Sarah Miller

Great Lakes and community activist

Sarah Miller at the LOON Formation meeting, Dec. 1987

Our Purpose

As members of a large Great Lakes and St. Lawrence community, we have known and worked with Sarah for many decades. She has been an inspiration to us as has her tireless work on behalf of the people and ecosystem of the Basin.

Our purpose here is to share with Sarah's family what her friends and colleagues thought of her and the importance of her work around the Great Lakes.

With this mission in mind, we contacted people who have worked with Sarah around the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin. They shared their memories of Sarah and of the contributions she made. Over 20 people responded with their thoughts, which follow in this compilation. They currently live all the way from Europe (Austria, Switzerland, and Spain) and across North America all the way to Washington State.

Sarah Miller with Julia Langer, Lake Erie (1986)

Their stories about Sarah are inspiring and moving. Not surprisingly common traits come across in their memories. Some frequently mentioned ones are:

- *her generosity and caring for people and communities,*
- *her unassuming nature and humility,*
- *her passionate and steadfast advocacy,*
- *her transformative principles and vision,*
- *her artistic flair and connections to the artistic community,*
- *her mordant and sharp wit, and*
- *her love for her home and community on Toronto Island.*

In her passing, Sarah has once again pulled together her dear friends and colleagues from her Great Lakes period. All of us who have contributed to this compilation have received much satisfaction as we all were in touch with each other once again and were pulled together by Sarah in a grand reunion.

- Fe de Leon, Jeanne Jabanoski, John Jackson

Contents

Our Purpose 2
Craig Boljkovac 4
Glenda Daniel 9
Kate Davies 11
Cameron Davis 13
Molly Flanagan 14
Michael Gilbertson 15
Jeanne Jabanoski 18
John Jackson 20
Lin Kaatz Chary 23
Sr. Pat Lupo 26
Burkhard Mausberg 27
Robin McClellan 28
Theresa McClenaghan 30
Paul Muldoon 33
David Naftzger 36
Margaret O'Dell 36
Patty O'Donnell 37
Steven Shrybman 38
Camilla Smith 40
Toby Vigod 41
Philip Weller 42
Canadian Environmental Law Association - In Memoriam Sarah Miller 44
Sarah's Beloved Toronto Island Home 49

Photos provided by John Jackson, Great Lakes United; Fe de Leon, Canadian Environmental Law Association; Beverley Thorpe; Canadian Environmental Law Association

Craig Boljkovac

I first met Sarah in late 1989, I remember clearly, it was at a meeting at the Greenpeace office on Bloor St. (at the time) with Jay Palter, Paul Muldoon, John Jackson and Jack Weinberg all attending. I was a very young and totally inexperienced activist at the time and had just started working for Pollution Probe on what I recall was a five buck-an-hour job paid by an Ontario government programme.

While Pollution Probe was a very strong ENGO at the time, and I had several great role models there (such as Pam Millar), I thought of Sarah (who was already well into her time at CELA) almost right away as a friend and influence. Her great, wry sense of humour, clear commitment to protecting the environment for all, and, most significantly, her humanity made a deep impression on me that lasts until this very day and beyond, almost 36 years later.

During my time at Pollution Probe, I was very lucky to work on virtually the same files as Sarah at CELA. The core of this work were toxics issues, centred on Great Lakes protection. We both had the honour to participate in a multistakeholder committee that advised actions under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (governed by the International Joint Commission) for the Hamilton Harbour Area of Concern (I grew up in Hamilton and Burlington and this AOC was nearest and dearest to my heart, personally).

I remember one meeting (the meetings were a bit boring at times but did result in some very effective mitigation measures which have had a positive effect, apparently to the present day) where Sarah and I sat together. We, as ENGO representatives, were occasionally attacked but often, thanks to Sarah, our advice was valued and sometimes even acted upon (not a small feat in those early days…).

At this particular meeting, one person started to wax "poetic" about his vision of the future: a future where people wouldn't eat regular food but would survive on a pill-based diet, with dehydrated foods and futuristic flying cars and, basically, zero connection to the land around us and the beautiful environment that the heavy industrial development of parts of Hamilton Harbour never fully destroyed, even at its' most polluted moments in history….

I felt Sarah stiffen during this person's narrative, and, as it continued, I saw a look of abject shock and even horror appear on Sarah's face. She kept calm, as usual, however, but insisted on asking for (and making) an intervention in response.

She was devastating. Period. In her response, Sarah laid out a very contrary vision of the future that basically demolished what this person had said. A sustainable future of verdant spaces, unpolluted waters, smart technology that enhanced environmental protection and the human condition, instead of some bizarre vision turning us into alien creatures totally disconnected from our environment as this previous speaker had clearly desired.

Sarah's response, as I said, while it was devastating, was still respectful and diplomatic, and it clearly had the support of everyone in the room save the first speaker. I can't tell you how much I learned from Sarah that day and in the almost countless thousands of days of our friendship from that point and beyond.

Soon afterwards, I left Pollution Probe to join CELA, working directly with our late dear friend Michelle Swenarchuk on a major provincial forestry environmental assessment case ("Forests for Tomorrow" was the name of our intervening ENGO coalition). While I didn't work directly with Sarah at the time, I know to this day (though she would never admit it) that she was instrumental in advising Michelle and her

team to hire me. For her confidence and belief in me I shall be forever grateful. And I was happily able to work with her more closely in the future as I changed roles at CELA, working on Great Lakes pollution issues once again.

While our paths somewhat diverged from that point on, as I moved to Ottawa in 1992 to work with the Canadian Environmental Network and later, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (as it was called at the time), Sarah convinced me to come onto the CELA Board of Directors despite living in Ottawa. I happily did so until 2000 when I left to work for the UN in Geneva, Switzerland.

For the last 25 years while I have lived (and continue to live) and work in Europe, Sarah and I had less and less contact. I was happy to email back and forth with her from time-to-time, and she kept me up to date on certain events. I also heard lots about her from Fe de Leon and Paul Muldoon, among others, who were still in close contact and working with her, even beyond her retirement. I was happy to see Bev Thorpe's posting on Facebook photos with Sarah as she and Fe visited Toronto Island (where I also had the privilege of briefly living in the early 90s) in the middle of winter, the two of them walking along a snowy and icy harbour/lake-shore together on some of those glorious blue-skied sunny winter days that I still miss here in mainly cloudy-winter Europe.

Sarah and Fe taking an Island walk

I will close with a last brief story. In September of 2018, I was honoured to participate in a meeting in Vladivostok, Russia, between North and South Korea on possible cooperation on environment issues (there was a brief thaw in relations between the two Koreas at that time). I posted a reference about my trip there on Facebook, and Sarah almost immediately responded (I didn't mention the subject of my visit, it was a bit sensitive at the time!). Her only question was something like "what do people there feel about climate change?" I was very surprised by her question, since, at that time people there, to me, were almost fully concentrated on basic survival (Vladivostok is an amazing city but people struggle just to survive in present-day Russia, particularly in the far-away parts of the country). I told her that it didn't seem to be a priority given the day-to-day situation of the people there, but, after I responded to her, I met a group of Russians who would talk about little else other than climate change! Sarah's deep curiosity about such far-away peoples was rewarded with a spot-on prediction that I couldn't even have imagined myself. Thus, tens of thousands of kilometres from Toronto, and almost 30 years since we had first met, Sarah was still teaching me – in the most profound of ways.

Wards Island by the ferry dock, Winter

Thank you, Sarah. I will always be grateful, and grateful for your life, your love of your family (she always talked about Kali to me!) and that you have left an impression on this Earth that will not be easily forgotten.

