

In Memoriam.
Ana-Karina Schneider (1975-2024)

It is with a heavy heart that I write this tribute to Karina, our beloved colleague and friend, who passed away too soon, earlier this year. Karina was an amazing individual, gifted in so many ways that it will impossible to refer to all of them. To begin with, she was an invaluable member of our *East-West Cultural Passage* team which she supported with all heart and energy, while also being the irreplaceable editor-in-chief of *American, British and Canadian Studies* journal which she has brought to excellence. However, she was, first and foremost, a generous and caring friend to us. Her luminous presence, her warm smile, and her heartfelt laughter brightened our days. Like a ray of sun, she touched our lives with her gentle spirit and open heart. Conversations with her were a pure delight, whether they were on academic topics – which she mastered exemplarily – or on topics about daily life. She always found a kind word or a witty or humorous remark, sometimes a mere knowing smile, to alleviate our frustration or to bring a smile to our faces during stressful times. Her outstanding professionalism, dedication, and passion – for teaching, doing research, or any academic endeavor – were unique, and inspired all of us to strive for excellence.

I met Karina almost thirty years ago, when I was a mentor for student teachers at one of the high schools in Sibiu, and I was impressed by her professional approach to teaching and her desire to help young high school students discover the beauty of the English language. Shortly after graduation, she became a tenured member at the university, and, after a few years, I myself competed

for a position at the university. This is how she became my mentor and friend, and together we negotiated the challenges of the academic system... until one September morning, when it all ended abruptly.

It feels unfair to talk about Karina in the past tense because she had so much more to give to everyone – to her family, her friends, her students, her colleagues, and to the national and international academic community. Memories come pouring in as I am writing this, remembering her for the special human being she was. I, for one, will always recall her as “the friend in need” who truly proved to be “a friend indeed,” and the heartfelt exchange about our friendship and professional collaboration, just a few months before her passing, will be forever engraved in my heart.

Karina was a doer whose capacity for work was endless. She excelled in research, signing first-rate studies on William Faulkner, Anne Enright or Jane Austen, to name just a few. At the same time, she was always ready to help colleagues in any situation, no matter how difficult or unmanageable it might have seemed.

Among her many academic accomplishments, mention should be made of her exquisite organizational skills, demonstrated during the “East-West Cultural Passage” conferences organized at our university for many years. As one of the main organizers, Karina was often the heart and soul of the conferences. She liked to bring people together, to help them connect – professionally and personally – and she succeeded in doing this during our conferences. Often, the topics of conferences reflected her passions, for example, “Literature and Music” in 2012 and “Reading Matters” in 2016. I cherish the memories of the professional and personal interactions we had with many international scholars who accepted her invitation to attend our conferences. And I also cherish the time we spent organizing the conference, especially our informal meetings to discuss last-minute details, with student volunteers and colleagues. Somehow, Karina always knew how to alleviate our physical and emotional fatigue with her grace and wit.

Karina also loved to travel and combined her passion for travel with her academic pursuits when she participated in

numerous conferences all over the world, generously sharing her professional expertise. She felt at home everywhere and loved to discover not only new places but especially new people.

Karina's spirit will continue to inspire us to become better – as scholars, researchers, students, and human beings. The many lessons she has taught us about friendship, generosity, integrity, and life in general will not be lost on us. Farewell, gentle soul!

“Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave.
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.”
(Edna St. Vincent Millay).

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