, the importance of respecting difference and the true nature of inclusion. She mixed analysis, story, pithy and profound statements with humour and the power of her dynamic personality.

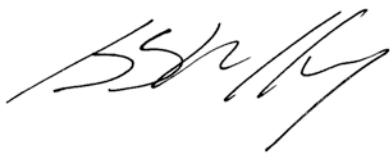
Her impact on me personally was profound. I currently run the think-tank, the *Centre for Welfare Reform* and I am co-founder of the global cooperative *Citizen Network* which works to advance inclusion for all. Over the past 30 years I have led a number of reform efforts. After returning home from Scotland I set up *Inclusion Glasgow* to helping people leave institutions using highly personalised support. In 2003 I set up *In Control* which pioneered the use of Personal Budgets as a universal reform of the social care system in England. I continue to work on these issues internationally and I am currently writing technical guidance for the European Union on how to change funding for disability supports to respect the UNCRPD. In 2008 I was awarded the *Prince Albert Medal* by the RSA and in 2011 I received an award from the *Social Policy Association* for outstanding contribution to social policy. Judith profoundly influenced all of this work.

Judith was not just an activist, she was a philosopher, in the truest sense of the word. My own doctorate is in philosophy and her thinking also had an impact on my writing. I have developed ethical, meta-ethical and political theories that build on Judith's concept of giftedness and which try to challenge the shallow and meritocratic conceptions of human

value which are still prevalent. Judith's presence is still with me when I am writing. My friend Jo Wolff, Alfred Landecker Professor of Values and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Gov Oxford, has also cited Judith's thinking in his philosophical work on disability. Many colleagues, disability and family activists in the UK also remember Judith fondly as an important positive influence from her many trips to the UK.

Judith's life, thinking and activism are a treasure. They have already had a profound impact on many. I hope you can honour her work and her person in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SDuffy', written in a cursive style.

Simon Duffy

**Director of the Centre for Welfare Reform**

The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair, Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

May 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Crombie:

RE: Judith Snow Nomination to Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

I am writing in support of the nomination of the late Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

I met Judith more than 45 years ago when she was heading up the Centre for Handicapped Students at York University. I was invited by several friends and colleagues to meet Judith and to help her establish an attendant care support system so that she could live on York U campus and carry out her important work. This meant helping Judith to move out of a chronic care hospital which was the only funded service option available to her at the time.

I joined a circle of Judith's friends which she dubbed the Joshua Committee, representing her determination to enlist help in blowing down the "walls of Jericho" (i.e. bureaucratic barriers) that limited her life opportunities. Within a year, Judith's story had convinced the Ontario Government to pass a landmark Order-in-Council to allocate direct funding enabling Judith to live in her own apartment in the community with personalized attendant care support. In the decade following Judith's pioneering example of self-managed direct funding became a model for policy and program change benefiting physically and developmentally disabled people in Ontario.

Judith's parents had raised a very independent young woman who was determined to manage the physical limitations of her quadriplegia but even more determined to overcome limiting barriers and discriminatory attitudes towards the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in community life. Judith became widely consulted across North America and internationally for her knowledge and experience in how to break down barriers and facilitate life chances for even the most severely disabled individuals.

Besides establishing her own independent living situation, Judith was committed to creating intentional community in which people with diverse backgrounds form supportive and mutually beneficial relationships. In the late 1980s, she provided leadership worked in Toronto to parents of twelve children with developmental disabilities entering adulthood to create cooperative housing with an individualized support component based on the Joshua Committee model (i.e. circles of support). Called NABORS, this was recognized as another innovative approach to supporting community living for persons with developmental challenges.

It is not possible to accurately measure the impact that Judith had on the many thousands of lives that she touched. And I am not only referring to marginalized and vulnerable people. She really redefined our understanding about what inclusion really means. I still carry with me daily a short statement that Judith thirty years ago wrote on "The Role of Disability in Shaping Responsive Community." It concludes as follows:

People must see that disability does not have to be fixed or cured, but accepted and challenged. The individual must be welcomed, celebrated, listened to, and supported in every environment to develop every talent that he or she potentially has, just as ordinary people are. Her/his contributions must be facilitated and used for the betterment of the wider group. In short, every citizen must be an ordinary citizen.

A simple, direct, clear message for all of us in living ordinary everyday life, offered by a most extraordinary woman.

Judith Snow belongs in the place where other Canadian champions of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities are recognized. I strongly urge favourable consideration for Judith to take her rightful place in that Hall.

Sincerely,



Peter Clutterbuck  
276 Winona Drive  
Toronto, ON  
M6C 3S7  
416-653-7947  
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Tom Kohler  
3005 River Drive  
Apt. 310  
Savannah GA 31404 USA  
Retired director of Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy  
May 4, 2021

**The Honourable David Crombie,**  
Chair, Selection Board, Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

**Why Judith Snow deserves to be in the Hall of Fame - A ground level perspective from The Garden of Good and Evil, Savannah Ga.**

One day John O'Brien came back from Canada with stories of this woman, a woman who had broken free of an extended care hospital, or more correctly had been sprung from an extended care hospital by a bunch of inclusion activists, college professor types and their friends. All of this was revolutionary in the early 1980's, at least around here. It was also an expression of the essence of what we were learning at Chatham Savannah Citizen Advocacy. Judith's story of private CITIZENS coming forward, aligning themselves with someone who was being marginalized because of prejudice toward disability and creating real change for the person, themselves and the larger community was our dream..... except now it was real. They were doing it.

Locally, people were going into nursing homes and extended care facilities but never leaving, except to be buried. College professor types in the Department of Education, Psychology etc were not interested in hearing about the budding integration movement. Hell, around here in the early 80's the word integration brought up conversations about school bussing, and how good the masters were back on the plantation.

At John's suggestion the Georgia Advocacy Office invited this mythical being to come to Atlanta, Savannah and Macon. Here in Savannah we prepared for our guest lecturer, or at least we thought we prepared. We reached out to our friends at St. Paul's Episcopal, at Aldersgate United Methodist and Trinity United Methodist, at First Presbyterian and at Christ Church. Social halls were booked, announcements printed, our board members all dutifully encouraged friends to attend, our friends at the TV stations and the newspaper were called. We were ready. Well sort of.

It's 3PM and we have a packed house in the social hall at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. A rented U Haul van pulls up. Hippies jump out. OK, college professor hippies get out. OK, social revolutionaries pile out. A pair of 2x6 planks are pulled out of the van, turned into a makeshift ramp, down this ramp comes Judith Snow and life will never be the same again. The social hall is buzzing with conversation, until Judith rolls in and things get very quiet. No one has ever seen anything like this roadshow before. YOU came from CANADA to talk with us about how to question, challenge and change systems? YOU came from CANADA to talk about the Bible, about the walls coming down? YOU came from Canada? Judith's 'simple' presence in the larger world, at least in the American South, was revolutionary, and undeniable.

Judith and her allies came to Savannah many times over the next 20 or so years. Closing my eyes and remembering some of that here's what emerges.... none of this is profound, but the impact was and continues to be.

1. A conversation with Judith that makes me realize that her politics are way left of mine, and that she is a lot smarter than me, and done more in her life than I have in mine. Now there's a good lesson for

a young whipper snapper who is still sorting through his own unconscious assumptions about himself and other people.

2. Judith, hungover as hell, after a full day and night of St. Patrick's Day partying (we have the 3rd largest celebration in the county), speaking at a breakfast we had arranged with legislators from around the state, in town for St. Patrick's Day. Most of the legislators were hung over too, so it all kind of worked. They got the message. Doctors can get it wrong. Terribly wrong. Life in an institution is soul sucking. It does not have to be this way. It can be different and 'ordinary' people can help make things different and better. It's 1980. It's Georgia, the state with the largest single institution in the USA. Doctors can get it wrong. Terribly wrong. Life in an institution is soul sucking. It does not have to be this way. It can be different and 'ordinary' people can help make things different and better.

3. My 20 something year old friend Kristin Russell scurrying around to build a bed frame out of 2/4's and cinder blocks for Judith. Judith and crew would be staying at Kristin's and making the Sentient Bean, the coffee shop she owned, home base for a week. Judith was the first person in a power wheelchair to ever be in the shop, much less to give lectures from the little stage in the evenings. And oh, let's not forget Judith organizing a laughing yoga class for Kristin and a bunch of local hipsters. All of this raised her status in hip Savannah, and gave the hipsters something to think about, that many of them have never forgotten.

4. Judith on the pulpit at Aldersgate United Methodist Church Packed with conservative, white, older parishioners. The sign outside said "March 15th: Judith Snow and the Joshua Committee - Breaking Down the Walls. They could have been a rock band. Hell, they were a rock band. And they rocked that church and those people that night. Hey wait a minute, she' not supposed to be able to do this. How can this be? How does she do it? If she can do it why can't other people do it? Wait a minute, maybe the world is not as I thought it was..... Wait a minute, maybe it's less about how the person moves their arms and legs and maybe it's more about how we choose to be moved as citizens and organize to move public policy.