Craig Boljkovac, Geneva, Switzerland

I first met Sarah in late-1989 when I started working at Pollution Probe in Toronto. I worked with her on Great Lakes issues (including the Hamilton Harbour Area of Concern); and through Great Lakes United and, later, when I worked as a researcher at the Canadian Environmental Law Association. I also briefly lived on Ward's Island, as a neighbour of Sarah's.

For the past 25 years I have lived in Geneva, Switzerland, working on chemicals and wastes issues for the UN. While based in Geneva, since 2014 I have been a Senior Advisor and Lecturer at Tsinghua University's School of the Environment (Beijing), as part of a Regional Center for technical assistance for countries in the Asia-Pacific Region for the Basel and Stockholm Conventions (part of the UN Environment Programme). My partner Cristina (she's from Colombia and we met during the negotiations for the Stockholm Convention) works for the UN here in Geneva, and we have two children: Alicia (almost 21), who studies at the University of Edinburgh, and Benjamin (18) who is entering grade 13 (yes, they still have it here!) at international school in Geneva.

Sarah's Island home

Glenda Daniel

Remembering Sarah Miller. Sarah was the heart and soul of the Great Lakes environmental movement.

In the 1980s and '90s I knew her through my own work at the Lake Michigan Federation. When I call up her image in my mind, I see her sitting with a group of us on the terrace of a restaurant on her beloved island in Toronto, hatching plans to make the plight of the Great Lakes known to a wider audience and to make sure that the elected officials and public agencies and committed citizens responsible for restoring them to health made it a priority on both sides of the Canada-US border.

Because her manner was so unassuming, it took a while to realize how critical she always was to the whole effort, but make no mistake. If it hadn't been for Sarah Miller, her persistence, her creativity, and her commitment to including a broad community in the restoration effort, much of the progress we've seen over the past 40 years would never have happened. She was definitely an inspiration to me at the Lake Michigan Federation as she was to all of us on the board of Great Lakes United and to the staff of the Canadian Environmental Law Association for many years.

On a personal level, I greatly appreciated her coming to Chicago a few months after my husband, Jerry Sullivan, died in December 2000, to offer condolences and share her memories of him with me.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, "we shall not look upon her like again."

Glenda Daniel, San Sebastian, Spain

Sarah and I were on the board of Great Lakes United together, advocating for coordinated Great Lakes environmental cleanup and protection in the US and Canada. I am now retired and living near my daughter and family on the north Atlantic Basque coast of Spain, a region known for its independence and also for its strong environmental advocacy.

Kate Davies

I was deeply saddened by the news of Sarah's passing.

Sarah and I joined the Board of Directors of Great Lakes United at the same time (1985) and I have fond memories of traveling with her and other Canadian directors to Board and other meetings across the Great Lakes Basin. Occasionally by plane but more often driving, the trips usually included discussions of strategies and policies to protect the ecosystem we all loved. In those discussions, Sarah's voice was strong and fierce and clear.

The Observer

SARNIA, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1986

A CITIZENS' hearing into Great Lakes pollution was held at city hall, attracting 21 speakers. From left, are Bob Ginsburg of Chicago, Ill., of Citizens for a Better Environment. John Jackson of Kitchener, Ont., of Great Lakes Institute, and Sarah Miller, of the Canadian Environmental Law Association of Toronto. They formed part of the panel hearing the speakers.

Observer Photo

Government, industry urged to heed environmental concerns of citizens

by MIKE FISHER
of The Observer

Government and industry should pay more heed to the concerns of citizens groups when making decisions that affect the environment, a hearing on Great Lakes water pollution was told Thursday.

About 100 people, including representatives from government, industry and communities from both sides of the international St. Clair River, filled city hall council chambers to express their views on pollution. There were 21 presentations.

The hearing was organized by Great Lakes United, a citizens' coalition with representation from Ontario, Quebec and the eight Great Lakes states in the U.S.

John Jackson, an executive member of the group from Kitchener, Ont., said the meeting turnout was encouraging because it attracted many speakers concerned about the environment.

He said the Sarnia meeting showed local industry is taking steps to improve pollution in the lakes ecosystem and is willing to listen to citizens' groups.

"In this meeting, there was the feeling that industry is taking responsibility for environmental problems and responding to the public rather than just the government," he said.

He said he was encouraged that Dow Chemical Canada Inc. made a presentation at the meeting because there has been poor industry representation at the group's previous hearings.

The Sarnia hearing is the 14th of 19 being held across the Great Lakes basin to voice concerns about water quality issues before the U.S. and Canadian governments meet next year to revise the Great Lakes Water Quality agreement.

Dow was the only company to make a presentation at the meeting.

Steve Bolt, Dow environmental manager in Sarnia, told the meeting, "Dow is convinced of the value of the consultative approach to solving problems."

He described improvements in environmental control the company has made since its spill of a drycleaning solvent last August which came to be known as the blob.

"Spills prevention is high on the public's agenda and it is high on ours, too," he said.

But many of the speakers representing various community groups concerned about the health of the river said Chemical Valley companies are not doing enough to prevent pollution, despite evidence of improvement over the past decade.

Scott Connop, a Dow lab technician who made a personal presentation, said the river is "a toilet bowl" and he is concerned about the accumulation of contaminants in the food chain.

Mr. Connop, a member of the St. Clair International Citizen's Network which links many community groups, said he was nonetheless proud that Dow is "coming forward and addressing the problems."

Lambton Industrial Society general manager Ron Denning said real improvement in the river will come from "honest science...and not doom and gloom speculation." The society is funded by 13 major Chemical Valley firms.

Scott Shibley, spokesman for the worldwide environmental activist group Greenpeace, urged laws requiring industry to reduce contaminants at the plants to achieve zero toxic discharge.

Most of the speakers at the meeting called for the absolute reduction of toxic discharges into waterways.

A spokesman for the Walpole Island Band, whose 1,600 residents at the juncture of the river and Lake St. Clair regularly consume fish and wildlife from the region, recommended more scientific research be done by the band itself.

City Ald. Mike Bradley said the much-publicized blob has become a blessing because it brought attention to complex pollution problems.

But too much attention is focused on the large firms when it is often municipalities which are the worst offenders, he said.

Mr. Bradley expressed disappointment that Lambton County politicians were not invited to the meeting. Mr. Jackson said it was an unfortunate oversite in the group's mailing system.

The most striking examples of the differences of opinion expressed at the meeting were seen in the lobby outside council chambers, where various groups had left literature.

A walleye caught Oct. 4 near Peche Island, slightly reeking and marked with what Windsor and Detroit Clean Water Alliance spokesman Rick Coronado said were tumors caused by contamination, was displayed on one table.

On another table, a healthy rainbow trout raised for one year in the Sarnia industrial area, now shiny and affixed to a plaque, was displayed by the Lambton Industrial Society.

Her commitment to the environment and the peoples of the Great Lakes was unwavering. In more public settings, she did not seek the limelight but her dedication and determination shone through her quiet but solid presence.

Sarah also had a lovely sense of humor and playfulness. She was creative and I can remember an elaborate head dress she made representing a fish, with a long snout, sparkly green scales, white eyes, and long multi-colored streamers that flowed out behind. It was worn at at least one meeting of the

International Joint Commission as well as at many marches and parades. Not only was it impressive and eye-catching, it was a work of art.

Sarah loved life and dedicated her own to many environmental and social causes. To me, she was a friend, a colleague, and an inspiration. I will be forever grateful for her passion, her generosity, and her honesty.

With a heavy heart,
Kate Davies D.Phil., Whidbey Island, Washington

I first met Sarah in 1983 when she was working at the Canadian Environmental Law Association and shortly after I started working on environmental health policy at the City of Toronto Department of Public Health. I am now Professor Emerita at Antioch University, a national university in the US, Senior Fellow at the Whidbey Institute, WA, a home for transformational learning since 1972, and a meditation teacher.

Cameron Davis

I'm sorry to hear about Sarah.

