

Cycling Advocate Claire Morissette Passes Away
by Robert Silverman

July 26, 2007 (Montreal, QC) - Claire Morissette, a leading advocate of bicycles and bicycling facilities, passed away on Friday, July 20 at the age of 57 after a long illness. Described as a "modern Joanne of Arc" of bicycling, Morissette devoted much of her life working to promote the use of bicycles in Canada and in developing countries. She also worked to reduce the number of automobiles in Canada by promoting car sharing. Morissette worked with various non-profit groups to advance her beliefs. She was also a strong feminist and an author.

Morissette was the founder and president of Cyclo Nord-Sud, an organization that collects and donates used bicycles from all over Quebec, repairs them and sends the bikes to developing countries. Since its founding in 1999, Cyclo Nord-Sud has sent more than 20,000 such bicycles to poor people, mostly women, in 13 countries.

Morissette also initiated the Montreal branch of Communauto, the oldest car sharing organization in North America. Morissette served as co-president the Montreal-based bicycle lobby group, Le Monde a Bicyclette, from 1976 to 1997. A strong feminist, Morissette believed that bicycles helped to empower poor women who did not have easy access to cars. In 1994, Morissette published *Deux roues, un avenir* (Two Wheels, One Future), a book that espoused her beliefs.

For all her adult life, Morissette fought, in a committed, passionate and astonishingly disinterested way to democratize and de-pollute urban transport in Montreal and to bring bicycles to those who needed them in the world. She worked tirelessly for the people of Montreal and for our planet, yet lived in poverty all her adult life. For these exceptional ecological contributions, Claire Morissette will long be remembered.

To learn more about Morissette's work:

Cyclo Nord-Sud
Communauto
Le Monde a Bicyclette
Deux roues, un avenir

Note : Robert Silverman co-founded Le Monde à Bicyclette and worked closely with Morissette for many years.