5. Judith decided to come South to escape Toronto winters. Savannah, or more specifically Tybee Island, a small beach community 15 miles from Savannah would be the end point for this grand child of the electric acid kool aid test Keasy school bus trip. What I didn't know was that Judith would be appearing before Tybee City Council pleading and winning her case for a length of stay dispensation in the city's campground.... and they threw in the 'friend of Tybee discount'.

6. Judith lived for a couple of weeks in the parsonage attached to First Presbyterian Church. Some of the churches most active members were deeply involved in citizen advocacy, had met and learned from Judith on her previous trips to Savannah, and brokered the arrangement with Rev. Stephen Williams.

Reverend Williams has one speed, full speed. Stephen is known for running not walking as he moves from office, to social hall, to chapel. He is non- stop... Except when confronted by or with Judith. Stephen would be sprinting across the empty social hall and Judith would be sitting having a coffee, maybe reading. He would break stride to say high and see if 'everything is all right?' Well, Judith would say "it depends on what level you are speaking about" and then she would throw out some sort of spiritual question, conundrum, or declaration, which would literally stop Rev. Williams in his tracks and he would come to a full halt, be still, and be in that moment with Judith. Yes, that moment. The moment when you realize that you are in the presence of an unexpected teacher...

someone who is wise, experienced, yet hidden from your own mind as the bearer of insight and wisdom.

Judith's local reputation was first that of activist and public speaker, then author and artist. After watching her work the Tybee City Council maybe a little bit of a con artist (for the good of the people) as well and definitely that of a party girl. But for me, for people in Savannah, and people around the world Judith's highest purpose was that of being an unexpected teacher. If you meet one, it opens you up to the possibility of meeting another. And if you meet another and another unexpected teacher you begin to realize that the idea that knowledge, wisdom, insight comes packaged in little boxes called classrooms begins to melt away. And that is when you become free to be who you want to be. Judith did that. She freed people to become who they wanted to be.

As a footnote, -- One of Savannah's finest unexpected teachers is a man named Waddie Welcome. His story, the story of Mr. Welcome and his allies may be found in the award winning book ***Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Community***. There would likely be no Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Community story in Savannah if there had been no Judith in Savannah. The 'Judith of Judith' created context for local people to be able to imagine that something different and good could happen with and for Mr. Welcome. Mr. Crombie, send me your mailing address and I will send you a copy of the book. Without Judith, likely no Waddie Welcome and the Beloved Community.

<https://www.aaidd.org/docs/default-source/about-aaidd/gomez-presidential-address.pdf?sfvrsn=2> - go to page 363 in Sharon Gomez's 2011-12 Presidential Address to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: ***Creating Inclusive Communities: Pathways to the Vision***. It highlights the lessons from Mr. Waddie Welcome. Without Judith, much of this would not even have been a dream.

Thanking you for the opportunity to share these rambling thoughts. It is an honor.

Tom Kohler  
912 308 6936

May 13, 2021

Savoy Howe  
10 Broadway Ave. #509  
Toronto M4P 3G8

Judith Snow is one of the most amazing humans I have ever met. Judith was not only an incredible advocate; she was a cherished friend and a great boss.

I started working for Judith in 1989 as a personal attendant. Over the following decade I witnessed Judith pull off things that most people could not or would not dare to attempt.

On one occasion at a conference in Colorado where Judith was invited as guest speaker, she encouraged 6 men to carry her and her 250lb wheelchair up 3 flights of stairs when the elevator was not in service. She smiled and joked the whole time.

On another occasion, Judith was attending a series of courses in a building that was inaccessible. She was so determined to take the courses that she got into the building by driving her wheelchair up two separate thin steel ramps at a 25-degree angle into a loading dock that was 4 feet off the ground. After each class she exited the building backwards down the ramps. If she was afraid, she hid it well.

I was fortunate through Judith to secure affordable housing in an intentional community that Judith dreamt up with a group of parents of young disabled adults. Courtyard Co-op opened at Yonge and Eglinton in 1993 and still houses some of their adult children 27 years later.

Judith was also a master 'trainer'. For over 45 years, she needed 24 hour personal support, which translated into many hundreds of people who had to be taught how to be her hands and feet – keep her safe – and do work as she directed. I suspect that this experience learning how to listen and pay attention was a masters level course that shaped the values and careers of almost everyone she touched – and who in this context – touched her.

Judith was a master of building support circles around people with special needs. She was a dreamer, one of the most courageous people I have ever met, a master punner, an avalanche of change. I used to call Judith the Snowmobile, because she could get through anything. Occasionally a friend would ask "How does she do it?" My response would always be, "She just does."

I am writing in support of the nomination of Judith Snow to the Disability Hall of Fame.

Savoy Howe



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5 May 2021

To the Honourable David Crombie (Chair of the Selection Committee)

Dear David

Judith Snow - Nomination for the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

I first met Judith Snow at the Toronto Summer Institute in 2006. I travelled there from Perth, Western Australia.

I felt privileged to meet Judith who I deeply appreciated as an extremely resilient and fierce advocate, trailblazer, leader, connector, artist, system changer, includer, discoverer of gifts in people (all people) and teacher.

Judith lived and demonstrated to us all, the huge importance to our communities for inclusion – for all people to contribute, be genuinely seen, heard and valued and in particular, to be in relationship with each other. Inclusion can be just a word used by some to pretend people are welcomed and part of community but Judith lived it – she lived with the consequences of when inclusion didn't happen, and she lived with the benefits of when it did happen – and those benefits include everyone in the community.

Judith's significant contribution to the disability and broader community reached so much further than just in Toronto. Judith's influence had and continues to have worldwide impact, including my state of Western Australia and, indeed across Australia itself.

Personally, I learnt much from Judith's life, story, contributions and teachings. Professionally, the organisation I work for, which is a member based, capacity

building organisation working alongside, people, their families and service providers, has embedded the values of Judith's teachings deep into our practice. The foundation focus of belonging, love, trust, relationships, contribution, being valued and creating system changes (that work for people) are all the hallmarks of Judith's reach. We know our organisational approach, work and values impact on the people and providers we work with, hence the continued ripple effects of Judith's influence.

I bought a painting that Judith had done, when I was in Toronto in 2016. It is on my office wall, and it always starts great conversations. There are always questions about who the artist was that did the painting, which leads to the sharing of who Judith is, her story, her influence, the work she did, and the persistence and resilience she demonstrated. This is another example of Judith's continued reach across the world.

I really hope that Judith is recognised for the leader that she was for inclusion and for people with disability to have lives that they themselves get to direct, guide and lead, where they have ongoing opportunities, experiences, love, belonging and contribution of their specific gifts.

Yours sincerely

Leanne Pearman  
Co- CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Western Australia's Individualised Services

<https://waindividualisedservices.org.au/>



May 14, 2021

Canadian Disability Hall of Fame  
Selection Committee

The Honourable David Crombie

I could tell you many stories of my dear friend Judith Snow and list dozens of reasons why she should be installed in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame! Judith was always someone who pushed the boundaries of what was possible for people - it is one of her gifts that I most admire.

In the early 1990's, I was working with Judith to develop and facilitate a circle of support around my friend Matt, who because of his autism, required significant support. I was working for Matt as his coordinator and Judith was volunteering her time and mentoring me.

Matt, myself and a group of friends were renting a house in Roncesvalles Village in Toronto and there was an opportunity to purchase the house we were living in. It seemed quite impossible to me but in her "go for it" way, Judith gave us the push we needed to take the chance. Our idea was to become homeowners and create a little "intentional community" that would mutually support us all.

Judith and I worked with the real estate agent and managed to buy a house worth \$250,000 with almost no down payment. We invited Matt and a couple other friends to share the house with us. We filled that house with good people, 2 of whom required 24-hour attendant care, 2 other people (for a total of 5, plus 2 attendants most of the time), a dog and 2 cats. It was a crazy idea and it worked beautifully.

This "outside the box" idea would not have worked without Judith's involvement

That many people living together can be fraught with all kinds of interpersonal dynamics. Add an ever-changing cast of supporters coming and going 2 or 3 times a day. It was a recipe for chaos and discord.

Judith was the master of recognizing and nurturing peoples' gifts and a skilled facilitator for making things work.

For example, while I am terrible at routine and daily maintenance and cleaning, I am also good with projects and timelines and getting things done in a timely manner. So, Judith created a schedule for regular house cleaning that would be done by Judith and Matt and their supporters. I was going to be responsible for larger projects, like renovations and repairs, painting, and other upkeep. Judith managed to harness each of our gifts and create the circumstances that got things done in ways that we all made contribution. It was a one of her many superpowers.

Through that experience, I learned so much about people and how to work together to build community.

In the Company of Others

1738 Commonwealth Ave, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49006  
[www.incompanyofothers.com](http://www.incompanyofothers.com)

Judith just wanted a life like everybody else. She used her skills of connection and persuasion to navigate her way to a life lived on her terms. Our little community lasted just under 2 years, ending when I met a woman from Michigan, moved to the USA and got married. Judith and one of our roommates, my good friend David, bought another house together. This time it was a little further north of downtown, with 2 apartments that they each lived in and sharing the costs and upkeep in a different way.

