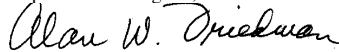


DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

**REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR
BARBARA J. HARLOW**

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Professor Barbara J. Harlow, Department of English, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

**IN MEMORIAM
BARBARA J. HARLOW**

Barbara Harlow, Louann and Larry Temple Professor of English Literatures in the English Department at the University of Texas, died of cancer on 28 January 2017. Barbara, the daughter of Lawrence and Lucille Harlow, was born in 1948. She received her B.A. in French and Philosophy from Simmons College, her M.A. in Romance Languages and Literatures from the University of Chicago, and her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Barbara was additionally educated at the Freie Universität in Berlin and École Normale Supérieure and École Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris. Barbara's academic career began in high theory: she wrote her doctorate on Marcel Proust and produced a translation of Jacques Derrida's *Spurs* in 1979 (something she later dismissed as "juvenilia"). But during her first academic post, at the American University in Cairo, the trajectory of her career changed utterly. She became passionate about contemporary Arab literature, the legacies of Empire in the Middle East, and the Palestinian question, and she produced her landmark translation of Ghassan Kanafani's *Palestine's Children*. In 1985, she brought her passions and her political commitment to the English Department at The University of Texas at Austin.

In 1986, with her colleagues Ben Lindfors, Wahneema Lubiano, and Ramon Saldívar, Barbara founded the Ethnic and Third World concentration, E3W, which was dedicated to studying the literature of recently decolonized nations alongside the literature of ethnic minorities in the United States. Her book *Resistance Literature*, which appeared in 1987, was the first English-language study of the fiction produced during Third World national liberation struggles. Lucid and direct, the book announced her departure from the world of high theory and her entry into what we still call postcolonial studies, though she hated the term because it implied that colonialism was over.

The enthusiastic reception of *Resistance Literature* led to numerous international speaking engagements: Barbara was an avid traveler, in both her physical and literary life. Her second book, *Barred: Women, Writing, and Political Detention*, which appeared in 1992, engaged with writings by and about women political prisoners in Northern Ireland, El Salvador, Israel, Egypt, South Africa, and the United States. Her next book, *After Lives: Legacies of Revolutionary Writing* (1996), focused on the works of assassinated political authors: Kanafani, the South African Ruth First, and Roque Dalton from El Salvador. In 2003, *Archives of Empire: Volume 1. From The East India Company to the Suez Canal* was published by Duke University Press and the second volume, *The Scramble for Africa*, followed in 2004. Both volumes were co-edited with Mia Carter. These books made available for students and researchers many of the key primary historical documents of the British Empire, marking Harlow's commitment to understanding the deep historical roots of current global crises.

Working across disciplines, regions, and national languages – in close collaboration with colleagues across campus in African Studies, Comparative Literature, the South Asia Institute, Middle Eastern Studies, and the School of Law – Barbara demonstrated the vitality and necessity of the humanities in understanding the crises of the contemporary world and building intellectual foundations for resisting them. Over the past thirteen years, Barbara devoted a great deal of attention to developing interdisciplinary opportunities on campus for the study

of human rights and social justice. From 2004 until her death, she served as a founding member of the steering committee of the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice, housed at UT's School of Law, where she also played leading roles in the editorial committee for the Working Paper Series, the selection committee for the Audre Rapoport Prize for Scholarship on Gender and Human Rights, and on numerous ad-hoc committees. She was the Center's acting director in fall 2009, when she also taught a course in the School of Law.

Barbara also turned much of her attention to undergraduate education during the last decade of her life. She was central to a collaboration between the Rapoport Center and the Bridging Disciplines Program to establish a certificate in human rights and social justice. She chaired the faculty panel for the certificate, designed the curriculum for its core course, and regularly mentored students in the program, both in their classroom work and in their internships. She also regularly taught signature courses for first-year undergraduates, most recently on the imprint of drones in contemporary film and literature.

Barbara was an original. From the day she came to Texas to the week she died, her clothes exemplified her stylish rejection of style: she wore idiosyncratic loose-fitting trousers that she sewed herself, always to the same pattern, accompanied by plain t-shirts and big silver earrings. Her lovely house in Clarksville was sparsely furnished and her kitchen was fuller of cats than of comestibles, but asceticism had its limits: there was always wine in the fridge, and sometimes there was hummus too. Barbara loved opening her home, having meetings there, and throwing post-defense and post-E3W Sequels Conference parties. That Harlow kitchen was a sacred space; she made it a place of comradeship, radical plotting, commiserating, and celebrating. Many vibrant things were launched there: friendships, projects, political actions, and careers.

