

## **Memorial for Tina Malcolmsen**

30 August 2020, *Written by Lillian Nayder – Bates College*

Tina came to Bates from Yale in 1991; what she accomplished in her twenty-five years at the college was really remarkable. She was twice chair of the English Department as well as chair of what was then called the Program in Women and Gender Studies. She helped to completely remake the college curriculum by building issues of power and politics into what had been the "traditional" approach to literature, particularly in the Early Modern period.

Tina was hired to teach 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century English Lit; but the courses she taught, in fact, had titles and subjects that included "Shakespeare: Race and Gender"; "Orientalism"; "Politics and the Theater"; "Colonialism and Literature in Early Modern England"; "Pre-1800 Women Writers"; as well as "Newswatch," taught with Carole Taylor, and a class on the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill Senate hearings. Her students spoke highly of her teaching and with good reason – she was very thoughtful, innovative and equitable as a teacher.

We all know about Tina's work for social justice, in Portland and beyond. But she was also a fierce advocate for equity at Bates College. When it seemed clear that the Personnel

Committee at the college wouldn't have any women members for a period of time, she organized faculty and spoke out against that prospect at faculty meetings. She was happy to go head to head with the Dean of Faculty - with **any** dean, but especially with Jill Reich - and often did so when she was Chair of English. When problems with the college administration arose, she reminded us of our power to call special faculty meetings - and to voice and to **act on** our discontent. In March 2011, she helped to organize a panel to address anti-Islamic and Anti-Arab prejudice at Bates and the threat of hate speech.

Tina was a very original thinker and an outstanding scholar, and her scholarship infused her teaching, as it does for many of us. While she was at Bates, she published a number of books: *Heart-Work: George Herbert and the Protestant Ethic* in 1999; *George Herbert: A Literary Life* in 2004; *Studies of Skin Color in the Early Royal Society: Boyle, Cavendish, Swift* in 2013; and an edition of Edward Herbert's *The Amazon* in 2016. On that project, one of her two collaborators was Matteo Pangallo, a former student. In 2016, after her retirement from Bates, she was a senior scholar in residence at Cornell, and in the summer of 2017, she hosted, at Bates, the meeting of the International

Cavendish Society - her book on skin color was the central conference topic.

Most recently, Tina wrote the entry for Magdalen Herbert - the mother of George and Edward - for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. After its publication last fall, she and I talked about the prospect of her writing a full-length biography of Magdalen, a project that I strongly encouraged her to pursue.

When Tina retired in 2016, Sanford Freedman spoke of her brilliant wit, her generosity and her openness - and I certainly experienced all of those traits in my many years and adventures with Tina Malcolmson. She read and helped to shape my biography of Catherine Dickens - draft chapter by draft chapter - as I did her book on *Skin Color*. We often read our talks to each other before we presented them. Summer after summer, we tromped around London and the UK - sometimes in the company of my teenage boys, whom she tolerated with a lot of grace, considering how they behaved. She would often email me from her favorite seat in the Rare Book Room of the British Library - seat #371 - before we would go out to dinner or see a play. You may know that Tina was a devoted Red Sox fan - but she was also an **astute** amateur theater critic and I relished hearing her comments on the productions we'd seen. In 2009, we were both left reeling by a

brilliant production of *Streetcar*, starring Rachel Weisz; but Tina's thoughts on the play helped us cope with our distress.

Literary scholars are famous for the marginalia they scrawl in books - all those insightful asides about what they're reading. I recently opened my copy of the *Good Food* cookbook and saw written, in Tina's hand, on the title page, "To Lillian - Lamb Tagine, p. 113." I could say **so much more** about Tina - not only her excellent tagine dinners but also her kindness to my two boys when they were growing up, among many other things. But I'll end with one very brief anecdote that I think captures her humor and her engagement as a scholar - her account of meeting with Michael Hunter, the head of the Boyle papers, in 2007 - when she described their lunch at the Birkbeck cafeteria at the University of London, and her experience of "happily disagreeing" with him about Boyle as they ate Aztec chicken and chips, and drank their cappuccino! To "happily disagree" was the mark of Tina's vivacity and intellect - a strength of her scholarship - and one of the many traits that I will sorely miss.

Thanks very much.