Behind her understated presence was an incisive intellect and burning dedication to the Great Lakes. Once you got to know Sarah, you locked in on what she had to say.

Today, the only way to make big societal change seems to be with a seemingly infinite social media presence, limitless budget, and extensive political connections. Sarah believed--rightly--that for the Great Lakes, perseverance wins. That's how I first got to know Sarah - at a Great Lakes United workshop of those who were not big names but were at the center of big impact.

Cameron Davis, Chicago, Illinois

Cameron has worked with major Great Lakes environmental groups (National Wildlife Federation and the Lake Michigan Federation, which was renamed Alliance for the Great Lakes). He then became President Obama's Great Lakes "czar." He currently is vice-president of GEI Consultants in Chicago where he heads resilience efforts, especially for coastal, green infrastructure, climate change adaptation, and water resources.

Molly Flanagan

Thank you so much for sharing this with me and giving me the opportunity to memorialize Sarah. I had the opportunity to talk to Fe about Sarah last week. I'm so sorry to hear this news. She shared several memorial tributes with me. The photo in the CELA tribute captures her exactly the way I remember her. I also read the tributes from you and Paul. I loved the specific examples that you each provided about your work with her. I didn't know that Sarah was responsible for the big banner at the IJC meeting! I've heard about that so many times. It makes me happy to know that she made it happen.

I met Sarah during the Great Lakes Compact and Regional Agreement negotiations when I was just getting started in my career. She was a fierce advocate and ensured that Ontario and Quebec's interests were considered every step of the way. She asked tough questions and worked tirelessly to get answers. Sarah had so much integrity, and that may have been the most important lesson she taught me. Her loss is a huge loss for the Great Lakes community. She made a big difference to the health of the environment and the health of communities and the people who live in them. Cheers to Sarah and a life well lived. Her legacy lives on.

Molly Flanagan, Chicago, Illinois

Molly started her career with the Ohio Environmental Council. Molly moved to the Great Lakes basin when she joined the Great Lakes Office of the National Wildlife Federation in Ann Arbor. Her focus here was on the Great Lakes Compact and Regional Negotiations on water diversions from the Great Lakes. This is where she worked closely with Sarah. Molly then moved to Chicago where she worked for the Joyce Foundation, and later the Alliance for the Great Lakes. She now works for the ERB Foundation and is U.S. Co-chair of the International Joint Commission's Great Lakes Water Quality Board.

Michael Gilbertson

Thank you for telling me about Sarah Miller's passing.

My mind goes back to that incredible period of time in the late 1980s and early 1990s when we had the Great Lakes science and policy on fire and we were in the business of changing the institutions and the politics. And Sarah was right in the middle of it all. First, the NGO outrage that the 1987 IJC meeting in Toledo had curated the questions that might be asked and the answers that the Commissioners responded with, leading to the "caravans" around the lakes and organizing for the 1989 Hamilton meeting. Then, the transformation of the IJC science through the cause-effect linkages workshop, and the health effects committee bringing forward the new science of injury to child development from mothers eating Great Lakes fish while pregnant. And Theo [Colborn] bringing her endocrine disruption hypothesis to sweet talk Gordon Durnil [IJC Commissioner] into becoming a Great Lakes activist. Gordon must have wondered what kind of political plumb he had been given when surrounded by all that political activism, with the theatre of wildlife masks and the 1500 registrants determined to make the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement start to work. Sarah was right in there organizing and making it all happen.

I think I felt her sadness and frustration when the politics finally got the activism at the IJC under control, at the request of the industry.

I think we all wanted to keep making the system work, even long after it had been shuttered and sandbagged. I have enormous admiration for Sarah for hanging in there to try to make sure that no one forgot the Great Lakes.

Michael Gilbertson, Guelph, Ontario

I met Sarah at the notorious revolutionary 1989 Biennial Meeting of the International Joint Commission, held in Hamilton, Ontario where Sarah was central to the transformative organizing of the "caravans" from each of the outraged Great Lakes' communities. I have been safely retired from the IJC for twenty-one years, living in Guelph, Ontario, and am trying to figure out what is causing the pandemic of early onset of cancers in our children and grandchildren.

International Joint Commission Biennial Meeting, Hamilton (1989)

Marc Hudon

Merci for this very sad information John. I had not seen Sarah for quite a few years now, but thought about her living happily on her island next to the big city… I never forgot about her and her knowledgeable mind, frank speaking and friendship with us downstream of the Great Lakes; she certainly had the St. Lawrence River at heart just like any of us in the Quebec region. I will always cherish her memory and smile. She was a fierce defender of the Great Lakes health and always spoke eloquently with authenticity and conviction.

She was committed totally to defending the environment and quality of life for future generations.

Salutations, toutes mes condoléances à sa famille et amis :(

Marc Hudon, Chicoutimi, Québec

Marc works as an advisor for industries on community relations and environmental compliance. Previously, Marc was involved for over 25 years ensuring communities and stakeholders are informed and can participate in decision-making regarding water governance and usage issues in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region. He has also served as senior advisor on St. Lawrence River-Great Lakes transboundary water issues at Nature Québec. Marc was a board member of Great Lakes United, and a member of the Canadian section of the International Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River Board under the International Joint Commission. Marc retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in 1994 as Base Environmental officer after being active for 21 years.

Jeanne Jabanoski

I really got to know Sarah when I went on the Great Lakes United Board as a member of the Toronto Environmental Protection Office. And I knew her even better after trips we made in the Enviro Van South (my car) ratcheting all over the Basin to meetings of the Board. There were many miles to cover. And it is no stretch to say that a lot of what I learned about Great Lakes politics came from those talk/drive sessions. Sarah was never at the front of the crowd, by design. She spent her time behind the scenes, influencing people to vote a certain way when we disagreed, strategizing on the next move we should make on key issues. She spent endless hours showing up for meetings of committees, tribunals, conferences. She was someone you could count on.

One of the facets of Sarah that interested me the most was her connection to the artistic community in Toronto. Whether GLU was issuing a publication or appearing at a binational meeting, she knew someone who could design the perfect cover or costume. I vividly remember the fish headpiece, complete with dollar signs and sores from pollutants, that originally was in the Caribana Parade here. I later wore it to a demonstration at the border in Niagara and lived with it for a number of years.

The environmental movement in the Great Lakes has spawned many remarkable advocates. Sarah was

one of them. I am grateful for the time I had with her and for her years of hard work. I often thought of her in her house on Toronto Island and imagine her spirit inhabiting it still. Bravo fierce fighter!

Jeanne Jabanoskii, Toronto, Ontario

Sarah and I were aligned on most issues that came before us on the Board of Great Lakes United and I valued her insight and tenacity. My working trajectory on the Great Lakes started with the Great Lakes Office of Environment Canada and went on to the Environmental Protection Office of Toronto Public Health. I ended my official days as a Vice President of Operations at the University Health Network and went on to study textile design in Toronto. I have been a practicing textile artist for the last 15 years.

Great Lakes United Board of Director members (1994)

John Jackson

Most of you knew Sarah through her Great Lakes work across the basin – especially the ten years that she spent as a Great Lakes United (GLU) board member (1985-1995). She did that with the generous support of her employer, the Canadian Environmental Law Association. But after that she continued to work for more than another decade on Great Lakes -wide issues.

Sarah had a captivating and unforgettable personality. In those ten years that she was on the GLU board some of us travelled with her throughout the basin to board and other meetings, such as the International Joint Commission (IJC). Those were always entertaining and interesting discussion fests. She always had strong – and often out of the ordinary opinions. Thankfully. And she was always persistent in pushing for creative solutions to Great Lakes problems.