Barbara's ethical humanism, commitment to liberation, and unswerving concern for the wretched of the earth became the common moral backbone for generations of graduate students who followed her into this comparative and cross-disciplinary field of study. Barbara's academic children are teaching now all over the country. On 27-28 October 2017, at a memorial conference at UT's Harry Ransom Center, *Barbara Harlow: The Sequel*, her former students—many now distinguished professors -- came together from across the country to pay tribute to Barbara and her scholarly legacy. Her former students gleefully reported tales of their intense scholarly apprenticeships with Barbara. Permanent mental recordings of the simultaneously exacting and supportive tone of her voice and impressions of that famous Harlow look were warmly and humorously shared. Dr. Louis Mendoza, now Director of the School of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies at Arizona State University, triumphantly recalled intellectually challenging Barbara on a point of debate, and winning the argument, with a nod from her and a respectful touché. Dr. Fran Buntman, a Professor of Sociology at The George Washington University, told the audience that one of Barbara's "simple," probing questions had served as an analytical and ethical guide from the genesis of her dissertation and throughout her scholarly career. That plain but profound question that Barbara urged Fran to consider was: "What is the current status of hope?"

Remarkably, Barbara maintained close contact with her former colleagues in Cairo over the past three decades, and even returned to serve as interim chair of the American University of Cairo's Department of English and Comparative Literature in 2006-7. She clearly left her mark. The department, with collaboration from Ain Shams University, Cairo's non-sectarian public university, hosted an all-day International Graduate Student Barbara Harlow Memorial Conference on 28 February 2018, at AUC's Oriental Hall in Tahrir Square.

Barbara's Clarksville neighbors didn't know she was a famous academic, but they valued her faithful participation in events like the supper club, Clarksville Christmas, and the neighborhood Fun Fest. She was renowned for her genuine interest in her neighbors' children, and her commitment to the community. She taught her child neighbors how to swim and started a Book Buddies reading club for them. Barbara who, as her students at all levels can attest, was often assertively inspirational, directing the children to lead the discussions and collaborate as engaged readers and thinkers. Barbara's Clarksville neighbors will miss her comings and goings, and the omnipresent light burning in her study window.

Barbara is survived by her sister Ann Harlow, her sister Karen Kelleher, her brother-in-law Brian, and her beloved nephews and niece, Sean, Ryan, and Katie. With them she spent traditional Christmases, and summers at the beach on Cape Cod, drinking wine and eating crab cakes. She took them all with her to South Africa,

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where they visited the political prison Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated. The children say the trip transformed their view of the world.

Tributes to Barbara Harlow appeared in journals and reviews across the globe, many of which she had been centrally involved in launching and supporting, and for which she edited, wrote, and reviewed. These include *Race and Class* (U.K.), *ALIF: Journal of Comparative Poetics* (Cairo, Egypt), *Middle East Report* (MERIP), and *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*. In the December 2017 edition of the latter journal, Dr. Tarek El-Ariss paid tribute to Barbara in an obituary essay titled, "Vie héroïque." El-Ariss noted that "Barbara was always at the cutting edge of intellectual commitment, identifying and confronting new sites of power. For her, politics was never a performative gesture or a theoretical articulation but an engagement with history and the material conditions of oppression and disenfranchisement.... Though her passing marks the end of an era at University of Texas Austin, her writing and lessons will continue to resonate far and wide."

On the final day of her life, surrounded by her family and friends, Barbara orchestrated her removal from life support as a celebration of social justice and comradeship: in plastic cups filled with vodka and tonic, we toasted her courage, and we toasted the necessity for and power of opposition. "Resist!" was Barbara's final word, voiced with her frail and determined fist raised in the air. Released from the bondage of tubes and restraints, she was able to smile for the first time in days. Barbara Harlow's *life-long* commitments to literature and history, human rights, anti-imperialism, social justice, and scholarly collaboration live on in her voluminous published works, and the lives and works of her former colleagues, students, and comrades.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Mia Carter (chair), Karen Engle, and Neville Hoad.

Distributed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts on April 30, 2018, and posted under "Memorial Resolutions" at <https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/facultycouncil/Wiki+Home>.