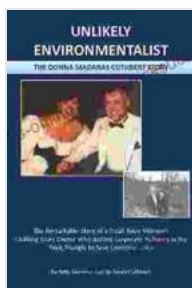


Unlikely Environmentalist: The Donna Madaras Cuthbert Story

In the quaint town of Woburn, Massachusetts, an extraordinary woman named Donna Madaras Cuthbert emerged as an unlikely environmentalist. Her journey from an unassuming housewife to a fierce advocate for environmental justice is a testament to the power of one individual to make a lasting impact. Faced with toxic pollution that threatened her family and community, Donna refused to be silenced. She rallied her neighbors, fought against powerful corporations, and ultimately achieved a landmark victory that changed the course of environmental regulation.



Unlikely Environmentalist: The Donna Madaras Cuthbert Story by Kelly Jameson

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 39716 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 325 pages
Lending : Enabled



Early Life and Family

Donna Madaras was born in 1923 in Woburn, Massachusetts. She grew up in a working-class family, where environmental concerns were not a priority.

In 1946, she married Charles Cuthbert, a veteran who had returned home from World War II. The couple settled in Woburn and raised four children.

The Woburn Water Crisis

In the 1960s, Woburn residents began experiencing an alarming spike in leukemia and other childhood cancers. Donna's own daughter, Judy, was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 7. Desperate for answers, Donna teamed up with other concerned parents to investigate the cause of the illnesses.

Their investigations led them to two local chemical companies, Beatrice Foods and W.R. Grace, which had been dumping toxic chemicals into the town's water supply. The chemicals, including trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE), were known carcinogens.

Activism and Advocacy

Donna and the other concerned parents formed the Citizens for a Better Environment (CBE) in 1982. They organized rallies, public hearings, and a boycott of Beatrice Foods to raise awareness and demand action. Donna's husband, Charles, became the group's legal counsel, using his legal skills to challenge the chemical companies in court.

The companies initially denied any wrongdoing, but mounting evidence and public pressure forced them to take responsibility. The resulting lawsuits became one of the most significant environmental cases in American history. In 1990, Grace and Beatrice Foods settled for \$8 million, one of the largest toxic tort settlements at the time.

Landmark Legislation

The Woburn case not only brought justice to the victims of toxic pollution but also led to landmark legislation. The Massachusetts Toxic Use Reduction Act of 1990, also known as the "Donna Madaras Cuthbert Act," requires companies to report and reduce their use of toxic chemicals. This law has been recognized as a model for similar legislation across the country.

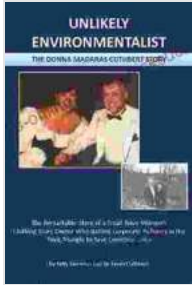
Recognition and Impact

Donna Madaras Cuthbert's activism had a profound impact on Woburn and beyond. She was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1991, the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism in 1994, and the National Wildlife Federation's Conservation Achievement Award in 1995.

Her story inspired countless others to stand up for environmental justice. The CBE became a model for grassroots organizing and community activism. The Woburn case also raised awareness about the dangers of toxic pollution and the importance of protecting public health.

Donna Madaras Cuthbert passed away in 2004, but her legacy continues to live on. She is remembered as a fearless advocate for environmental justice and a symbol of the power of one person to make a difference.

Donna Madaras Cuthbert's journey from ordinary housewife to unlikely environmentalist is an inspiring reminder that anyone can make a difference. Her courage, determination, and unwavering belief in the power of community led to a landmark victory that changed the course of environmental regulation and protected countless lives. Her story serves as a testament to the indomitable spirit of those who fight for a just and healthy world.

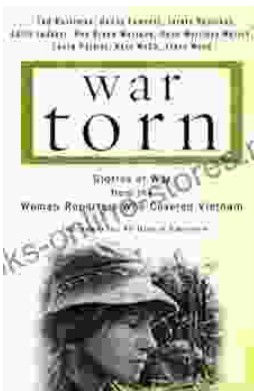


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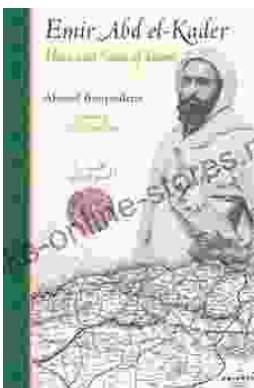
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