

Farewell to Sabine from Richard and Maria Maguire

Maria: We are Richard and Maria Maguire from Wentworthville and Reconciliation for Western Sydney (R4WS) in Parramatta that Sabine and Brummi connected with since 2008 and influenced very much over all these years. We are speaking for others from R4WS attending Sabine's memorial here today and many others that she has impacted.

I'd like to place some simple orchids from our garden up here that might symbolise both the amazing beauty and also fragility of Sabine, and maybe of all of us actually. I also brought this bunch of colourful flowers because they show both sides of her, the deep purple flowers called vervain might express her awareness of pain and injustice, her solidarity with others and her own suffering for many years. And these yellow daisies can stand for her infectious energy and courage, for her belief in the presence of hope and sun, her ability to say yes one more time, even when the going gets tough. It is as if she had one eye crying and one with a sparkle indeed: we can, we must, we will, together!

Richard: Meeting Sabine and Hans has made a deep impression on me. Here was a couple that had left the comfort and security of their own country and careers to become allies of Aboriginal people in far away Australia and help the rest of us to grow in awareness and action. After arriving here they quickly made many contacts with Aboriginal activists and those that supported them and participated in events and campaigns, in their part of Sydney. Soon after we met at an Aboriginal Arts event in a North Sydney suburb they got interested in our Reconciliation group in Western Sydney that had started in 1997 and they remained active till the very end, not minding the distance and long train ride.

Along with many others I have been moved again and again by Sabine's passion and constant engagement for truth, justice and treaty. I admired her ability to arrange for numerous fine speakers for our Building Bridges sessions which always were out to enable the community at large to directly hear and learn from Aboriginal voices. And she and Hans contributed in many other ways. Even though her disease put severe limitations on her, she continued to actively participate and contribute to our group and the large urgent undertaking that had become her life. In her last few weeks she organised two speakers for our October Building Bridges program and even was present on Zoom in the first session the day before she died. Awesome!

Though she is no longer with us in the body, I am sure her spirit will continue to enlighten all who knew her.

Maria: Yes, indeed. Sabine, you intricate soul and precious sister of so many of us, here and around the world. You have mysteriously been called to this ancient country for a high purpose.

You received and learned much and gave yourself generously,
to awaken people, everyone, up and down the land,
have them face the horrendous injustice of past and present
and build a new future, together.

The time is now, no way to wait or stop, not for you, not for anyone.

Your candle, your fire was strong, and it burned you out.

Too early, sadly, but not in vain.

Thank you for everything, for all you are, did and will be.

Being a fellow German like you, as my co-mourners here might have noticed from my accent, I'd like to finish with the opening line of an ancient German hymn from challenging days long ago: "Nun danket alle Gott" thanking God, and I understand God here as the life-force underneath everything, the love that creates and sustains us and everything, as I believe you, Sabine, would have seen it- and responding with thanks of your whole being, like the song says "with head, mouth, voice, hands" and I add the feet for you, with no ifs and buts, no excuses or illusions, as you have shown us, so full-heartedly.

You did run the race that mattered most to you, and to the very end, giving your whole self. Thank you!