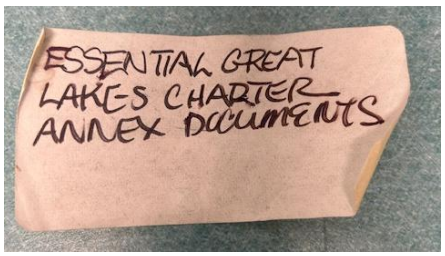
Sarah was a creative person. She always came up with interesting ways to promote our ideas. For example, at the IJC's biennial meeting in

Windsor in 1993, which was attended by approximately 2,000 people, we unfurled a 75-foot banner around the sides of the room as industry

did their presentation to the IJC Commissioners. The banner listed the toxics releases from the presenting industries as they had reported them to government. This was Sarah's idea. She had prepared the banner the night before, in a room heavy with fumes from the magic markers used to make the banner.

Sarah also made sure that our publications were well designed – often including the work of local artists such as in *The Fate of the Great Lakes: Sustaining or Draining the Sweetwater Seas.* Sarah was heavily responsible for arguments in this document on diversions of water from the Great Lakes. That publication, the history and principles in it, played a lead role in the basin-wide discussion of water diversions out of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin that led to the negotiation of a basin-wide agreement between two provinces (Ontario and Québec) and the eight Great Lakes states, and the related Great Lakes Compact), in 2008.

Sarah was a long-time member of the advisory committee that developed and negotiated the diversion agreements. She was a lead advocate from the environmental side who deciphered all the very technical and legal aspects of the Agreement – ever vigilant for potential holes in it that needed filling and making sure that it was consistent with our principles.



Sarah also would make sure that every meeting had special touches. She was strongly connected to the grassroots arts community and brought them out to do presentations at some of GLU's annual meetings. For example, in Owen Sound, Ontario, in 1989 a Toronto group called Portable Theatre Company came to present "Message in a Bottle". She would look for interesting food for everyone to enjoy at meetings. And was amazing at searching out appreciation gifts for

people that were especially suited to them – although invariably extravagant.

She was heavily involved in many other issues, including the Hamilton Area of Concern, helping organize Great Lakes meetings for citizens to better organize around the remedial action planning process for the areas of concern and contaminated sediments. She also was heavily involved in Toronto activism, which I have not covered here.

While doing an amazing job of organizing, of writing, of strategizing with people, she tended to keep herself in the background. Occasionally she would get into the question line to make an important comment that would frequently lead to a change in the flow of the conversation and have a strong effect on the decisions that were made.

John Jackson, Kitchener, Ontario

> *I first got to know Sarah about 45 years ago. We quickly became enduring friends and fellow activists. I worked with her both as a board member of the Canadian Environmental Law Association and as very active members of Great Lakes United.*
>
> *Since GLU closed, I have continued to work on an ecosystem-wide basis, seeing myself as resident of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin, ignoring as much as possible political boundaries. Since GLU closed I have been involved in several cross-border Great Lakes organizations, including the International Joint Commission, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and the Great Lakes Ecoregion Network.*
>
> *I have been living in Kitchener, Ontario for the past 45 years, 70 kilometres from Harriston in rural Ontario, where I was raised. In between, I have lived in Windsor, Ontario, and Berkeley, California.*

Lin Kaatz Chary

I remember exactly the first time I met Sarah not long after I started working at The Grand Cal Task Force in 1986. It was my first time attending the GLU Annual meeting which was in Niagara Falls on the Canadian side. I arrived at the Buffalo airport late in the day only to discover that there was no shuttle service across the border; I didn't know anyone at the GLU meeting and didn't remotely have enough money for a cab. I approached a very nice-looking older couple with Canadian license plates, explained my situation and they not only took me over the bridge but dropped me right at the door of the hotel by which time it was dark! It turned out he was a professor of ecology.

That was the start of my great adventure with GLU and the Great Lakes, and of course, Sarah. I know I identified her immediately as a leader from whom I could learn a great deal and I was right. From the beginning I admired her tremendously and tried to stay in her "circle" as it were, because although I was very involved in fighting the US Army Corps of Engineers over where they were going to put contaminated dredgings, it was from Sarah, Paul, and others that I learned about the GLWQA and struggles in the Great Lakes. I had such admiration for her insight and tenacity, experience and commitment to her community. Over the years I learned about her work in saving the Island and I had the great privilege of spending the night there with her one time. I was in love with that place. I don't remember how it came about but I think I had probably asked her if I could stay over for one night when we had a meeting in Toronto. What I didn't expect was to arrive and find that she had prepared an amazing dinner of grilled salmon for us in her newly redecorated cottage. It is not an overstatement to say I was in awe.

We fought many battles together at many IJC Meetings and beyond, and at some GLU meetings as well. We spent much time and energy confronting recalcitrant EPA Region V Administrators and bureaucrats after Val Adamkus left, insisting that Environment Canada and EPA Region V do their jobs in enforcing not only the letter of the Agreement (which was hard enough) but the *spirit* of the Agreement- zero discharge and the elimination of toxic chemicals into the GL. What I admired so much about Sarah was that she was always so firm and stalwart - I can see the set of her face when she really meant business!

In 1999 a colleague and I organized an international meeting of PCB activists and I said it had to be in Toronto and our one evening dinner together had to be on the Island in the community center that I knew Sarah had been so instrumental in building. I wanted everyone to see the sculptures on the shore. We had a great time. To me that place was a living example of how Sarah was never just about words, but about community and putting her values into action which I think is one of her great legacies.

The last time I saw Sarah was probably more than a decade ago when I was in Toronto for some reason I don't even remember, probably related to the work I was doing at the time which was promoting green chemistry in the bi-national GL. She and Fe and I had dinner together;

it happened to be my birthday so it was a perfect dinner for me. We didn't stay in touch really after that - our era had passed. But Sarah Miller left a huge wonderful mark on my life in many ways; she is among a small group of women who had tremendous influence on me as a Great Lakes activist and for that I will always be grateful.

Lin Kaatz Chary, Gary, Indiana

> *…I met Sarah at the first Great Lakes United annual meeting I went to in Niagara Falls which was probably 1986. Today I live in the same house I lived in then, in Gary, IN, three blocks from Lake Michigan, and surrounded by what was then the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and in now happily a National Park. Since retiring from environmental work, I've received my MFA in Creative Writing and continue to agitate against the abysmal political situation in the States right now and our Fascist-in-Chief DJT.*

Sr. Pat Lupo

It's hard to believe Sarah's gone.

I loved her sharp wit and her passionate stance.

I still relive the death of the GLWQA in casket with the Great Lakes species.

I regret that I never got to her beloved Island, we talked of it often. Sarah was an awesome Great Lakes friend!!

Pat Lupo, OSB, Benedictine Sisters,
Erie, Pennsylvania

I met Sarah through our work together on the board of Great Lakes United, I always look forward to spending time with Sarah; she was always so passionate and funny. I am still advocating for the Great Lakes in Erie, PA and I teach at the Inner City Neighborhood Art House.

Sarah Miller, Camilla Smith and Pat Lupo, 1994

Burkhard Mausberg

I was at the 1989 IJC meeting in Hamilton, the first one with significant public participation. I was quite young and had helped with the No Time To Waste lake-wide hearings in a minor capacity.

But that participation made me quite excited to go to the IJC meeting. After the first day's official agenda was over, there was a party - quite a fun one too - the beer was flowing freely and we danced a lot.

Of course, being naive or dumb and probably both, I had not made any reservations for my accommodations. By the end of the party, no public transit was available to get back home. An extra pillow and blanket were secured and full trust was given to have a young man share the room.

That was Sarah to me. Always a big heart.

Burkhard Mausberg, Huntsville, Ontario

I first knew Sarah from her work at CELA, meeting her in the summer of 1989. Then, when I worked for Great Lakes United in the 1990's, she became a constant presence. I now work for the Small Change Fund, leading a dozen talented experts helping some 120 groups to (hopefully) win their environmental campaigns.

