



Speech by

## Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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### DEATH OF MS M MITCHELL

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (8.11 pm): Tonight I would like to share a story with this House, a story that is not unfamiliar to those who are privileged to sit in this parliament and serve our communities. There is no-one in this chamber who can claim to have made it here on their own. We are here because of hard work by committed, loyal and dedicated family members, friends, party members and supporters.

Today I pay tribute to a friend and party member who was dear to me and dear to a lot of my colleagues both past and present. Her name was Marion Ann Mitchell and she was born on 20 October 1940. Sadly, Marion passed away last week on 27 August at the age of 66 after a long battle with cancer. To her mother, Eileen, go my sympathies and those of the entire Queensland Nationals. Eileen will miss her daughter dearly, as will Marion's son Stuart, his wife Deborah and their new daughter Ava. Our sincere sympathies also go to Marion's sisters, Maureen and Diane, and their families.

It is so easy to say that someone worked 'for you', but in the case of Marion Mitchell you have to say that she definitely worked 'with you'. This was the case for me. It was the case for my friends not in this chamber now, former premiers Rob Borbidge and Russell Cooper, and she was also a dear friend of Penny Cooper. Prior to working with Mike Horan, Marion ran her own business and before that worked extensively for the Queensland Nationals organisation, proving herself to be an invaluable and irreplaceable asset to Sir Robert Sparkes and, over the years, the entire National Party. That was underlined earlier this week when former Queensland Attorney-General, Paul Clauson, gave her eulogy at St John's Cathedral here in Brisbane.

You only had to meet Marion once to remember her. I can recall vividly the very day and the very spot I first met her. It was Mackay in 1988 at the party's conference. As we recall that period in history, there certainly was not a lot of humour amongst Nationals, but Marion had a humour all right. It was a trademark humour that was brutal, but brutal in the nicest way imaginable. She had a frankness about her that was refreshing in a political environment so often dominated by 'yes men'. And she had a soft spot, almost an angelically caring attitude that she could quickly counterbalance by giving you a good verbal clip around the ear if you did something stupid.

Politics, on all sides, is so often dominated by the wannabes, the so-called crack political advisers, crack media operatives and crack campaigners. But Marion was one of those who actually understood the basics. She understood that to win an election was a seat-by-seat strategy and she understood that to win a seat you needed to get the basics right. 'Do you know how to scrutineer?' she would ask. 'Do you actually know how to stop a vote going to Labor that should be yours? How many doors have you knocked and show me on a map? Are your posters printed? Are your pamphlets printed? Have you lodged them with Australia Post?' And of course she always knew the answer to these questions before you and better than you.

Marion is going to be dearly missed by us all. So many of us on this side of the House owe our political careers to her, and we owe our enormous thanks for her deep friendship. We shall miss her. Rest in peace, Marion Mitchell.