The house purchases were a perfect example of Judith's beliefs about contribution and giftedness. Her life was an embodiment of her beliefs that weren't specific to disabled people but for every person. She explored and lived those ideas everyday of her life. Once Judith met a new person, she would quickly begin noticing and teasing out the gifts that she recognized in them and look for ways to actualize those gifts in meaningful ways in our community.

Her supporters were another great example of how she worked with the idea of giftedness. While all her supporters were trained to do everything needed for her support, Judith was intentional in how she scheduled people based on their gifts. That way they got to do things that utilized those gifts and allowed them to shine and enjoy their work even more. People stayed forever! Judith is one of the few people I have known who had supporters who worked for her for years at a time. Many of them took "breaks" to explore other passions but they always returned to Judith and work they found rewarding and fulfilling.

Judith taught me plenty in the years that I worked with her and I carry many of those lessons and ideas with me today. I believe her greatest contribution was her love of people and her desire to help everyone seek and find their gifts so that they could share with the rest of the world. She pursued this passion with integrity and devotion; traveling the world and helping others see what is possible for those who have been marginalized by their "difference".

For me, it wasn't so much that Judith's work reframing disability and helping others to see people who experience disability in a new light. It was that she was helping everyone see themselves in a new light, regardless of their ability.

Judith's contributions to the disability community and the world are too many to count and I know that others have shared them in the letters of support.

The work she did in helping us all see assets and not deficits in people is one of her greatest contributions and worthy of her induction into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheldon Schwitek  
Co-founder  
In the Company of Others



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To: The Honourable David Crombie

Subject: Judith Snow nomination to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Date: May 9, 2021

Dear Sir,

Let me add my voice to the many Canadians and others nominating Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Surely you have received much information already concerning supporting Judith's huge impact on the inclusion of people with a disability label into the mainstream of community life. She was unique – in the brilliance of her voice, the depth to which she moved people's hearts, and the inspiration she provided to others to take positive action. All while having some of the most complex medical conditions and severity of physical limitation anyone has ever encountered.

I wished to add my support for this nomination in two ways.

Although I am an American, I did live in Canada for three years, and have visited every one of your ten beautiful provinces. I do know of Judith's contributions in Canada. But first, I do assure you that Judith's influence went far beyond Canadian borders. Every time we had her visit in the United States, she inspired families, individuals with disabilities, and personnel from many agencies and organizations which provided support services. On one occasion, we had trainings for agency staff in a fairly rural but central part of Minnesota. She was completely up to the challenge of having her complex wheelchair transported over gravel paths and training rural hotel staff about her needs for complicated bed and bathroom needs – never losing a beat, committed to the difference she could make for disability agency staff who were coming from all over Minnesota. Many of these staff were people who had previously worked in our large state institutions, who had previously supported people similar to Judith in her physical needs, who came away from her training forever changed about what's possible for people who carry a disability label.

Secondly, I do want to let you know about her influence on those outside of the disability field. I have the privilege to lead programs for a large international organization (Landmark Worldwide) which provides transformational programs to the general public. Our programs start with issues of personal change – such as in people's relationships and jobs, but our more senior level programs move beyond that to how participants can make a difference in community and social transformation. I had the honor to have Judith as a participant in several of these senior level programs which I lead. She opened up other participants' eyes to whole new perspectives about making a difference, not just for those with disabilities, but in many other arenas. Our course participants are lawyers, doctors, housewives, engineers, stock brokers, janitors, etc., etc., from all walks of life – many of whom have never had a personal relationship with anyone with any type of disability. Many befriended her and relished her sharing and contributions in every course. Judith's inspiration to these individuals to take action in their

own lives in the areas they were committed to, had her make a difference far beyond those from the disability area.

One type of our senior level programs is what we call vacation courses. We provide week-long courses at resorts and have had large courses on Caribbean cruise ships. Judith and her aide came on several of these cruises. On ships that hold 3000 plus passengers, our 500 or so course participants were not the only passengers. Judith cruising around in her wheelchair on these ships with international travelers made a difference for crew and passengers from across the world -- especially when she would be carried into the deck-level hot tubs in the evenings, or go through buffet lines with her support staff. One ship had rock-climbing, and the ship staff rose to the challenge of figuring out how to get her to the top of the rock wall (because of course that is where she wanted to go). The glorious joy on her face at reaching the top of the rock wall was indescribable. She was cheered by dozens of other passengers who were on the deck below her. Her life was an expression of figuring out how to do the impossible, and inspiring others to do so themselves.

If there is any Canadian who belongs in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame, it is Judith Snow.

Sincerely,

Angela Novak Amado, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Human Services Research & Development Center

Formerly of the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration

amado003@umn.edu

**To:** The Honourable David Crombie, Chair of the Selection Committee)

**From:** John Lord

**Date:** May 11, 2021

**Re:** **Nomination for Disability Hall of Fame**

I am very pleased to be supporting the nomination of Judith Snow for the Disability Hall of Fame.

Judith Snow was a towering presence in Canada with her unique vision and gifts for almost three decades. I know Judith as a master story teller, a wonderful writer, and an exceptional leader in the area of social inclusion.

Long before it became fashionable, Judith emphasized that each person had gifts and strengths. On many occasions I have participated in workshops where Judith challenged families and service providers to recognize people's gifts. This important insight was especially true in her own life where, despite being unable to move most of her body, she used her strengths of communication and problem solving to help people to build lives of inclusion.

Judith's commitment to inclusion was unwavering. She understood that relationships were at the heart of inclusion, and she exemplified this in her own life and in her writing and speaking. Judith can be considered the founder of Support Circles, a powerful way for people to come together to support a person with a disability. Learning from her own Support Circle, Judith inspired hundreds of people to develop Circles. Under Judith's guidance, I developed a support circle for my daughter thirty years ago. My daughter is now 43 and still has a vibrant support circle, which has helped her to live a rich full life in community.

Judith understood the power of community long before disability groups embraced the concept. She was a pioneer and a gifted human being. As a trail blazer, Judith deserves to be a member of the Disability Hall of Fame.

John Lord, CM  
Waterloo, ON  
[www.johnlord.net](http://www.johnlord.net)

Tim Vogt  
Starfire Council  
5030 Oaklawn Drive  
Cincinnati OH 45227 USA

May 14, 2021

To The Honourable David Crombie,

I am writing to express my support for Judith Snow's inclusion in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

There are not many people who have changed my life as much as Judith. I first met her in 2007, when she came to my hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. I arrived that evening a young and fairly successful Director of a segregated Day Program. I left that evening wondering if anything I'd ever thought about "disability" was even true, and determined to correct the course of my entire career.

That night, Judith, headlining a bill that included two famous authors (Peter Block and John McKnight), challenged those of us in the audience to rethink what we'd been taught about disability. She told us stories of people who were limited by their label, and had so much more to offer the world, if only we could focus on their gifts instead.

That single night changed my entire life, and I spent the next 10 years desegregating our services, concluding that effort in 2016. Judith supported me in many ways along that journey.

In the years after I first met Judith, she taught me many more lessons that I have come to treasure. I once complained to her about the resistance I was getting in my change efforts from my Board of Trustees. Judith asked me a very simple question: "Are you being a mirror for their fear? Or a mirror for their courage?" That question had me re-thinking what I believed about people, and what role I could play in supporting them to go along a difficult path.

Another time, Judith shared her lessons about morphing from "Activist" to "Artist." She talked about the difference of fighting preconceptions with joy instead of anger. She told us the story of having someone use a brush to paint the line she dictated to them. "Who's the artist?" she asked. It was a perfect illustration of collaboration and what's possible when we embrace each other. Afterward, we were talking and she told me "Our lives cannot be just be about the struggle." She told me that while there was still a need to fight, that she had learned that there was also more to life, and that it was important to keep that in mind.

These are just a few lessons I learned from Judith. But mostly, I learned the power of one, committed, fierce, playful, intelligent person. I would not hesitate to estimate that the ripple effects of Judith's life and teachings touch millions of lives.

I wholeheartedly encourage you to include Judith in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. Her legacy has inspired so many of us to spend our lives working to live up to the call of inclusion.

Thank you for your service and consideration, and please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Tim Vogt      Starfire  
[www.starfirecouncil.org](http://www.starfirecouncil.org)    [tim@starfirecouncil.org](mailto:tim@starfirecouncil.org)  
513-503-6243

Susannah Joyce  
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The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair, Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Nomination for Canadian Disability Hall of Fame  
Letter of Support for Judith Snow

May 10, 2021

Dear Sir:

I am writing this Letter of Support for the nomination of the late Judith Snow to be inducted into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. In her work as an advocate, consultant, educator, writer, and artist, as well as through the example of her life, Judith inspired so many others who have a disability and those who have an interest in inclusive communities, to expand our vision of what is possible individually and collectively, focusing on gifts rather than perceived limitations.