Robin McClellan

I am sorry to hear of Sarah's passing, although it may have been a blessing. She was a force of nature with a lovely sense of humor, which I will always remember.

I first met Sarah at the International Joint Commission's Biennial Meeting in 1986. Although I had lived in the Great Lakes Basin my entire life, I was relatively new to environmental work in the region and was immediately struck by Sarah's quiet competence. During my time serving several terms on the Great Lakes United Board, I came to deeply appreciate not only her expertise but also her dry, clever sense of humor.

Some people—like Abbie Hoffman (known then as Barry Freed in the St. Lawrence River, where I lived), who introduced me to Great Lakes environmental activism—made their presence known with a flash. Sarah's impact was more subtle, grounded in thoughtful analysis and quiet resolve. She valued collaboration, emphasized teamwork, and brought a sharp strategic mind to every issue she took on.

Ultimately, though, what I came to value most was Sarah as a beautiful, compassionate human being. Alongside her intellect, she brought humor and joy wherever she went. I will miss her deeply

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."-- Rabindranath Tagore

Robin McClellan, St. Lawrence County, New York State

Today, my focus has shifted to more local concerns in St. Lawrence County—New York State's poorest county—though I continue to serve on the Citizens' Advisory Committee for the Massena/Cornwall/Akwesasne Area of Concern.

Since retiring from teaching in the Alternative and Renewable Energy and HVAC programs at SUNY Canton, I've turned my attention to land use planning, drawing on my background in energy and toxics to inform this work.

Theresa McClenaghan

Remarks delivered July 17, 2025, Toronto Islands, Ontario

It is with great sadness that I pay tribute to Sarah Miller today, and her unparalleled legacy in environmental protection in Ontario. CELA staff and Board extend our sincere condolences to Kali and all of her family on losing their Mom, grandmother, and so much more.

Sarah worked at the Canadian Environmental Law Association for over 35 years from the mid 1970s to the mid 2010s, and her unflagging efforts left the people of Ontario and our environment in a much better state than would have been the case without her work. This is not something we can truly say of very many people, and all of you who cared about Sarah who are here today, and who were part of her personal ecosystem of family, friends, neighbours, coworkers, and collaborators can be very proud of her.

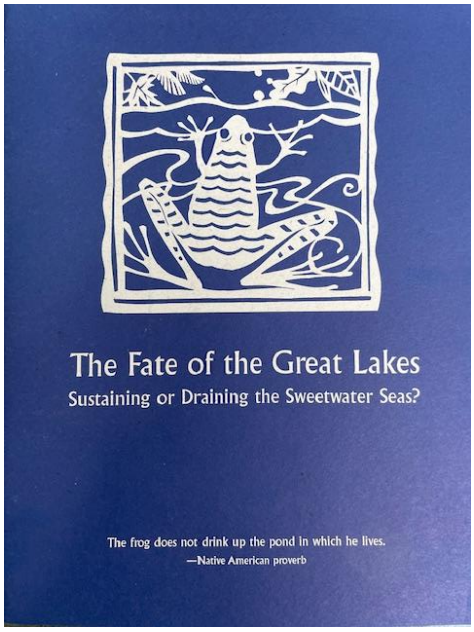
Sarah helped to truly shape the character of CELA and the Ontario environmental movement. She understood the big picture and what mattered; what needed to be changed; but also attended to the details so that visions did not just stay on paper.

Her attention to detail was evident close to home where she paid attention to the kind of beautiful spaces we worked in, and watched out for all of the staff at CELA. She always paid attention to hospitality; it was unthinkable that anyone should visit CELA without some kind of food and drinks. She made sure that the ambience reflected CELA values, working hard to secure spaces that were recycled buildings just as we argued for reuse and recycle in the broader policy world. She also brought artistry into our work, reaching out to Toronto artists to enhance its impact, whether with the design

of our logo, covers on our reports, or the art on the structural support in our office on Spadina Ave.

Sarah truly cared about the people around her, and was sure to know about, and ask about our family and friends, and what was going on in our lives away from the office. And when our family lives intersected with the office, like the annual trip for each of my children to come to work with me, she gave them important work to do – she put my then very young daughter on reception with a script, and my tween son to figuring out how to disassemble office furniture for a move.

Sarah had a gift in finding resources, connecting with project funders, and pulling the people together who would be able to get important and essential work done like advocating for cancer prevention, reduction of toxic chemicals, or ensuring the right of Torontonians to know what was being released into the air around them. She was also central in the work of having CELA become funded as a pilot legal aid clinic in the 1970s, and continuously supported as an integral part of the Ontario legal aid clinic system every since.



We would not have current protections against water takings and diversions out of the Great Lakes basins without her dedicated work over many years. She always had her ear to the ground, had connections to many decision makers, could push politicians, and get the attention of media. She knew how to argue for strong protections and not give in, but also to make sure there was a result. Similarly we would be under much greater threat of privatization of public drinking water services in Ontario without her

steadfast understanding of the risks of such an approach and her eagle eye working to forestall any such ideas.

Sarah also mentored all of us who worked with her over the years. She introduced us to many people; gave us significant opportunities through her networks, and had confidence in us. People trusted her, and she trusted us and that mattered.

Throughout the time I worked with Sarah, her dedication to her daughter Kali was always foremost. While she was dedicated to her work, she also highly valued her home on the Island, her family, and her multitudes of friendships and projects outside of work.

For much of her career at CELA the title she preferred was "Co-ordinator" and it was very apt; only after she retired did we realize how much she had been the glue that kept us together and the key to smoothing the way forward for our work. She was a real connector and we are all the richer for having had her in our lives.

Theresa McClenaghan, Paris, Ontario

> *I first met Sarah at CELA outreach events before I joined CELA as Counsel in 1998 and then Executive Director in 2007. I worked closely with Sarah as a trusted colleague at CELA over the following almost two decades before she retired. We worked closely on Great Lakes issues like the many aspects of responding to threats of bulk water diversions and takings from the Great Lakes, on municipal right to know bylaws, on cancer prevention policy and much else. We also worked closely together in respect of the overall management of CELA for the entire time we worked together.*

Paul Muldoon

For probably close to two decades, I worked with Sarah, first as directors for Great Lakes United and later when I was counsel and then Executive Director at the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

At GLU, we travelled together around the Great Lakes meeting incredible people, facing difficult issues of the day and supporting local, regional and basin-wide initiatives for a healthy Great Lakes. At CELA, we worked together on issues from the routine (budgets, office management, hiring) to the substantive participating in Great Lakes, national, local environmental campaigns.

Great Lakes United Board (1994)

Throughout my entire time [working with] her, Sarah was the guiding light, the moral compass for things from big to small, and by extension, a moral compass for me. Let me explain what I mean by the statement, as it sheds light why Sarah made an impact on so many people, on so many organizations, and on me.

For example, the usual routine when I worked at CELA would be to seek Sarah out in her office after working hours and huddle, presenting issues that had to be resolved. I would present confidently the proposals as to how to address every issue. Sarah would patiently listen, and then provide a gently worded rebuttal. As a manager and lawyer, my proposals were quick, pragmatic, practical; Sarah however presented a perspective that focused on the long-term, seeking to pursue our collective vision, ignoring the practical impediments and focusing on what was needed to put the issue on an ethical footing, building a just community, and protecting the environment. Time after time, I left the meeting with my perspective truly broadened and enlightened. We did not argue, I was the student and she provided moral guidance. Without exception, the solutions that evolved were better, considered and authentic.

