



**Jeanne E. Neese, Esq.**

***A Tribute***

Anyone who rides a public transportation bus, train or trolley in Pennsylvania is, in large measure, indebted to Jeanne Neese, who passed away April 28, 2010.

As Director of Government Affairs for SEPTA, for over three decades, Jeanne was instrumental in the drafting and enactment of legislation that has provided funding not only for SEPTA, but also for every public transit system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Jeanne was a master of the esoteric and exacting art of writing complex legislation.

But writing legislation is only the end product of a political and legislative process involving countless political constituencies, agendas and egos. While Jeanne certainly recognized that she represented by far the largest transit agency in Pennsylvania, she astutely understood that in the political maelstrom of Harrisburg, all boats rise and fall together, and consensus rules. Jeanne was a consensus builder. She brought people together for the common good.

Jeanne created the concept and was author of legislation that provided hundreds of millions of dollars to transit agencies for the seemingly arcane subject of asset management - basically money to properly maintain vehicles and facilities. The result was an immeasurable improvement in transit maintenance, which, in the long run, actually saved taxpayers millions of dollars. This program was embraced by the Clinton Administration and became the national standard.

Jeanne also played a critically important role in the passage of the landmark Act 44 legislation, which, for the first time, rationalized state funding for transit operations by creating a predictable source.

Since Jeanne's untimely passing, tributes have flowed from across the Commonwealth, not solely to her political and legal skills, but especially to her moral strength, passion, humanity – and humor; her deft and warm gift of bringing often divergent people together, and engendering a sense of trust and a comfort that all transit providers – large, medium and rural - serve an important role deserving of government support. This is her greatest legacy.