Her experiences with her own Circle of Support and her teachings about the ways in which Circles offer the strength of relationships and shared actions to increase opportunities for people who have a disability, inspired numerous people in North America, the UK, and elsewhere to embrace this approach. Many of us are still members of Circles because of Judith's example and knowledge.

Judith was involved in many wider initiatives to make change at a policy level, but she also made a difference in so many individual lives. At various conferences and institutes we both attended I saw how her interactions with other people who have a disability and those who support them, were unfailingly encouraging and kind.

In planning directly with others who needed some support she would gently challenge and invite them and their networks to "dream large" and consider what it would take to accomplish any goal. Her own examples were always there for motivation .... showing physical and emotional courage, visionary thinking, a sense of adventure, the ability to listen and connect deeply, and inspire dreams to become reality.

Inducting Judith Snow into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame will significantly increase the awareness of government and citizens regarding both possibilities for and accomplishments of people who have a disability and how our communities can welcome and support them.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination.

Sincerely,  
*Susannah Joyce*  
Director, *Realizations Training & Resources*



May 13, 2021

### **Nomination of Judith Snow**

I would like to enthusiastically support the nomination of Judith Snow for the Hall of Fame of persons with diverse abilities. It was my pleasure to work with Judith in a variety of roles over the years. I served as a Governor of Frontier College during the years when Judith was playing a leadership role with the College. Her leadership abilities were wonderful. She was able to open up conversations about inclusion with people who had never interacted with persons with diverse abilities. She had a fantastic sense of humour and could put people at ease. Her narrative of herself and others like her as gifted remains in my mind as a powerful way to understand the power of inclusion in all of our lives.

I was also the Chair of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Toronto when she applied as was successful in being admitted as a PhD student. She took a number of courses and did very well as a PhD candidate. Sadly, her health took a turn for the worse and she was unable to continue with her studies. But the simple process of her application for PhD studies at the U of T opened the institutional eyes of the University to the opportunities and challenges of inclusion.

I have been present at several occasions where she has been the invited key note speaker. She held her audiences in rapt attention every time she spoke.

Judith Snow should have been named to the Order of Canada, but she passed away before those who knew her best could pull the nomination together.

Thanks to Jack Pearpoint, one of Canada's giants of the Inclusion movement, and her great friend and colleague for leading this nomination process. Judith Snow richly deserves this recognition.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B.L. Hall'.

Budd L Hall, PhD  
Co-Chair  
UNESCO Chair

**Communitas, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 358**

**Manchester, CT 06045**

**860 512-2789**

**gducharme@mcc.commnet.edu**

May, 2021

*Pat Beeman*

*George G. Ducharme*

*Co-Directors*



*Communitas ... Building  
positive and inclusive  
communities locally,  
while acting in solidarity  
with like-minded people  
and organizations globally.*

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ENGLAND

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CANADA

This is a strong letter of support for the nomination of Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

The life experience, strength of spirit, teacher, mentor, and deep intellectual honesty of Judith Snow inspired us to begin our "long walks" with people with disabilities and found a non-profit organization called Communitas, Inc. thirty-three (33) years ago.

It is no exaggeration for us to say that her living example of the significant gifts of adults with severe disabilities caused us to completely change our professional focus and develop a series of booklets based on her "Circle of Support" to encourage our colleagues in Connecticut, throughout the United States, and in England (see Circles Network, founded by Mandy Neville in 1992) to focus on individuals and their gifts not their disabilities.

We continue our "walks" to this day living the words and life that Judith inspired in all of us through her wisdom, insights and life experiences.

Generations to come will be educated and enlightened by the legacy of hope Judith left with us in New England, the U.S. and Great Britain.

Gratefully,

GEORGE G. DUCHARME, Ph.D.    PAT BEEMAN

Co-Director

Communitas, Inc.

Co-Director

Communitas, Inc.

Dr Jackie Dearden  
21 Gertrude Road  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham  
NG2 5BZ  
England

The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair of the Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

7th May 2021

Dear Sir

**Re: Nomination of Judith Snow - Canadian Disability Hall of Fame**

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination for Judith Snow to be included in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame because Judith has been a major influence in my work and approach to life.

I came to know Judith through the inclusion movement when I worked as an educational psychologist in Nottingham City over 20 years ago. I was fortunate to be able to attend several conferences both at home in the UK and abroad in Canada and the US where Judith shared her wisdom to large diverse audiences. Her powerful message of inclusion for all and particularly how to listen to the dreams of all people without judgement in order to enable everyone to reach their full potential changed the way I viewed others and influenced my teaching and research over the years.

I held the post of associate professor of special needs and inclusion at the University of Nottingham for several years and used Judith's training materials extensively to support the education of teachers and trainee educational psychologists. I can sincerely say that without Judith's influence their understanding of disability would have been diminished significantly. I used to watch the reaction on my student's faces when I showed videos of Judith talking about listening to people's dreams and the response was always the same - they were visibly shaken and often emotional. Judith touched people's emotions and changed their attitudes and beliefs in a way that was both challenging and supportive. She encouraged people to acknowledge and see the reality of segregation whilst at the same time supporting a view that everyone could do something to promote change towards a more inclusive society.

I therefore fully support the recommendation for Judith to be included in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame without any reservations. She made a distinctive and lasting difference to the lives of many people including mine.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jackie Dearden



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May 7, 2021

Dear Honourable David Crombie,

It is with enthusiasm and great pleasure that we nominate Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. Judith has had an enormous impact on our family and on thousands of families, individuals with disabilities and professionals across North America.

When our son, Micah was born in 1984, we soon learned that he had an intellectual disability (I.Q. of 40) and a seizure disorder. We were determined to provide the best educational experience for him. He began public education in a self-contained first grade classroom receiving kind attention by the teachers but with limited expectations of his potential.

In our drive to learn all we could to support his growth, we learned about the work of several people in Toronto, including Judith Snow. **To say Judith changed the trajectory of Micah's life is to tell the bold, unabashed truth!** From her and other pioneers (Jack Pearpont and Marsha Forest), we learned about new ways of supporting our son. We learned that he could belong in his school and community and learn along side his classmates in general education. We learned that he could authentically engage with his peers by creating intentional Circles of Friends. Judith nudged us, despite our feelings of awkwardness. She, individually and through her presentations and ongoing support, helped us take necessary steps to enhance his academic and social interactions.

We knew nothing about this intentional, inclusive way of living with disabilities. She opened our eyes and was unrelenting (in the good way!) in her support for us to hold great expectations for Micah and to know his gifts. We have over three decades of stories to tell about our son and Judith's unfaltering support of Micah and our family. Suffice it to say, that Micah accomplishments are rooted in Judith Snow's guidance, writings, mentoring and brilliant understanding of what it means to be human. Micah is now a Teaching Assistant at Syracuse University, lives with supports in an apartment 500 mile from us, and speaks about his life and inclusion across the continent. Since third grade, he has had a Circle of Friends which continues to be active and a necessary part of his life, supporting him in his decision making and enhancing his capability to live with dignity, purpose and interdependently.

Judith's impact is far reaching. Micah, and our family speak and present nationally on the topic of "Cultivating Circles of Support" for families, individuals with disabilities and providers. Hundreds of people are learning the power of creating intentional Circles,

which we learned from Judith's leadership and teachings. We have authored several books, webinars, and articles and presented in person and on zoom on the topics of Circles of Friends and Full Inclusion to hundreds of audiences. ([danceofpartnership.com](http://danceofpartnership.com), [throughthesamedoor.com](http://throughthesamedoor.com)). Deeply rooted in our work is what we learned from Judith.

Judith Snow created truly inspiring and challenging relationships with people across the border in Detroit and on journeys and travels throughout the United States. Judith drove her van (with supports) with a painted logo: "Peace through Inclusion." She co-hosted educational and community events with Detroit Artists from the Heidelberg Project (Tyree Guyton) where they discussed art and disability at Detroit's *New Work New Culture* Conferences introducing hundreds of local Detroiters to the importance of work, creativity and meaning for ALL people. She opened the hearts and minds to community artists and activists to the lived experience that ALL means ALL, including people with disabilities. Judith met with the legendary philosopher and activist Grace Lee Boggs deepening the discussion of philosophy and focusing on the meaning of the phrase: "Becoming more human-human beings." Judith Snow shared her intellectual and spirited aspirations and challenges with other Detroit groups, including Warrior on Wheels and the Matrix Theatre Company.

On behalf of Judith's extended family in the United States, we look forward to seeing her become a distinguished inductee in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. It is without any reservation and with only undeniable belief that Judith Snow belongs in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

We welcome your questions or if you need additional information. We are grateful for this opportunity to recognize the exceptional impact Judith Snow has had on our world.

We welcome your questions or if you need additional information.

With respect  
Janice Fialka and Rich Feldman



May 13, 2021

To The Honourable David Crombie,

I wish to nominate Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

I have known Judith's work in the world since I first read ***"Behind the Piano: The building of Judith Snow's Unique Circle of Friends"*** in the 1980's. I used the insights in Judith's story in my own work here in Georgia in supporting people with disabilities to build circles.