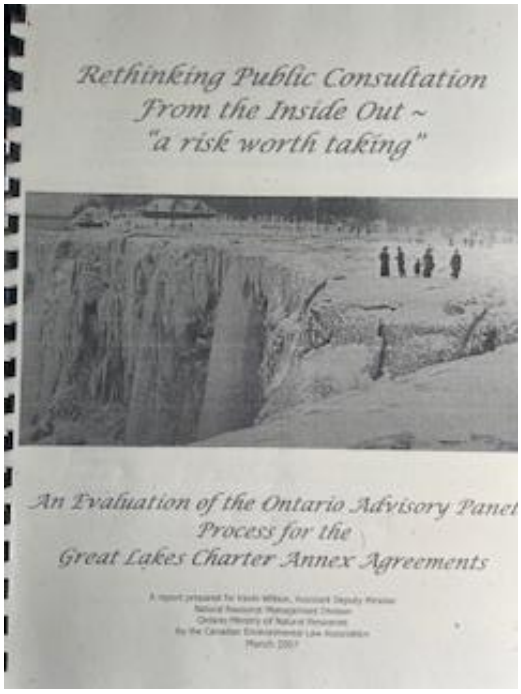
I could give many examples of her commitment to "doing the right thing." Many will remember that we moved into the new office space on Spadina and Sarah pursued a simple principle over the stiff opposition of the landlord, space planners, and contractors. She wanted everyone to the extent possible to have equal access to sunlight. May I say that the final design was wonderfully unique and equalitarian, a reflection of Sarah herself

Sarah's approach to issues was always courageous –whether providing guidance negotiating positions on the Great Lakes agreements or federal toxics legislation, she refused to settle for incremental gains, as she sought solutions to further inter-generational equity, natural justice and environmental integrity. She recognized the "deals" come and go, the fundamental principles of equity and justice can never be compromised.

Since leaving CELA, I miss those conversations with Sarah. But those discussions have had such a profound impact on me, I reflect on them

to this day when confronted with difficult issues. I ask "what would have Sarah thought about this?" and no doubt it causes me to pause and reflect as I ask if I am adhering to her fundamental principles. Sarah is embossed in my mind and heart.

I will never forget Sarah. As a teacher giving me and those around her the permission and strength to pursue a collective vision of environmental equity and justice; As a colleague, knowing we share the same goals working together in unity and mutual support; and as a friend, knowing no matter how I screwed up, she would have my back, and defend it fearlessly.



Farewell, my teacher, colleague, and friend.

Paul Muldoon, Toronto, Ontario

Sarah and I worked together for years at the Canadian Environmental Law Association. During that time, we also travelled throughout the Great Lakes as directors of Great Lakes United which involved long drives and great discussions.

David Naftzger

Sarah was a key player in the Compact/Agreement development. I always appreciated her eye for detail, her legal expertise, and the constructive way that she approached problems.

David Naftzger, Chicago, Illinois

David Naftzger is the Executive Director of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers

Margaret O'Dell

I am so happy to hear from you, even though it's for such a sad reason. I don't think I am in a position to offer the kinds of reminiscences that belong in a family memento book, but I do remember with great appreciation that Sarah was a thoughtful, creative, and knowledgeable advocate for Great Lakes policies and programs. It was always a pleasure to work with her, and I know her voice is missed.

Margaret O'Dell, Chicago, Illinois

Margaret was a Great Lakes project manager for the Joyce Foundation. When she left the foundation, she volunteered as a board member of Great Lakes United.

Margaret and her husband spend their winters in Chicago and their summers in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

Patty O'Donnell

As a former Great Lakes United board member, I had met Sarah after she had left the GLU Board. When I became involved in Great Lakes issues while working for a Tribal Nation and getting involved in GLU, I met her at various Great Lakes conferences, meetings, and gatherings where I got to know this amazing, activist woman. I can still hear her expertise, passion, and words of wisdom. It was an honor to work with her.

Patty O'Donnell, Traverse City, Michigan

> *I met Sarah through Great Lakes United when I was the environmental stewardship director for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in northwest, lower Michigan and was very impressed with her knowledge and to learn from her about Great Lakes environmental issues. I am retired and continue living in the little finger of Michigan surrounded by Lake Michigan*

Steven Shrybman

I first met Sarah in 1982 when I joined the staff at CELA. I believe Elizabeth May was the preferred choice but she wasn't yet called to the bar so I got the job, and in spite of that Sarah was a welcoming presence from the outset. I soon realized that we had a lot in common. We both cherished community - Sarah: the wonderful community on Wards Island; Me: the land trust near Perth Ontario that is still our home base. We were the same age with roots in the counterculture of the 60s. We were single parents. We were committed enviros – and shared a less than optimistic outlook for the future prospects of our planet. We worked together for the next 12 years.

I left CELA and Toronto in 1994, but happily was in town for her retirement party. Sadly I got to see her once after that, probably ten years ago. I have now learned that her health began to fail since then, and that we came to share something new, a failing memory. So it's difficult for me to remember much about the years we spent together. But what I do recall is feeling that Sarah was in many ways the glue that held CELA together – she was connected, caring and supportive – with many on the Board, the lawyers and perhaps most importantly with the support staff – but also remember that she was a committed activist and campaigner who played a key role working with and finding ways to support grass roots groups and coalitions focused on the Great Lakes and its watershed. Sarah was an important friend and ally – she is missed.

Steven Shrybman, Perth, Ontario

I met Sarah in 1982 when as a youngish lawyer I joined CELA and set out to heal the world. She was the glue that held that place together and made it hum. I have now retreated from active practice and spend my time reflecting on battles - some won, but often lost - and thinking about friends no longer with

us. We spend most of our time at home on the land trust we have shared with other families for over 50 years.

Camilla Smith

I knew Sarah as a fighter for the things she believed in. We were both on the GLU board for many years.

Camilla Smith, Grindstone Island & Hudson, New York State

Camilla was a board member of Save the River, a founder of the Thousand Island Land Trust and a member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee for the St. Lawrence River at Massena Remedial Action plan. She was a Great Lakes United Board member.

She is an artist, well known for her photography. She currently has an exhibit of her photographs at the Grindstone Island Heritage Museum. She is also well-known for the colorful ties that she makes.

Camilla and her husband Marty Kenner spend their summers on Grindstone Island in the St. Lawrence River, and winter in Hudson, New York.

Fred Brown, Camilla Smith and Sarah Miller (1994)

Toby Vigod

I met Sarah in 1978 when she started at CELA. I still have a memory being on a very large interview committee when she was hired. When I returned as a staff lawyer after my call to the Bar in 1980 and throughout my time as Executive Director, I worked with Sarah on many issues. She was a fantastic organizer and always great at names for the many citizens groups that were involved in environmental issues. I remember SCOW (Stop Contaminating our Waterfront), which opposed dredging in the Keating Channel back in the early 1980s.

Sarah became a tireless advocate for protection of the Great Lakes. When I left CELA in 1993, Sarah organized a wonderful parting gift of a catfish paper maché sculpture made by a Toronto Island artist which I still have. When I returned to Toronto in 2004, I would run into Sarah at St. Lawrence Market on Saturday mornings. Sarah had a unique and creative perspective on many issues and an unwavering commitment to environmental protection. She will be missed.

Toby Vigod, Toronto, Ontario

I met Sarah when she started at Canadian Environmental Law Association in 1978. I articled at CELA and eventually became Executive Director in the mid-1980s. Sarah and I worked together (with a two-year gap when I was on the Sewell Commission) until I moved to Victoria in 1994. I eventually moved back to Toronto and retired in 2010.

Philip Weller

Many thanks for sending me this information even though it is extremely sad.

Clearly I have not been connected with Sarah from the time I moved to Europe but have very positive memories of her from Great Lakes activities and CELA. She was as you have said a very creative person but my memory was of someone who was interested in people as people and both very committed to the causes but also to supporting the persons involved in campaigns and activities in a personal way.
As a Board member of GLU my memories were also of someone who had clear opinions and principles but was also a great person with the Staff of the organization and looked out for their interests.

