Remembering a leader, mentor and friend

BY KRISTA BOEHNERT

For those who had the honour of having Pat Elemans do a formal introduction of them, or for any audience member who has heard her deliver these remarks, you know the great care, detail, warmth and humour she brought to any emcee engagement. Oftentimes her remarks were as memorable—sometimes more so—than those of the person she was introducing. She was just that good at it, leaving us with the daunting task of paying tribute to someone who could paint a picture of someone’s life in technicolour, using the perfect words and descriptions. While this is an impossible undertaking—we’re no Elemans, after all—we want to celebrate and honour our dear colleague, leader and friend whom we lost far too soon, in March of this year.

Dedicating her energy, warmth and vision to the school for 15 years, Elemans was an inspiration to many people in our community, both on campus and off. From revitalizing our MBA during her tenure as program director to leading the school’s alumni, development, communications and marketing efforts as assistant dean, external relations, she was central to the school’s impact on community, students and staff. She brought her signature style, presence and grace everywhere she went, from the front of the classroom to the emcee’s mic at the school’s flagship Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year Award gala.

Elemans was a firm believer in giving back and encouraging others to do so as well. As Gustavson’s key community contact during her tenure, she was well known by both locals and international contacts. The relationships she forged built strong connections with Gustavson in the form of business representatives for the school’s International Advisory Board and recruiting executives-in-residence, adjunct professors, guest speakers and executive mentors to engage with our students. Driven by a passion to enhance the student experience, Elemans loved to connect community members with the next generation of business leaders.

When enhancing the student experience required financial support, Elemans more than rose to the challenge, securing transformational gifts from Peter B. Gustavson and Sardul S. Gill to name the business school and graduate school, respectively. She was also instrumental in securing funding for the Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation, the BMO Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurship Catalyst Fund, the Jarislowsky CAPI East Asia (Japan) Chair and the Black Press Scholarship program as well as numerous other scholarships and award funds.

Elemans’ impact will live on in the relationships she forged, the initiatives she championed and the hearts she touched. In one of her final speaking engagements for the school, Elemans introduced the speaker using a list of adjectives that she felt best described the guest. And she was on to something. As we honour her, words feel inadequate, but they offer comfort too. Here’s to you, Exceptional Elemans. Leader. Positive. Mentor. Passionate. Advocate. Energetic. Supporter. Funny. Warm. Unforgettable. Friend.

In consultation with her family, the school has established a memorial fund to support Elemans’s legacy of encouraging and building the foundations for student success and the pursuit of excellence in community-engaged learning. For those wishing to make a gift in her honour, please visit extrweb.uvic.ca/Pat-Elemans.