Upon meeting Judith decades ago when she came to Georgia to teach on several occasions I learned from her in so many ways: the power of great questions, the power of entering "into relationship with someone who has been exiled" and the wisdom in her book ***"What's Really Worth Doing and How to Do It: A book for people who love someone labeled disabled"***.

We have been enriched both here in Georgia as well as with colleagues all over the world by Judith's deep philosophy and generous mentoring of so many of us.

I thank you for considering my nomination of this world leader Judith Snow.

Sincerely,

Gillian

Gillian Grable, MSW  
The University of Georgia  
Institute on Human Development and Disability

The Canada Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons  
Hall of Fame Selection Board  
Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons  
6 Garamond Court, Suite 265  
Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Z5

Dear Honourable David Crombie and members of the Hall of Fame Selection Board,

Today I am writing to you in support of my aunt, Judith Snow, and the motion to nominate her to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

To provide you with some background when I was born my aunt was already wheelchair bound so I grew up knowing nothing different. By this time my aunt was already a full force to be reckoned with, but of course, I had no idea of the depth of her advocacy until I was an adult.

As a result of her perseverance, my world is one where people of all abilities can do whatever they set their minds to. From what I understand, my aunt was the first wheelchair bound student at York University. I believe my aunt to be among the first (if not the first) person to live independently and not in an institutionalized facility for disabled persons. I know now that these were incredible accomplishments, but as a child I knew only that these were her wishes.

I knew that she always had a gift for enlisting the help and support of others, but at the core of these achievements was her commitment to the ideal that all people, regardless of physical or mental challenges, deserve the right to try for themselves. Judith spent her life teaching us to look at people for what they are - uniquely able to share their gifts; their knowledge; their talents with the world, regardless of preconceived notions of ability.

Of course, as a child, she was just "aunt Judy" to me. We climbed on her wheelchair and she drove over our toes. Her attendants became family and we looked forward to every holiday and gathering to hear her stories.

I am sure that her many friends and supporters can better describe to you her endeavours and accomplishments within her community, and the impact that she had on people around her. I was just a child when Judith began "rocking the boat" and I can't speak to the variety of groups and causes she contributed to. I can, though, tell you how she shaped my life and how she normalized a life where all people were only limited by what they could imagine.

It is with all due respect, that I urge you to induct Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame where Canadians and people from all around the world can continue to learn about the force of nature that she was. By inducting Judith to the Hall of Fame you will continue to show the world that we are only as small as our greatest desires.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Fitzgerald

May 14, 2021  
Dear Committee,

It is with great pleasure and a good deal of longing that I remember my very good friend and a crusader for the gifts and needs of people labelled with a challenging life situation. My longing for Judith is most pronounced when I meet young parents who are still struggling to meet the expectations of the school systems, housing and employment barriers and financial stresses of finding meaningful community opportunities for their children. I long for Judith because she always had the quickest focus on an issue and ideas to move families forward.

Personally, I learned a vast amount from her but there was always more to learn. I met Judith at a teacher gathering when she and Marsha Forest were speaking with staff in order to help the school system move forward with the long awaited and long needed inclusion of young people in all of our classrooms. She became a mentor, an adviser, a sounding board and a great source of inspiration for this mother-- me. Our relationship with the education part of my daughters' lives was supported by Judith and others but, particularly, because of Judith's personal experience and her vast abilities to articulate those notions, Judith was my go to person.

Our relationship did not stop there. When school ended, life continued and planning for a supported, sustainable and healthy life after school became the new focus. Again, Judith, certainly not alone, was a driving force in building our commitment to life in the community for our girls.

One of the most important personal developments for our eldest daughter happened in a program designed by and spearheaded by Judith, Laser Eagles. At long last Felicia was in a setting where facilitators had the patience and methods to involve her at her speed and met her at her ability level. Felicia thrived. We literally saw what we thought school might bring to Felicia happening week by week.

Judith became a good friend and I'm not sure if a friend is supposed to recommend a friend for the honour in question but, she was more than that to so many. Lives were saved, changed, improved, restored, inspired and supported by this amazing woman.

For me, I can think of no other more deserving of this honour.

Sincerely,

Rose Galati

4177 Pascal Court

Mississauga ON L4W 3C5

The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair of Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Sir,

I write to you in support of the induction of Judith Snow to the Canadian Hall of Fame.

I am not a Canadian. I am Scottish. Judith Snow's work and vision has crossed the seas and has influenced thousands of disabled Scots and their families to think differently about themselves and their children.

I have had the privilege in my work and my life of seeing people blossom under the gentle rain of Judith's words and ideas. Young women with disabilities, wondering about their place in the world and their value as individuals, leaving the room believing themselves to be more substantial and significant. And for those who met Judith and saw how she was supported and what she had achieved a world of opportunity opened up to them.

Her vision and belief in the gifts that we all embody and the clarity of her thinking changed heart and minds. Her work is transformative and full of hope. It challenges nonsense and cuts to the heart of who we are...disabled or not.

Everyone is born in. All means all.

Her spirit lives on in her writing and her presentations. The loss of her physical presence is cannot be replaced but having her memorialised in the Hall of Fame would ensure that she is honoured and remembered.

It seems only fitting and I urge you and the committee to make it so.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simmons  
[hsimmons708@gmail.com](mailto:hsimmons708@gmail.com)  
6 Latimer Court  
Motherwell Scotland ML1 2GA  
UK

May 12, 2020

The Honourable David Crombie  
Chair, Selection Committee  
Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Dear Sir,

Please accept this letter nominating the remarkable Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. Judith Snow was an artist, performer, writer, human rights advocate, and motivational speaker.

Her broad range of achievements, exploration and explication of groundbreaking philosophy, and wry and incisive wit would be enough to define her as a truly outstanding person. However, she transcended ordinary limitations as she achieved all this with no ability to move her arms or legs and being dependent upon a ventilator.

She was a person of enormous focus, organization, and persistence, but to me, her most important contribution is her elucidation of the composite/collective nature of human experience and identity. In our individual-obsessed culture, it was illuminating to hear Judith speak of herself--and all of us--as multi-bodied beings.

She knew and explained how her will and dreams were embodied and enacted through and with other bodies. For instance, to create her artwork, she used her mouth to direct a laser beam; another person would place the paint on the canvas as directed by the beam/Judith..

Judith helped me see that I, too, am a multi-bodied being. We all are. Somebody else's being provides my food, clothing, home, learning, transportation. Our will, desires, and needs interpenetrate. They are inseparable.

Thus, I strongly recommend Judith Snow for inclusion in the Hall of Fame. Her life, teaching, and voice demonstrated our fundamental interconnection and created a pathway to new personal and social identities.

Sincerely,



Shaun S. Nethercott  
Founder and Artistic Director of Matrix Theatre Company 1991–2015  
2016 Kresge Artist  
President, Nethercott Unlimited, LLC

Dr. Gary Bunch  
Emeritus Professor, York University  
Honourary Professor, Novosibirsk University in Russia  
100 Waterton Road  
Weston ON M9P 2R3  
May 5, 2021

To Whom it may Concern:

I knew Judith Snow for a considerable time. We knew each other from a loose group of people composed of people with and without disability. After a time, this loose group banded together and became the ***Marsha Forest Centre***.

The centre is composed of individuals who draw no funds, all members attend meetings, funds garnered are used for centre activities. Centre activities extend as far as India and Russia.

Judith was a founding member from the mid 1990's – until her death.

Gary Bunch



May 17, 2021

## **Supporting the Nomination of Judith Snow to the Disability Hall of Fame**

Mr. Crombie:

Judith Snow was my introduction to the world of inclusion. When I first interviewed for an assistant job with Judith I had no idea what was in store for me. Judith taught me what inclusion meant, how everyone had something to offer and that when people work together amazing things can happen. She also taught me that people aren't disabled, they are differently-abled.

I remember being amazed the first time I went to Laser Eagles (of which Judith was a founding director) - it was brilliant! Just because someone was not able to create art in the "traditional" way by placing brush to canvas, did not mean their concept could not come to life. Pairing people with a vision to those who could physically help them create it was a perfect marriage and allowed an avenue of self-expression for those who may not have otherwise had it.

Over the years I worked with Judith, one of the biggest lessons she taught me was that you could do almost anything you put your mind to and that often I was my own barrier. Time and time again, I was witness to Judith accomplishing things that seemed unattainable.

I remember arriving to assist Judith one day and her wanting me to test drive a van for her. She had decided that she wanted to buy a toy hauler and convert it into a living space, so she could travel and work. There were so many considerable obstacles with this project that several times I didn't think it would come to fruition. But Judith found a way to overcome all of those obstacles and months later she was on her way to Savannah, Georgia in her custom toy hauler!

Judith accomplished many notable things throughout her life. She became the first person in Canada to receive government-mandated individualized funding for personal assistance, she founded the Laser Eagles, she travelled the world teaching inclusion, she helped others build circles so they could live fuller lives. To be honest, I'm surprised she's not already in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Judith inspired people, she opened others eyes and minds, she built community and taught others how to do the same, she taught people how to see the value in others and how to support each other to create a better world and to accomplish goals, Judith taught people to dream and that those dreams were attainable.