I still have a bowl Sarah presented to me on my departure from GLU. Unfortunately, a few hours before I received your message I received another message about the death of a work colleague and friend here who died the day before. She had worked with me at WWF and the ICPDR as well as the project I worked on when I retired. She was very similar to Sarah – a very dedicated and committed person who worked in the background and let others take the spotlight but without her work many many important things would have never happened. My memories of Sarah are similar and although her contributions are perhaps not as visible and obvious as some others I am sure many of the significant things that happened in connection with the Great Lakes would not have happened without the work of Sarah.

Please share my condolences to her family and friends and thanks again for letting me know.

Philip Weller, Schwechat, Austria

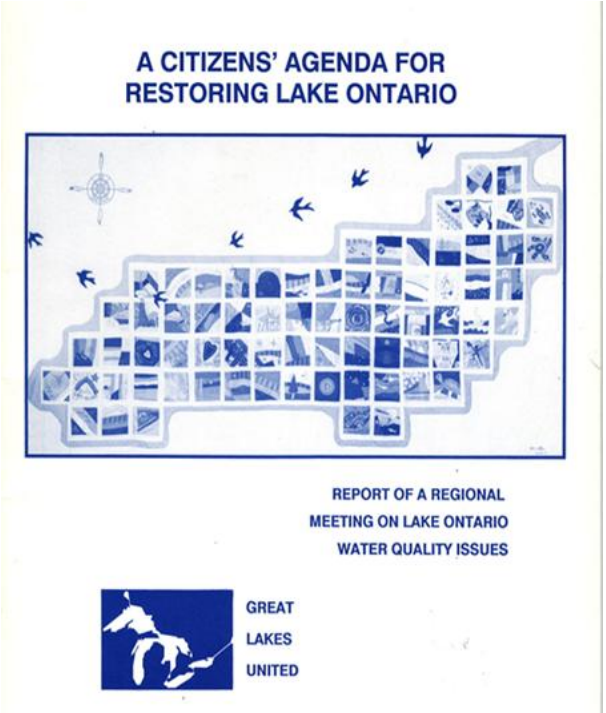
I first met Sarah in her role with CELA where she was responsible for coordination with environmental groups and had continual contact and support from her in various activities - work on Acid Rain, and hazardous waste, together with John Jackson, and with Great Lakes United in Buffalo when I was head of the GLU office and she a Board Member.

I left Great Lakes United in 1992 and moved to Vienna, Austria where I was involved in environmental activities in the countries of former Eastern Europe (behind the iron curtain) and eventually became head of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) where I worked for over a decade. I continue to live in Austria and recently retired but remain active in water related work through the International River Foundation based in Australia where I am a Board member.

Canadian Environmental Law Association
In Memoriam:
Sarah Miller (May 19, 1944 - June 2, 2025)

The staff and board members of CELA learned with deep sadness of the passing of Sarah Miller, a remarkable and passionate activist who dedicated her life to environmental advocacy and the well-being of her community. Sarah lived a life truly on her own terms, leaving an enduring legacy in both her professional and personal realms.

Sarah Miller was a coordinator and researcher with CELA for over 25 years. During her time with CELA, she worked tirelessly on toxics reduction, cancer prevention and Great Lakes protection. She was instrumental in the creation of the Great Lakes Compact and pushed for for binational review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Sarah also advocated for Toronto's ChemTrac program and Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act. Her dedication to ensuring hazardous materials were not dumped into the Great Lakes during Toronto's demolition efforts led to her work on developing clean fill guidelines. Her role in the Walkerton Inquiry and her early work in establishing CELA as a legal aid clinic were pivotal.



In addition to her time at CELA, Sarah was a former board member and vice president of Great Lakes United, was actively involved in the

Lake Ontario Outfall Network (LOON) and contributed to the development of the Citizens' Agenda for the Restoration of Lake Ontario.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Sarah was known for her generosity and warmth. Meetings at CELA were always accompanied by snacks and goodies, including her famous pistachio cake. Sarah was a generous mentor, always eager to introduce staff to other environmental advocates and to advance their work. While she could come across as stern and reserved, those who knew her well recognized her kindness and dry humor. She was meticulous and organized, like a "Martha Stewart-ish" figure ensuring everything was just so. There was a hidden whimsy in her, like her hand-drawn map of Toronto Island with quirky notes. She had a lunch routine of simple sandwiches and chips, yet knew all the best dining spots around the city. Her directness and honesty were balanced by a sweet and warm side, and she was fiercely protective of her staff, like an "energetic mama bear."

Sarah received numerous awards for her work, including a Gem award from Legal Aid Ontario and a Public Health Champion Award from the City of Toronto in 2016. Her dedication to environmental causes, especially those related to the Great Lakes, was unwavering. As Alan Levy noted, "She was a force – smart as a whip, hard-working and always well-informed. She spoke her mind." Ramani noted that Sarah was the "heart and soul of CELA," and Miriam remembered her as a critical member of the team who left a large gap after retiring. Sarah's passing is a profound loss for her family, her many friends, and the entire environmental community that benefited from her tireless efforts. She was, as Graham described, "a treasure, a mentor, colleague and friend," and "a kindred spirit." Sarah will be dearly missed and we will forever be grateful for her dedication and passion.

A Sampling of Memories and Recollections...

I remember Sarah as being tirelessly devoted to all environmental causes, but especially those related to the Great Lakes. Sarah was a critical member of the CELA team by working on many files and contributing to so many aspects of CELA. She left a large gap after retiring, but continued to follow environmental issues. The loss of Sarah is a loss for us all – from the CELA community to all people who benefit from clean water and a healthy environment.
– *Miriam Diamond, CELA board member*

I first met Sarah Miller in the 1980s and from the start she impressed me with her passion and deep commitment to environmental issues, especially those in the Great Lakes. I remember her always being so organized, so well prepared, always with the necessary information at her fingertips. Although she could sometimes seem stern, you didn't have to know her very long to see that behind her gruff exterior lay a generous heart and a sweet disposition. She taught me so much over the years and I know she touched every part of CELA and everyone who knew her. She will be deeply missed.
– *Isobel Heathcote, CELA board member*

Sarah was for many years the heart and soul of CELA. Her formal title as "Coordinator and Researcher" does not begin to capture her contributions to the clinic. She championed numerous law reform projects, including Great Lakes restoration, cancer prevention and toxics reduction. Beyond her commitment to environmental protection, I remember her fondly for her generosity and acts of kindness. She had a wonderful personal touch and made you feel special. She organized baby showers for both my children at her home at Ward's Island. Sarah infused CELA with warmth, humour and energy and will be greatly missed.
– *Ramani Nadarajah, CELA staff member*

Sarah was a treasure. A mentor, colleague and friend with whom I was honoured to share the trenches of environmental law over many decades. Sarah was a pioneer. She championed the Great Lakes back in the "good old" days when some areas were so polluted they were routinely deemed fire hazards! Things are a lot better now thanks to folks like Sarah and her tireless efforts in service of the environment. Sarah was a tremendous asset to CELA internally through her management role, and externally through her community outreach work. Mostly, though, she was a kindred spirit,and a pal. Rest in peace, Sarah, we miss you. My sincere condolences to Sarah's family
– *Graham Rempe, CELA board member*

Sarah was passionate about environmental protection. For me, she epitomized the true spirit of CELA. Loyal to a fault, she was a force – smart as a whip, hard-working and always well informed. She spoke her mind. Like an energetic mama bear, Sarah kept the office together, and was protective of our staff. I recall Irene, an old friend who was CELA's office cleaner for several years, saying that Sarah was the best employer ever.

