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Burfitt-Dons, Louise Olivia

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Louise Burfitt-Dons, FRSA (née Byres; born 22 October 1953) is a British writer and social commentator, humanitarian and political activist who is best known for her anti-bullying work as the founder of the charity Act Against Bullying. On 20 September 2014, Burfitt-Dons was adopted as the Conservative Party candidate for MP for Nottingham North in the 2015 general election.

Early years and family

Louise Olivian Byres was born to Olive and Ian Byres in a small desert hospital at Magwa, in the Burgan district just south of Kuwait City. Her father worked for Kuwait Oil Company and her mother ran a kindergarten. She had an elder brother, Laurence. She attended the Anglo-American School in Kuwait, and later the Hertfordshire and Essex High School and the Ashford School for Girls in Kent. Burfitt-Dons' father died of cancer when she was 26. During his illness she obtained a liquor license and took over the running of The White Horse in East Bergholt so she could care for him.^{[clarification needed][citation needed]}

Burfitt-Dons has two daughters, Brooke Burfitt^{[1][2][3]} and Arabella (b. 1992),^[4] by her pilot husband Donald Burfitt-Dons, a New Zealander whom she met and married in London in 1982 while he was on an overseas basing with Qantas. The couple lived in Australia between 1982–93 where Louise worked as an actress and wrote plays for the Sydney stage. She co-starred in a dinner theatre show with Andrew Harwood in 1988. She currently lives between Nottingham and London.^{[5][6]}

Social Commentary

Louise has appeared on Sky News, Good Morning America, Channel Four News, ITV News London, ITN, BBC Breakfast and Talk Radio Europe, BBC Surrey and BBC Sussex, BBC Oxford, LBC, The World Tonight. She has written on social affairs and political issues for a range of blogs including Conservative Home. She is a regular news reviewer on the Ian Collins (radio presenter) show Roundtable on LBC.

Boosting Britain

In 2012, after visiting a range of different businesses,^[7] she set up an online initiative to encourage and promote new ideas and companies which were helping Britain . It covers infrastructure, defence industry, education as well as motivational factors.^{[8][9]} She has suggested more honorary titles for engineers would help to bolster their image and help with the skills shortage^[10]

Campaigning

Since setting up Act Against Bullying, Burfitt-Dons has been outspoken on the ill-effects of tribalism in society as a speaker and writer. She has advocated that tribalism is on the increase and has been taking effect in all forms of modern society leading to social unrest. Feeling the need to express what the public were confiding in her she designed a range of campaigns to promote human dignity and individuality in modern society.

She designed the Cool to be Kind Campaign in 2000; two years later she founded the National Decency Campaign in 2002.^[11] and, in 2006, the "Grade Not Degrade" campaign. The Scotsman quoted her as suggesting Celebrity Big Brother was legitimising the growing trend of bullying behaviour in classrooms around the country.^[12] She spoke at the Conservative Women's Organisation Forum [3] at the House of Commons on cyber bullying claiming that today "children have to be as savvy as celebrities but without the pr support". In response to the growing trend of internet abuse she designed the CyberKind Campaign, which was launched on Remembrance Day (11 November) 2009.

Burfitt-Dons founded the UK Kindness Movement and co-founder of Kindness Day UK.^{[13][14]} She appeared on BBC Breakfast on the first Kindness Day UK on 13 November 2010 alongside Kathy Lette who claimed that English people were condescending and unfriendly [4]. In 2007 she began campaigning on global warming and has said that "climate change may be the ultimate issue that unites us all".^[citation needed]

Awards

In 2006 she was nominated as an Angel Hero for the US My Hero project In May 2009 she was invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of her work with children as well as to acknowledge her efforts as a campaigner and speaker on humanitarian and environmental issues.^[citation needed]

Global warming

Burfitt-Dons co-founded the Global Warming Alliance which was set up in January 2006 to find solutions to the crisis. On 2 December 2008 she launched the Global Warming Hotspot [5] channel on YouTube.[6]. She spearheaded the international Hot Women

Campaign [7] which encouraged women to become more active in climate change issues and reduce carbon emissions and significantly raised awareness of the differences between male and female thinking on the issues.^[15] The Scotsman quoted Burfitt-Dons' claims that "the relentless rise in CO2 emissions is incrementally raising planetary temperatures, increasing water vapour in the atmosphere with a commensurate rise in rainfall, and ever stronger wind patterns randomly occurring across the globe."^[16]

Right Wing Feminism

Burfitt-Dons got involved with women's issues because of her charity work as a motivational speaker and mentor. In October 2009 she was part of the freshers feminist debate at Cambridge University [8] [9] with Cosmopolitan Magazine editor Louise Court and Edwina Currie. Burfitt-Dons set up the Royal Society of Arts' Women's Speakers' Network whose mission is to "raise women's profile in society by greater involvement in public speaking". She chaired the launch event at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers on 9 November 2010 in a public debate entitled "The Great Female Debate: Do Women Speak Too much or too little?"^[17] She believes that some feminist groups have hijacked and radicalised the equality movement and has catalysed a debate around conservative feminism calling on more gender realism via her blog The Right Wing Feminist.^{[18][19]}

Politics

In September 2014 she was selected to fight the 2015 General Election for the Conservative Party in Nottingham North.^{[20][21][22] [23]} She clashed with the incumbent MP Graham Allen over his criticism of small businesses in Nottingham North^[24]

Controversy

In 1999, she criticised the treatment of an incident ^[clarification needed] involving her daughter, Brooke, and Princess Beatrice of York.^[25]

Publications and plays

- The Counsellor (October 2000)^[26]
- Painkillers (June 2001)^[27]
- Act Against Bullying (August 2002)^[28]
- A Christmas Riddle (June 2000)^[29]
- Valentine Card (June 2001)^[30]
- How to Catch A Man (September 1991)^[31]