Judith made a remarkable impact on this world and the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame would be lucky to have her :-)

Thank you,

Kate Becher  
5675 Whittle Road  
Mississauga, ON L4Z 3P8

## MICAH



HI I'M MICAH

JUDITH HAS BEEN MY GREAT FRIEND, TEACHER, AND ROLE MODEL FOR MOST OF MY LIFE

JUDITH HELPED ME MEET A COOL FRIEND AT THE TORONTO SUMMER INSTITUTE. HE AND I WERE VERY CLOSE FRIENDS. WE WENT THE AFRICAN SAFARI PARK. HE WASN'T JEWISH – BUT I GAVE HIM A BAR-MITZVAH ANYWAY.

I HAVE A HOUSING STORY: I WAS STUDYING AT OAKLAND UNIV IN MICHEGAN -. I WAS TAKING CLASSES AND I WANTED TO LIVE IN THE DORM. AT FIRST THEY SAID YES, AND THEN THEY SAID NO.

I DECIDED TO SEE HOW I COULD WORK WITH THE SCHOOL TO SEE HOW TO LIVE IN THE DORM. THERE WERE SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. THEY KEPT SAYING NO!!

THE STUDENTS WERE VERY BEHIND ME – SUPPORTING ME VERY MUCH. THERE WERE STUDENT RALLY'S ...

THEN I HAD JUDITH COME AND TESTIFY TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS BECAUSE I KNEW SHE COULD PROBABLY GET THEM THINKING.

SHE SAID:

“YOU CAN BE GREAT PIONEERS IN COLLEGE LEADERSHIP – OR YOU CAN BE DINOSAURS.” THEY WERE DINOSAURS.

I AM HAPPY TO HONOUR JUDITH.

Micah Fialka Feldman  
Syracuse University

Beth Mount, Ph.D.  
Graphic Futures  
25 West 81<sup>st</sup> Street, 16-B  
New York, NY 10024  
212-362-9492  
[graphicfutures@earthlink.net](mailto:graphicfutures@earthlink.net)  
[www.BethMount.org](http://www.BethMount.org)  
[www.Inclusion.com](http://www.Inclusion.com)

To: The Honourable David Crombie (Chair of the Selection Committee)  
Subject: Why Judith Snow deserves to be in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Judith Snow deserves to be in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame because of the historic and global impact of her life work. Judith was a bold and brilliant innovator of disability rights and most significantly, the power of relationships. Judith Snow is attributed with the invention of Support Circles, which have proliferated throughout the world and enable people with disabilities to live their best lives.

I knew of Judith and her work in the mid 1970s as she pioneered her escape from a nursing home by creating the first Circle of Support..friends and allies... who contributed both instrumental and emotional support for her to live in her own home. Throughout her lifetime, Judith's Circle of Support strengthened the expression of Judith's infinite creative genius. Support Circles have enabled countless others to live more independent and fruitful lives.

I cited Judith; her life, her thinking, her philosophy and leadership. in my 1987 doctoral dissertation, "Person Centered Planning; Finding Directions for Change," which focused on the exploration of a different way to think about capacities in the lives of people with disabilities. I worked on a Circle of Support initiative supported by the Connecticut Governors Council of Disabilities. My colleagues and I cultivated more than thirty support circles which have continued to sustain hundreds of people to thrive across their life span...for as long as 35 years.

Judith was unstoppable in imagining better possibilities for the lives of all people who live with a the label of disability. Among her many teachings, Judith called humanity forth to appreciate the healing and generative gifts that people with disabilities bring to the life a community.

Lifting up the life and work of Judith Snow through her presence in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame will ensure that her legacy continues for generations to come. Her inclusion in the Canadian story of disability and humanitarian leaders amplifies her historic role in building a world that works better for everyone.

May we continue to find countless ways to pass her story on...

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Mount". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Beth Mount, Ph.D.  
May 15, 2021



David Hasbury  
[david.hasbury@neighbours-inc.com](mailto:david.hasbury@neighbours-inc.com)  
[neighbours-international.com](http://neighbours-international.com)

May 17, 2021

To: whom it may concern

From: David Hasbury

Re: Judith Snow Nomination to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame

Judith Snow was a profound thinker, a thought shifter, a disrupter, a visionary, and a social change artist. She became a friend and teacher of mine almost 40 years ago.

I met Judith in 1982 when interviewing with her for a job as her Personal Attendant. I had followed up on this employment opportunity after her friend, Peter Dill, had visited the faith and justice youth leadership organization where I worked.

Peter made it clear that Judith had limited control of movement in her body, that she used a wheel chair to get around, and required support to do most physical tasks, including driving, preparing food, eating, personal care, house cleaning, and laundry etc.. It was not difficult to understand how Judith would be identified by a wider world as "disabled".

But it was Peter's introduction of Judith as a powerful woman who could move others, that inspired me to attend the job interview. It was Judith's story, set in the context of her relationship with others, in particular, a small group of people she came to name as the "Joshua Committee", who knew who she was, the gifts that she could offer, and who mobilized, acting to liberate her from the "chronic care" hospital where she was forced to live, and was in fact causing her to die.

Judith's apartment was on St. George St. in the Annex neighborhood of Toronto. She lived in a one bedroom apartment that she rented in the years after her hospital liberation. This was made possible through the political advocacy of Judith and members of the Joshua Committee. After lobbying the government, Judith became the first person in Canada to receive

individualized funding to support her life, complementing the money she would be able to earn. This funding made it possible for her to choose where she would live, who she would hire to work for her as Personal Attendant, and how she would transport herself when she needed to travel, to work, or to connect with friends near and far.

I met her for the interview, with her friend Marsha Forest (another member of her Joshua Committee). Marsha's presence in the interview served as a bridge between Judith and the potential Attendant, helping the Attendant learn how this relationship could work. In part it was to help the interviewee look past Judith's "disability" to see the woman who had a life including work, friends, and interests, and understand that the job of the Attendant was to do what was required to support that life. Marsha facilitated the conversation, making it possible for the interviewee to ask questions that I am sure Judith was tired of being asked. She provided a second insight into "sensing" if the person being interviewed would be the right fit for the job.

Just a few blocks away on Bloor St., was the Senator Croll Apartments, an 18 story apartment building, with accessible rental housing units, and an Attendant Care system. It was built in 1980, and as an affordable accessible housing supply with attendant care available, it was a state of the art development at that time, in providing physical support to those who would require it in their own homes. While the Senator Croll Apartments was a huge step forward, it was significantly different from Judith's living arrangement, and support system.

Judith's life support arrangement was completely individualized. When I took on the job, I worked for Judith. The schedule was customized with Judith to meet the needs of her changing schedule, and the availability of the Attendants. The way the job would be done was negotiated with, and directed by Judith. If needed Marsha would be available to support the navigation of the relationship between Judith and her Attendants, as they traveled through the personal territory that is ground of this work, and Judith's quest to maintain control of her life while being totally dependent physically.

The year before I met Judith, the United Nations had designated 1981 as "The International Year of Disabled Persons". The Canadian Government had developed a media campaign that included ads and posters. One of the colorful posters developed was text stating "INDEPENDENCE...That's living!".

I recall sensing that something did not sit well with this declaration, no matter how much I understood the sentiment behind it.

One of the things I had learned from Judith, and her people, was that something beyond independence was what living was all about. Interdependence was necessary, as was reciprocity, the humility that comes with accepting the complexity of relationships, and the experience of recognizing and valuing each other.

At the heart of it all was a recognition of the unique gift that could be found in the character of the person born into this world, and in the opportunities, challenges, and the necessity for creativity that our capacities and limitations bring forth to our wider human family.

Toward the end of her life, Judith spoke at the Toronto Summer Institute on Inclusion, Community, and Diversity. She reflected on imagining her life to be written as a trilogy. She was in her 60s at the time. She spoke of the first 30 years of her life being all about what it takes to live through and beyond the medical and societal expectations that she would die by the age of 30.

The second act spanning the next 30 years of her life would be about following a vision of “inclusion”, and the questions it surfaces; what would it mean for all of us to be in this together; what is being asked of us; how must we relate to each other, and so many more questions.

The third and final act of the trilogy would about following a vision of herself that had lived within her, but seemed too far fetched to be spoken. Judith envisioned herself as an artist. She had been quietly practicing what that would mean for years before she felt confident to declare this publicly. Her art took many forms, and each informed the other; learning to paint; crafting the art of questioning; honing the art of listening; the art of gathering and convening; and the art of writing.

Judith Snow was an artist — an artist of social change. Her body, with its capacities and limitations, played a part, but only a part, in inspiring the creativity that fueled her social art, influencing and shaping her experience and choices. Her mind, her wit, her imagination, her heart and spirit, and her curious pursuit of questions were the driving forces.

To her friends she was Judith, and while we could use many words to describe her, “disability” and “disabled” would not likely make it anywhere

near the top of this very long list. “Saint” is also a word that would not make it to the list. She was a “friend” and an artist, with all of the strength, vulnerability, and challenges that goes with this.

