



Age and Youth in Action

May 5, 2016

**Remarks by Joan Davis, Gray Panther at the
Maggie Kuhn Award to Gray Panthers, NYC Network
By Presbyterian Senior Services.**

Thank you. It is hard to say in a few brief moments what is most important in one's life.

Maggie Kuhn was, first and foremost, interested in Social Justice. This is more than about age. It happens that we are living in a rather fearful world. It is **very** fearful. I might say, "We are encouraged to be afraid."

Most Muslims are just like us in the rest of the world. But, that is not what people are encouraged to see. We happen to be scared out of our wits. Yet, we have our bullies and our tyrants. But we don't see that we are like them and they are like us. We don't see the basic humanity. And, that is a very sorry thing for the world.

It would be better to be more afraid of what we are doing to our planet. That's a very important thing -- because, soon, we will be in the history books of our relatives. We will be in an unfamiliar photograph in an album. We should be more concerned with what we are doing to our planet -- its climate -- and its **people**.

What we are doing with our drones -- and our sophisticated military equipment -- is shameful. It is absolutely shameful! And I think Maggie Kuhn would say, "Right on!"

We know that we are fighting for Social Justice. But, we have to know what we are fighting! It is control. And, it's endemic. It's in the banks and in the mergers; in the legal loopholes for tax evasion; in the hedge funds. As a religious community, we must honor the fact that the hedge fund is like gambling; and, we know that the Bible says there is something wrong with that. Also, the subsidies we provide to the military --and to other "select industries" are deplorable.

Inequity is the product. And, we are adding to this inequity by the privatization of our schools and the ever-increasing industrialization of our prisons. Our jails are burgeoning with people. Never before has there ever been such large numbers of people in jail.

This is contempt. It is "economic terrorism." It makes people scared, frustrated and miserable. And, it is outrageous.

Maggie Kuhn stood for-- and encouraged -- "Social Justice." This is what the world needs. And increasingly, people are filling the streets demanding it. Therein lies our greatest hope. People are seeing that things need to be changed at a very basic level.

And the number of new groups that are taking shape to fight for social justice --and the many different areas of it-- makes me proud to be a human being. We are grateful for this ever-growing opposition to the ill will that people have for others. The Gray Panthers stand with -- and are in coalition-- with them.

And so we thank The Presbyterian Social Services for recognizing our work and for encouraging us to continue.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis