

In Memory of Gayle Di Pietro – 3 March 1951 – 25 April 2021



Pieter Venter, a former GRSP CEO and long-term friend described the tremendous support that Gayle provided to him when he began in his role as not only a loyal colleague, but a great friend and road safety advocate who will be sadly missed.

In describing Gayle, Pieter explained:

“Many people impacted on my career as road safety researcher and manager, but few as much as Gayle DiPietro. Gayle’s support during my tenure as CEO of GRSP in Geneva helped me greatly to face the challenges and opportunities that came our way. She unselfishly empowered many persons to become specialists in their fields and leaves behind a wealth of knowledge.

I will forever appreciate her support and friendship and remember fondly the interesting projects we worked on together as well as the designer spectacles and outfits”.

Margie Peden worked with Gayle for many year but was not just a work colleague, she was also a close friend. Margie has provided this heartfelt message to Gayle.

Gayle – you were so much more than a colleague – although we did make an awesome team especially when combined with Adnan and Kelly at the commencement of the Bloomberg-funded RS10 project, didn’t we? You were funny, smart, and articulate. You were never afraid to speak your mind – sometimes a bit too bluntly – leaving me to explain your “Aussie way”! But most importantly you were a genuine friend. Always there – physically or virtually – to

listen, share, housesit or look after precious sausage dogs. Your storytelling was epic – sometimes embellished – always based on truth. We often joked about writing a book together to share some of those shared experiences: we went to the same places but your experiences were way more colourful than mine! I miss you already my friend but I will always smile when I see someone making a grand entrance, wearing red-rimmed glasses and high heeled shoes. Rest in Peace.

Kelly Larson, a long time friend and colleague expressed her feelings with these words.

I had the pleasure of calling Gayle my friend, and colleague, for more than a decade. We were lucky enough to work and, explore together, nearly every corner of the world – China, India, Viet Nam, Brazil, Cambodia—not to mention New York, London, Geneva, Paris – to name a few.

Gayle was smart, reliable, strategic; and also fun, kind, generous, and thoughtful. She loved her work, her friends, her life in retirement, and especially her family. Her compassion was palpable, and her steadiness consistent in good times, and bad.

She will be missed tremendously – taken too soon with so much love, life, and goodness left to give. No doubt her spirit lives on through her family - the grandkids especially - and all of us she touched every day.

We miss you too much already Gayle Di Pietro! Rest in peace.

Abdul Bachani provided this message.

Gayle was a great colleague and mentor, but most of all, a dear friend whom I feel lucky to have known and shared great memories with all over the world for over a decade. Full of energy, wit, and humor, she always gave her best to everything she did and was always there when you needed her. As a role model for younger colleagues, she helped shape the professional foundations for countless individuals around the world.

I was personally lucky to have met Gayle at the beginning of my public health career and will be forever grateful for her advice (always had time to listen, knew what to say, and genuinely cared about you), insights (never one to sugar-coat things), and collegiality (steady, reliable, thoughtful, and smart) over the years.

Gayle, your untimely departure has left a void in many of our hearts and lives, and you will be terribly missed. I will sorely miss our chats, but will truly treasure all the memories and experiences we shared together! Rest in peace.

Cristina Inclan had this message.

Missing you my dearest Gayle.

Someday we will see each other again and we will continue laughing, dancing and enjoying life.

*Love
Cristina*

Cessie Petchi, worked with Gayle for many years wished to express her grief and sense of loss in this poem.

*My dearest teacher, role model and dear friend,
You are missed more than you'll ever know.
Your great contribution and dedication to your work, will always be remembered.
Your strength, high spirits, and love for life; admirable!
Your guidance, lessons and values are forever etched.
I am blessed to have known such a wonderful and true person
For all that you are and have been,
You always have a special place in my heart!
My dearest Gayle.*

Judy Fleiter, who followed Gayle into the GRSP's Global Manager role has reflected on Gayle.

"I had the pleasure of working alongside Gayle for three months in late 2016 as she transitioned out of the role of GRSP's Global Manager and handed over to me. As I got to know Gayle during these few months of shared work and work travel to Mumbai, Baltimore, Washington DC, Malaysia and New York, it was clear that she had a passion for hard work, assisting others in their career development, and making the most of every day. In fact, a young staff member from a partner organisation commented to us that she had not realised how much fun work could be until she saw Gayle in action. Gayle's contribution to the GRSP body of work over many years was obvious, and in particular, her contribution to the development of the inaugural Global Road Safety Leadership Course that our organisation proudly co-hosts with our firm colleagues from Johns Hopkins University."

Adnan Hyder, another close friend and colleague provided this message and reflections on his sense of loss.

Gayle was always a source of energy and spirit - she knew how to bring life to meetings, conversations, and gatherings - and she had the complete sense of knowing her own true self (a rare gift) which allowed her to be so genuine. She had an amazing career, cared so much about her family (even though she joked about them), and always thought "out of the box" and brought deep insights to all issues. Gayle loved life, and she taught me so many valuable lessons - which she shared freely - and guided me when I needed a sounding board. She was always there when you needed her, always thankful for her blessings, and even when unwell or caring for her elderly mother, in amazingly cheerful spirits. Gayle visited us at GW on the first public event I held here and everyone loved her - what a person.....

I will miss her dearly and our monthly calls - where we would chat about life, family, work and people - how she could assess people in a few minutes was amazing. I will miss her presence in our meetings; the evenings our "trio" (Gayle, Margie and me) spent eating, laughing and having a blast after serious road safety conferences; and her rants about her early morning (post-jet lag) visits to her favorite NYC store, Duane Reade! I will miss her stories about travel, taxi drivers, and odd encounters all over the world; and every time I see the color red, I will think of her.....

Farewell my friend - thank you for blessing me with your company for so many years - with love and peace, I bid you a final adieu!

As well as being sadly missed by her three adult children and her grandchildren, she will also be missed by her friends and a huge collection of global road safety colleagues and friends.

For me, I remember being warmly welcomed to the GRSP during a cold Geneva winter, her delicious home cooked meals, staying in Gayle's apartment over Easter with my wife and her wicked sense of humour. I recall the notes she would pass in serious meetings where I had to control fits of laughter and the 'butter wouldn't melt in her mouth' looks she would give in response. I also recall how much she talked of and loved her kids and how proud she was of each of them.

There does seem to be a fitting poem for each of us and these words from the Irish poet Derek Mahon seem to me to capture much of Gayle's spirit, life and attitude.

Everything is Going to be All Right

How should I not be glad to contemplate
the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window
and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?
There will be dying, there will be dying,
but there is no need to go into that.
The poems flow from the hand unbidden
and the hidden source is the watchful heart.
The sun rises in spite of everything
and the far cities are beautiful and bright.
I lie here in a riot of sunlight
watching the day break and the clouds flying.
Everything is going to be all right.

Dave Cliff
GRSP