Somewhere beyond disability there is a different way of seeing, thinking, and being. It is a lateral move, somewhere out in left field, not separate, still part of the game, yet stretching where and how the game could be played.

Somewhere in our imagination, deeply rooted in our bodies on the ground, and in what happens in the relationships between us Judith Snow lived, and her imagination took many of us to places we would not have thought to go on our own.

Judith’s way of living provided profound questions to explore, and lenses to view ourselves, each other, and the world we live in. Her life was a testament to the fact that we are all “born in”, and each of us brings a gift that must be discovered, and shared to make our families, communities, and nations whole.

Judith was famously known for claiming, “the only disability is having no relationships.” The practical implications of this statement, and the questions it surfaces, shaped her personal life, her work, her art, and repeatedly caused shifts in the minds of people around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hasbury', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Hasbury

May 17, 2021

Dear Honourable David Crombie,

I am writing to support the nomination of Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. I met Judith in 1991 over twenty-four years ago. Judith influenced our family towards a very good fulfilling life. We have a daughter, Annie, now 40 years old. Annie is a person with an intellectual disability. When we met Judith we were often sad seeing only limited possibilities for Annie's life ahead. Annie is so joyful, delights in life and connects to all people. Annie brings happiness to the world. But when we met Judith, a cloud hung over our family constructed by the disability label.

It was hard to see beyond limits. Judith entered our life like a whirlwind of constant new possibilities and challenges to our old thinking. Judith said over and over, "What is Annie's dream for her life? What does she really want? Can you really listen to her? " Judith often said, "The great violence to people labeled disabled is saying they don't have the right to a real dream. Instead they are told they should settle for a plan service providers offer."

Annie's life now is very much about living her dream for a life contributing in community. Annie lives in Hudson, New York in an intentional spiritual community where people with and without disabilities live together. Annie is a cook, an actor in drama troupe and a singer and a friend. Annie chose this community life and took the risk to move to New York. The community of Camphill Hudson welcomed her. As Annie's family, we were terrified that Annie's move to New York might not work out, but we trusted her commitment and her faith in her dream to live on her own in her beloved community. Judith was so much a part of this journey from disability to community, from neediness to giftedness - to fulfilling dreams.

I can hear Judith saying now: "Dream bigger. Big dreams need big circles of support. You can do it, just start with people around you who understand your dream." Our whole family was encouraged and challenged too by Judith to dream and to act.

Judith has been gone since 2015, but stories of her life will inspire, encourage and challenge families and people with disabilities for a long time - just like our family. It will be a great contribution for people to hear of Judith's life story in the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Now it is Annie's turn. She often says to me: "Daddy, always remember your dreams." I wonder where she learned that.

Thank you for considering my letter to support Judith being nominated to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame,

Best wishes,

Mike Green

2745 Julian Street  
Denver, Colorado 80211





May 4, 2021

Attn: Honourable David Crombie, Chair of Selection Committee

Re: Canada Disability Hall of Fame Nominations - Judith Snow

Dear Mr. Crombie,

I would like to support the nomination of Judith Snow to the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

Judith was a colleague and a friend with a generous spirit that impacted thousands of people around the world. Her wisdom, passion and insights literally changed the way people with disabilities saw themselves and their belief in what was possible for their lives.

I once attended a conference in Birmingham, England and met a mother of a young man with a disability whose life was profoundly impacted by Judith. Hearing Judith's stories when her son was very young transformed the way the woman thought about her son's life. She attributed Judith's insights for helping her son realize his dreams of serving the public and starting his own business. As a filmmaker, I had the opportunity to interview the woman and produced a short clip of her discussing how Judith impacted her life - [Dreams Change Lives - 3 min.](#)

It wasn't until I met this woman that I truly understood the tremendous impact Judith had not only across Canada but internationally.

Mr Crombie, I cant imagine a Canadian Disability Hall of Fame that does not include Judith Snow nor can I imagine anyone more deserving.

Sincerely,

Jeff Dobbin  
Executive Director, Partners for Planning

Dear Disability Hall of Fame,

I first met Judith Snow when I decided to join the Laser Eagles art collective. Her style of “tracker artists” really opened creative doors for me. I learned that although I needed physical assistance, I could still use my mind and, with help from other people, I could realize my creative vision. I use the skills that Judith taught me in my creative work with other people throughout my career. She also shed a lot of light on disability history, having played an integral part in advocating for Independent Living. She hired and directed her care via a government order, which started what would later become the direct funding philosophy for the Independent Living Movement in Ontario; in doing so, Judith began a legacy that will shine on for years to come.

She also tried to share her ideas with the broader community. Some of those ideas were expanded on by the disabled community. Judith and her friends took their philosophies to other neighborhoods, such as the Support Circles Movement. Many people benefited from these circles and networks in a variety of different ways. Judith was a big believer in self-advocacy and taught me the value of working one on one with people and that the best advocacy was sometimes achieved through cooperation, working at their level and educating people about disability; there is a time to look at the bigger picture, but sometimes creating one-on-one relationships makes a more substantial impact than following the broader community.

Knowing the great work of the Hall, I believe very much that Judith encapsulates being a person who has a dynamic legacy of spreading knowledge in the disability community, and I think that her legacy will be strengthened in the way she mentored many people who will be future Disability Hall of Famers.

I believe that Judith Snow is a name that will be revered widely in the disabled community, and after this pandemic is over, she will be able to reach a wider audience. Judith Snow would be a great addition to the Disability Hall of Fame.

Thank you.

Adam Roy Cohoon  
[arcohoon@gmail.com](mailto:arcohoon@gmail.com)  
416-710-0817

## Reflections about Judith Snow



When Judith Snow passed away, it was almost too hard to take in. It was surreal and it brought deep sadness. It also brought opportunity for reflection on Judith's wonderful life . . . and some thinking about the impact she made in our own lives, in my life.

Judith was courageous. She was like a beacon that guided us. One could not help rising up to some challenge in life upon meeting Judith.

Many of us have participated and shared in learning opportunities with Judith – in whatever form that came. She was well known for her teaching, challenging many around the meaning and reality of inclusion and citizenship, relationships and dreaming.

Judith inspired audiences with her life stories. In recent years she has been most active as a motivational speaker, social inventor, artist and peace activist.

Judith was a pioneer for inclusion and individualized funding. She worked tirelessly educating and supporting inclusion in schools and in community along with Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Rose Galati and others in those early years of Integration Action for Inclusion, a provincial organization that still exists today promoting and supporting full inclusion and citizenship. That is about the time I met Judith – the beginning of my best learning and grounding. The rest is history. . . .

Judith's role with the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO) and her significance to individualized funding in Ontario, Canada and around the world was beyond huge. Decades ago, her bold actions and that of the Joshua Committee, enabled Judith to break free from an institutionalized setting and live life with the help of individualized funding.

Judith was the first person to receive 'individualized' funding in Ontario enabling her to hire her own support team. This led to a life transforming experience and story that was told all over the country and the world; the story is available in a book called *'From Behind the Piano'* through Inclusion Press. It continues to be read by many today. Judith's story and her activism at the time, along with her circle of support called the Joshua Committee, meant change for many others. It broke down barriers that ultimately resulted in various forms of individualized funding emerging and developing over the years.

The 'funding' needed to hire personal assistants was always an important component in Judith's life but not the only component. Individualized funding did make it possible for Judith to provide jobs as she hired people as personal assistants enabling her to do what she needed to do – be it work, play, travel, teach, paint or hang out at home . . . . and the list goes on. But for Judith, life was about much more than the funding. It was her strong belief in herself and others; her desire to contribute, to share, and to teach; her passion for: inclusion, citizenship and peace, for possibility and dreams and above all relationships . . . . that resulted in Judith leading an amazingly full life for many decades – a life that touched thousands.

No one in Ontario who uses some form of individualized funding, does so without having some piece of that be a result of Judith Snow's first efforts in Ontario to receive such funding . . .

For those of you who have family members who benefit from Special Services at Home Funding (SSAH) for children with disabilities; Enhanced Respite (funding for children who are technologically dependent); Passport funds for adults with developmental disabilities; 'Intervener' funding; Direct Funding (Self-Managed Attendant Care for Adults) through the Centre for Independent Living (Ministry of Health), and other forms of individualized funding that flow through a government approved transfer payment agency . . . you can connect the flexibility this brings into your lives, supporting a family member or living with disability yourself back to Judith Snow.

Not to be forgotten: Judith contributed greatly to the work of IFCO as co-chair for many years, as an active member of the leadership team during many years of Transformation, as a writer and editor of documents, and more recently as a key resource to the current leadership team. . . Many members of IFCO will continue to be grateful and appreciative for that involvement and contribution.

Respect for Judith as a person and a professional runs deep. The opportunities many of us have had to be challenged and learn from Judith will always be cherished. It was always nice to hear about and see her family involved in her adventures over the years. I will never forget the time Judith and I presented at a board meeting of Community Living Ontario about individualized funding and independent facilitation. Her father was with us at the event and was invited to sit at the table. He actively participated and contributed in the discussions after our presentation. It was a wonderful moment for all of us present – a father so proud of his daughter, a daughter so proud to be there with her father, a friend so blessed to see it.

