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Office of the Mayor
City of Leavenworth

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Community Members,

This week our community lost one of its finest assets with the passing of Councilmember Carolyn Wilson. When events like this happen, it makes us pause – for a bit – our crazy, busy, sometimes frantic-feeling lives. We are reminded that what makes this place special, indeed, what defines community for us, is not buildings or businesses or visitors, or the beautiful setting, as much as it is the people we know: those we work side by side with, recreate with, create art with, share faith with, and serve the community with.

Carolyn was one of those pillars. Many of us, myself included, shared those various aspects of community with her. I first got to know Carolyn in the very early 2000s, when we served on City Council together. It seems like so long ago – and yet it seems like yesterday! During the past two years of serving together as elected officials (again!), we often commented on various things that only the two of us were around to recall from those long-ago days (some of it was definitely about “the good old days,” but not all of it! 😊)

I said above that she was one of our finest assets, because that is what residents are to a community. Assets bring value to the community in a way that is hard to define in a tangibly, but when an asset gone, it's a palpable absence and cannot be replaced. The greatest of assets are built with love and commitment given, shared with those around us, woven into the fabric of our lives together. And this is exactly what Carolyn did, and what she stood for. I don't know anyone who combined whimsy, playfulness, and lightheartedness with the steely determination and commitment of doing what is best for the community like Carolyn did. I can't remember the last time I greeted Carolyn where I didn't get teased, “punned,” or got a verbal poke.

She was was involved in, and committed to, our community in a way that few are – and she treasured those involvements! She was one of the “Dangerous Women” who told the stories of brave women who challenged the status quo of our society in terms of race and gender equality. And she so enjoyed her involvement with the Leavenworth Summer Theater, which she referred to with tongue-in-cheek as “my real job.”

No challenge could keep Carolyn down; she just bounced back! When you see this happen time and time again, it was easy to get lulled into thinking she is immortal – that nothing would be able to knock her down for good. It was just last week, when she had to miss part of the normal Tuesday council meetings that she told us all, “this is the last time I will have to miss a council meeting for theater practice.” None of us knew then that she would be missing council meetings for another reason. But while we have learned the hard way that Carolyn is not immortal, she left a lasting legacy. For when you have woven yourself into a community as deeply as Carolyn, you will always be a part of the fabric that is known as Leavenworth. Thank you, dear friend and colleague! You will be missed, but you are still with us in our hearts.

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