Sarah joined CELA's staff sometime in the 1970s. In her inimitable style she had her finger on everything that moved in the organization, particularly office management but also many client files. As staff came and left, she was the constant. Sarah participated directly in advocacy work, too – Great Lakes United (GLU) comes to mind. From time to time I heard her interviewed on radio regarding environmental issues, and saw her name in newspapers.

She seemed serious, even intense, most of the time, but occasionally light hearted; direct, intimidating occasionally but sweet and warm as can be sometimes. A fond friend of Sarah wrote to me that she "did

many wonderful things for the world for an old grump." Wonderful indeed.

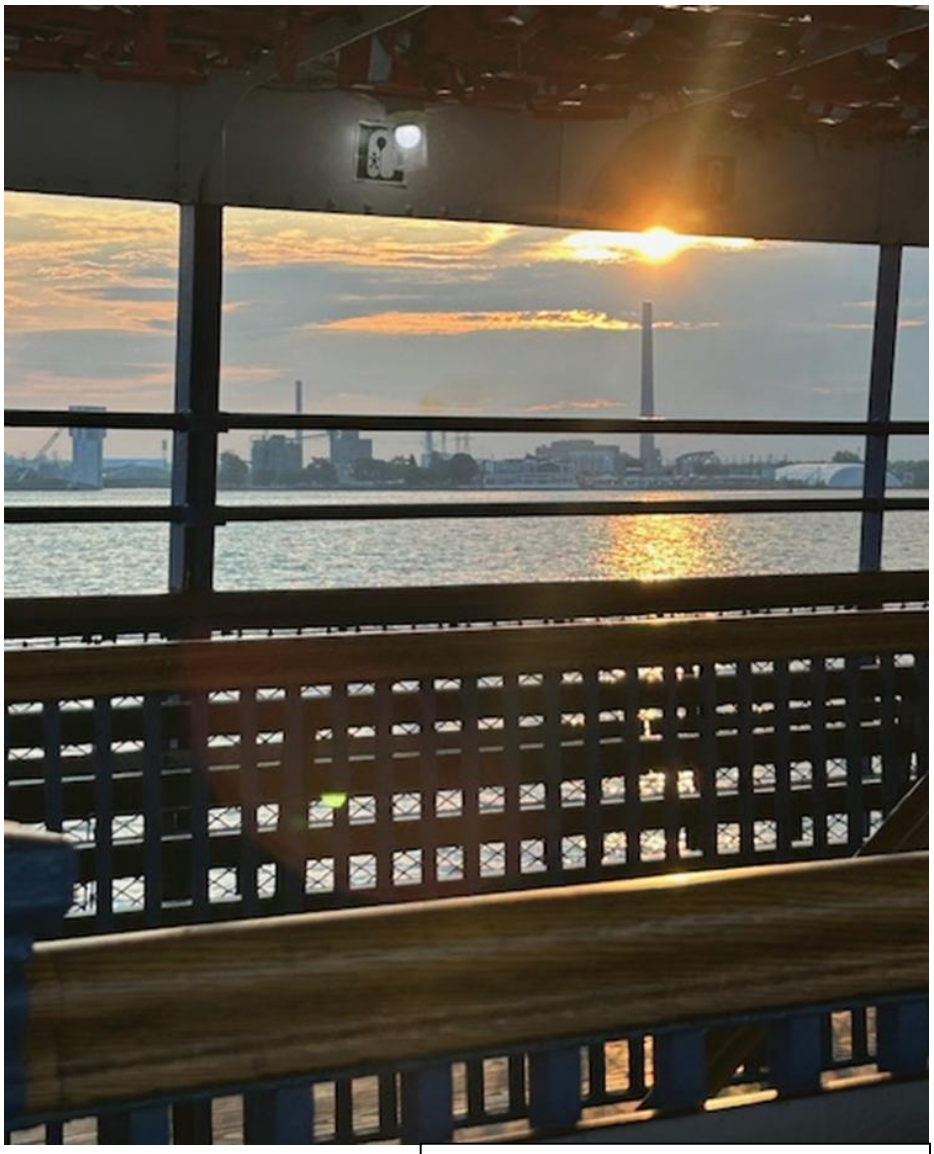
When she finally retired from CELA after decades of service, there was a large gathering under a big white tent on Ward's Island, where she lived for ages in a tiny cottage. People from all reaches of the environmental movement and government came to laud her. It was a grand party and she seemed delighted. Sadly, Sarah declined steadily over the past few years. I last visited her in hospital and enjoyed strolling down environmental (and CELA) memory lane with her.
She touched all who worked with her – a truly unforgettable soul. And the world needs Sarah now more than ever.
– *Alan D. Levy, CELA board member*

Posted at: https://cela.ca/in-memoriam-sarah-miller/

Sarah speaking at her retirement party, Shaw House, Toronto Islands, 2013

Sarah's Beloved Toronto Island Home

-Shared by Fe during her visits to Sarah on Wards Island over the years-

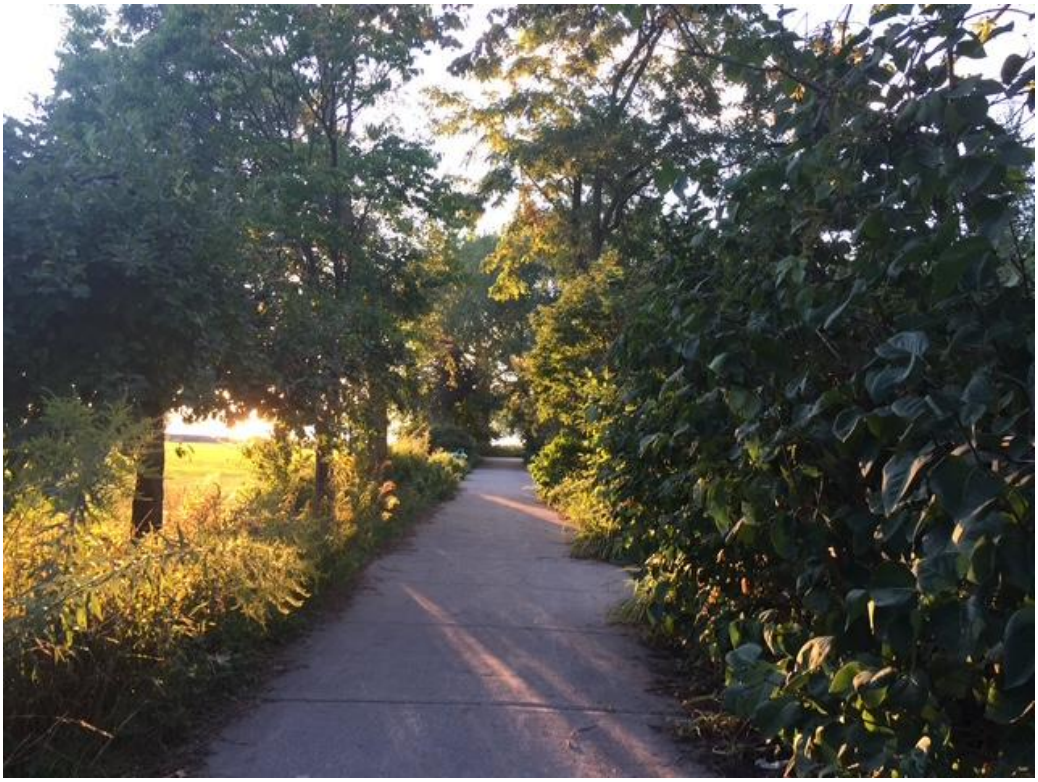


Morning ferry to Wards Island, Summer

Sarah's granddaughter Lucy's treehouse, Toronto Islands

Sarah's Island Home, Winter

Walking towards ferry docks, Wards Island, Summer



Evening ferry departing Wards Island