

# LaDDC News

## A Tribute to Council Chair April Dunn July 6, 1986 – March 28, 2020

March 29, 2020

It is with great sadness that the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council announces the passing of our Chair, April Dunn. She was an incredibly strong advocate for people with disabilities and dedicated Chair. The Council is forever grateful for her beautiful life and disability work; it is without a doubt that her legacy will remain within the disability community long after her passing. As the Council and the state of Louisiana both mourn her passing and celebrate her impactful life, we ask that you keep her mother, Joannette, and grandmother, Gloria, in your thoughts and prayers. Below are expressions of April's life and legacy from Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards and Incoming Council Chair Randall Brown.



### Governor John Bel Edwards:



*Today with deep sadness, I announce the passing of 33-year old April Dunn, who succumbed to complications from COVID-19. April was a dedicated staff member who served in the Governor's Office of Disabilities Affairs and a tireless advocate for people with disabilities.*

*On behalf of First Lady Donna Edwards and my entire administration, it is with heavy hearts that we mourn the loss of our dear April. She brightened everyone's day with her smile, was a tremendous asset to our team and an inspiration to everyone who met her. She lived her life to the fullest and improved the lives of countless Louisianans with disabilities. April worked hard as an advocate for herself and other members of the disability community.*

*She served as the chair of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, and when I created the State As A Model Employer Taskforce, April told me how much she wanted to be part of it because of her struggles to find meaningful employment. I was proud to have an advocate like April on the task force and on my staff. She set a great example for how other businesses could make their workforce more inclusive. I ask the entire state to join us in prayer for April's mother Joannette and her grandmother Gloria.*

## Incoming Council Chair Randall Brown:

*Once in a great while a person crosses your path that just by knowing them you are made a better person for the experience. In my case and in the case of Louisiana's entire disability community that person was April Dunn. A tireless advocate who saw injustices and wanted to set them right not tomorrow, not some day in the future but right now!*

*She taught me to see not a policy or a law but the people behind it...the people who needed it. She also taught me the value and joy of unconditional love.*

*She always asked me how I was as soon as we would meet to begin our work together before EVERY meeting, and in four years there have been many. She always asked how my family was. When I told her my boss had cancer she would always ask how was he doing? She knew your birthday, from memory, and would say I hope you have a good one, every year. When she looked at you the love in her eyes was as visible as the sun in sky.*



*She was a person who didn't simply love. She was the living personification of it. It poured out of her every day, everywhere she went. She had every reason to dislike me, in the past year, and I wouldn't blame her if she had, but you know what? She chose to love me harder and my love for her grew too.*

*The Council we serve put us together as their leadership team. It's a gift I am most grateful for tonight. To serve with and under her was a great joy and privilege that will forever be etched in my heart and mind as one of the best lessons in leadership and love I will ever know.*

*Tonight our hearts are broken, and we must mourn her loss, our loss, but every time we work together, every time we choose to love each other, especially when it's not easy to do, every time we fight for what's right for the voiceless April will be there. And tonight that is the only true comfort many of us have.*

*Madam Chair, good and faithful friend, Louisiana and her people are better because you lived. Rest well, and watch over us. Job well done. Life was better with you in it for us all. Coronavirus took your body but will never take your legacy or your love. God bless and keep you forever in the peace that only he can give.*

*Love always, your vice chair and fortunate friend...*

*Randall*

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