
Obituary

Christine Z. Howe

Our community of leisure scholars lost a significant contributor and colleague in the recent death of Christine Z. Howe (1951–1997). Chris was an educator's educator. Her tireless work habits enabled her to produce an impressive number of publications and presentations. She was often on the cutting edge of contemporary topics. She lobbied for under represented topics such as evaluation, multi-cultural programming, qualitative research, and the disenfranchised well before such were considered fashionable by the majority. Chris was committed to excellence. Her intelligence and concurrent drive to accomplish tasks meant that she did more and did it better than many of us, and in far less time. She brought a passion to her many endeavors, and thus contributed in her various positions of professional and academic leadership, classroom instruction, student advising, and one-on-one interactions with colleagues.

Chris was known for holding up her end of the bargain, usually in record time. Her support was constant, undaunting, and not boastful. She took personal joy in seeing others succeed. She assisted others in realizing success. And she was one of the few of us who would take the time to share the words "good job" or "congratulations" in a note or card.

It was a treat to see Chris when she was delighted. She expressed this side of herself in playful, whimsical ways. Within a day or so of moving to California in the early eighties, Chris found pure joy in experiencing her first earthquake and seeing nude sun bathers all in the same day. She told a friend, "now my life is complete." She was joking, of course, but charming in her delight.

Chris was a very private person. Yet she was also one to express publicly, precisely, and eloquently truisms that deserved to be heard. While her private-vs-advocate self may have mystified some, it was that part of Chris which would not allow her to be passive when something mattered or needed to be said. She spoke her values, she was a watchdog over ethical standards and issues of fairness, and she acted upon what she believed. Chris took the more honest and less popular road. She was remarkably straightforward and direct. If it had to be said or done, she would do it. It was a matter of integrity and a sense of loyalty to herself to be her best.

It is Chris' gentle soul, her echoes of laughter, and her focused concern for others that remain uppermost in many of our minds. It was not the

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number of articles and chapters (though there were many), the number of presentations (though they were often), the number of students (though there were hundreds), nor the professional assignments (though there were dozens of boards, councils, editorships, and committees). It was not the number of pages in her academic vita (though Chris' was impressive) that was so endearing, nor was it receiving all the honors and awards recognizing her distinguished scholarly contributions (and there were many of those, too). Rather it was the little things Chris did or said that made differences in peoples' lives that were revered and will be greatly missed. Susan "Boon" Murray, who knew Chris as a research mentor, co-author, co-presenter, and chairperson, quoted from Winnie the Pooh, "She leaves an awful hole."

Gaylene Carpenter