Judith continued living her life courageously passing the milestone of her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, someone who was expected to die more than four decades ago. She became an amazing artist and had a display at the Royal Ontario Museum a couple of years ago. Individualized funding was part of the reason Judith's life could be so rich despite the day to day challenges.

Judith was a friend. I will miss her. I so appreciated having met Judith and others at the early stages of my daughter's life as we as a family explored inclusion and individualized funding – first through SSAH and later other avenues. The importance of connecting with people who have deep seated values and are willing to push the edges is so important. My hope is that many younger families will have opportunities to experience this along their path. Judith is someone who inspired our journey supporting our daughter over the course of Lisa's entire life. We have been truly blessed.

Judith's example of true involvement in her own local communities and neighbourhoods – beyond the disability world – strengthened us all to think bigger. But more than ever, for many of us it is the friendships we have developed with Judith over the years that we will hold dearest in our hearts. . . Judith we thank you, we will miss you. . .

Your friend,

Michelle Friesen  
7025 Enterprise Way  
Windsor ON N8T 3N

May 18, 2021

The Honourable David Crombie

**Support for nominee Judith Snow for induction into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame**

Submitted by Dave Hollands, Head of Creative, Royal Ontario Museum

Dear Mr. Crombie,

In 2011 the ROM hosted a landmark exhibition *Who's Drawing the Lines? The Journey of Judith Snow* which featured artworks and writings of social inventor and inclusion-builder Judith Snow.

Through a creative and generative encounter between Judith and the ROM team an exhibit was created that challenged common perceptions of art and ability. For ROM staff the experience of nurturing this project with Judith changed us in a lasting way. That, apparently, was usual for her. Judith challenged us to play with our non-traditional learning environment to raise many questions about how art can be made and demonstrate how human capacity for creativity can be shared given the right kind of individualized assistance. Judith eschewed normal outcome-specific learning and encouraged us to land on a powerful open-ended experience for our visitors.

Judith was very pointed about her desire to exhibit at the ROM – as a devoted teacher of all things about inclusion it was evident she saw our potential to educate and go deeply into the narrative behind her art. She made herself available to be present in the exhibition space on many days, to facilitate an experience for our visitors. Judith especially wanted the exhibition, and the process of making it, to take us on an awakening personal journey that celebrated human diversity and potential.

Judith's project intersected at a good point when the ROM, already well on a path to improve access and inclusion, was open to a little shaking-up and to listen to new personal perspectives. We and our visitors were so much better for it. These qualities of inspiration, contribution and transformation are what I believe recommend Judith Snow for induction into the Disability Hall of Fame.



**May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Hello:

I am writing this letter to offer my testimonial to the life and presence of Judith Snow and to support the application for her to be inducted into the Disability Hall of Fame. I knew Judith as a national and provincial colleague and friend for thirty- two years. I was part of her support circle for eleven years up until she died. Upon her sudden death, I had the privilege of being her death midwife and guiding others through the ceremonies she envisioned for her funeral.

Judith Snow was remarkable. She was remarkable in how she showed up in the world. She had a fierce vision of a better world. She was dogged in pursuit of that vision. The gap between what she envisioned for the world and how the world behaved never deterred her. Why would she wait for the world to change and fully embrace her? She had things to do. She lived by an urgent imperative, live better, be better, do better. She set out every day to live the life she imagined. She lived in a state of continuous flux and transformation. She had a tremendous capacity for change.

Judith lived with the constant realization and acceptance that for her to be who she wanted to be, she would need to live day to day in a state of mutuality and interdependence. She knew clearly that she would need to form powerful allies and transform her caring relationships into partnerships.

One of Judith's greatest and most precious gifts was to listen for other people's longings. To listen over and over to what it was that someone had submerged as a possibility for themselves, where they had given up on their dream, where they had lost something of themselves that gave them purpose. Then she would support people to breathe life into that dream and begin living out of their life's purpose. As those around her would begin living more attuned to their own desires, she would enrol them in her life purpose, and they would then work closely together in this enlivened sense of being true to themselves with a broader purpose.

When Judith had setbacks with her health or her work life, she would draw from her vast source of inspiration and begin again with even more resolve to live fully and offer her gifts to the world.

Judith understood that there is a deep of reciprocity in change. “As you change, I also change”. For change to be sustainable she knew it needed to arise out of relationship. Her closest partners were those she brought around her in her support circle for over thirty years. It was this gathering of trusted people who intimately knew her life’s purpose and witnessed how it was evolving over time. They were the some of the ones in her life who stood by her who got to be present to her tremendous powers of embracing uncertainty. These relationships were reciprocal, all of us on the circle benefited from being with Judith as she inspired the world to more fully grasp the gifts of open vulnerability.

Her support circle came into being because Judith was able to say to those around her, “I can no longer go up against the system barriers on my own, for me to carve out a life for myself I will need all of you to believe in me and enter into sacred partnership with me, so that I can become who I am meant to become, and free to share my vision of a new world”. This was no small feat. She brought people into her vision because of how much she had distilled it and how succinctly she could vocalize it for others.

Judith had a tremendous gift for asking profoundly decentring questions of the world. Questions like: How do you benefit by treating me like a broken person? How do you benefit by treating my disability as the only relevant descriptor of who I am? Why can you not afford to see my gifts? Why have you stopped seeing my humanity? What are you trying to strip me of? What about my fellow men who you would want to believe are incapable of speaking up for themselves? Why have you come to believe that disabilities are anything but a construct you have created as a means of oppression?

Judith taught people to dream bigger and more tangibly. She challenged people to not just see one another’s gifts but to draw them forth into action so that the person could be seen and heard in the act of contributing.

She lived by her own example and challenged herself to ask new questions everyday so that the concept of disability would dissolve and disappear. She envisioned a time where all of us would be present to our own vulnerabilities and strive to fulfill our purpose anyways- even when it appeared on the surface of it as acting against all odds. She spoke of a time when all people would live out of their dreams as shining examples of their true purpose being surrounded in meaningful relationships that made this possible.

Judith lived her life with a totem animal, the elephant. It wasn't until after her death that I began to try to understand what it meant for her. Elephants are deeply committed to living interdependently in a loving, gentle community. The kind of community that looks out for one another, removes one another's obstacles and barriers with deep compassion and commitment.

I now can better understand how her provocative questions and urgings brought the promise of a new world alive in her and all of us that had the privilege to know and love her.

Judith Snows life work and visionary leadership is more than exemplar it is bold and daring. Judith belongs in the Disability Hall of Fame so that this vision can live on among generations to come.

Respectfully,

Judith McGill  
[jlmcgill@gmail.com](mailto:jlmcgill@gmail.com)  
416 997-3311





May 18, 2021

Honourable David Crombie  
Chair, Disability Hall of Fame

**Re: Support of Nomination of Judith Snow – to the Disability Hall of Fame**

Judith Snow was an outrageous, original human being. She challenged, pushed and stretched people she met around inclusion, diversity and community. She was an innovative thinker and philosopher, who focused her work on practical application. Judith's "BMX theory" is an example that pushes the edge.

Judith travels with Jack Pearpoint and me in our work around the world, even these days via Zoom. Judith's words via several powerful videos continue to impact and instruct people. We offer teachings in person centered ways to build community internationally, and Judith's spirit and wisdom are with us, and continue to have a profound impact on people.

I cannot recall a course offering in which we have not shared Judith's talk on "Dreaming". In this short film, Judith talks about the power of dreams and listening for the seeds of dreams which reveal the themes of life that are important to a person. She also speaks to listening into dreams and holding the question "what is this person trying to contribute to other people in their community? what gifts does this person have that the community needs to grow richer and stronger?". These were not idle questions for Judith, she lived them. She raised the voice of people who do not use words to communicate, and by example, demonstrated the importance of listening to the communication of everyone.

Judith also engaged in powerful, reciprocal relationships with over 600 personal care attendants in her employ during the course of her life. In so many of those relationships, she taught folks to deeply listen and never assume her choices, or any person's choices, based on past experience.

She challenged folks to examine, listen into and elevate the messages from their own dreams, to live into their own gifts and contributions to everyday community life. Judith connected with thousands of people directly. But all those people have networks who

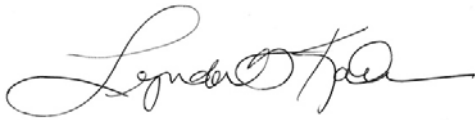
were also impacted by her example, her teaching, her life. We have been privileged to witness thousands of people impacted because of individual encounters with Judith in the course of their lives.

The letters in this Nomination submission give further evidence to that impact.

It was a privilege to be in her wake and sphere of influence.

She lived out loud to be sure.

I look forward to celebrating with so many on the occasion of her induction into the Hall of Fame.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lynda Kahn". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lynda Kahn  
Inclusion Press  
47 Indian Trail  
Toronto M6R 1Z8