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Tribute to Marguerite Rosenthal

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Book Reviews

A Special Note from the former Book Review Co-Editor

We are saddened by the loss of our colleague and friend, Marguerite Rosenthal. Margy's connection to the *JSSW* is rich and longstanding—she was a college classmate of founding editor Robert Leighninger at Oberlin, sat on the editorial board, and after her retirement from the faculty of Salem State University School of Social Work served as the book review co-editor from 2010-2015. As an activist, policy advocate, social work policy professor, and scholar Margy's work was deeply informed by commitment to the ideal of the public good and the potential of a robust welfare state.

As book review co-editor Margy not only edited each and every book review with her keen eye for grammar, punctuation, and content, but she also wrote 13 reviews, including the highly influential *New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander, and the less known but fascinating *New Deal, New Landscape: The Civilian Conservation Corps and South Carolina's State Parks* by Tara Mitchell Mielnik.

As co-editors of the *JSSW* book review section, Marguerite and I frequently debated which books to review, reached out to new publishers, and scoured the university presses for timely and important titles. In the effort to find the perfect person to review a specific title, Margy reached out to internationally renowned academics as well as doctoral students—and was especially pleased to identify emerging scholars who could write well.

Margy's approach to scholarship enriched the *JSSW* book review section. For example, Trudy Goldberg, a close collaborator and colleague, recalls how in the early 1980s she and Margy embarked on a research agenda to determine if the newly identified feminization of poverty was confined to the United States. Trudy noted how "this took Marguerite to Sweden where she became a first-class scholar of that social democratic welfare state, and later knowledgeable about other European regimes. That led in turn to our partnership in more *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, December 2016, Volume XLIII, Number 4

works and participation in a number of conferences here and abroad." This is but one example of how Margy's pursuit of social justice framed serious research questions, which she pursued with integrity, passion, and collaboration.

Margy was an engaging teacher who brought the history of social welfare policy to social work students, many of them the first in their families to attend college. I know about this first-hand, since Margy served as my faculty mentor at Salem State College. In fact, I was a guest speaker in her class before returning to university for my doctorate, and it was Margy who recruited me to the faculty. As the current chair of Social Welfare Policy at Touro College Graduate School of Social Work, my syllabus remains indebted to hers—and our social work students learn about the Lowell mill girls, the Lynn shoe-worker strike of 1860, the anti-lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, among many other topics that inspire them to find connections to their own experiences and current struggles, such as the Fight for 15 and #blacklivesmatter. Margy's policy syllabus was framed by C. Wright Mills' notion of private troubles and public issues, and Margy's class was a favorite, even among clinically-focused social work students.

What follows are select comments from colleagues and friends of Marguerite's who are connected to the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* as editors, scholars and reviewers. As Margy is honored in different ways in the many, many communities she was part of, we acknowledge her contributions to the JSSW community and how sorely she is missed.

*Jennifer Zelnick, former Book Review Co-editor
Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*

Tribute to Marguerite Rosenthal

Margy will be sorely missed by everyone who wrote reviews for the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* during her term as book review co-editor with Jenn Zelnick. She was an outstanding academic colleague who made a significant contribution to our field. I learned from her constructive feedback on many reviews which often resulted in enjoyable exchanges on wider social and political issues. Her insights drew on a formidable knowledge of the literature and reflected her

strong commitment to social justice. We are diminished by her passing.

*Jim Midgley, University of California, Berkeley
Former Book Review Editor
Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*

Margy Rosenthal was a person of many talents, all of them powerfully developed. Before she became a book review editor, a service for which we are enormously grateful, because it's such a big and important job, she was an Editorial Board member doing regular reviews. She was particularly useful to me by going beyond preparing a basic review and helping me make a decision. I remember one paper which was policy-oriented, international, and quantitative. She helped me through the statistics (gini co-efficients, for god's sake) and their implications for policy.

She was also an activist. I discovered during the Civil Rights era that I wasn't one. I followed the lead of others and cheered from the sidelines. Margy got me involved in a short-lived but interesting action-oriented social work organization. She also persuaded me to accept an invitation to join the Board of the National Jobs for All Coalition. It's a high-powered group and I'm honored to sit quietly among them. My job is to use my New Deal research to demonstrate that we once did, and could again, provide public jobs to prevent starvation, restore dignity, stimulate the economy, and build a lasting legacy of physical and cultural infrastructure. I'll now have to work harder to measure up to Margy's faith in me.

*Robert Leighninger, Editor
Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*

Many of us somewhat grudgingly take on the task of writing book reviews as part of service to our disciplines. When contacted by Marguerite about a review, I always knew she'd considered the pile of books in front of her with my eclectic interests in mind and had found something she knew I'd want to read. She saw the importance of the book review

task and managed it oh so well. I miss getting those books, and I miss her.

Robert Farrant, University of Massachusetts Lowell

My dear friend Margy was both fierce and loving in her commitment to everything she did: her teaching, her social justice activism, her assiduous editing of this reviewers' prose, and her praise for work well done. She was truly one of a kind.

Ted Murphy, Northeastern University

Marguerite was committed to adding quality to the Journal, but more importantly, she was kind and personable. We developed a very satisfying working relationship, and I always enjoyed hearing from her, even after she retired from her position as book editor. She was a dear human being, and I was honored to have been able to work with her.

*Melinda McCormick, Assistant Editor
Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*

You meet someone—a new faculty member—and what was an ordinary day marks the beginning of a lifelong friendship and partnership in scholarship and social activism. An excellent and meticulous researcher, writer and editor, Marguerite Rosenthal was an asset to any faculty and scholarly endeavor. Intense but always ready for a laugh, ever empathetic, small wonder Marguerite excelled in the number and quality of her friendships. And who else had such a conscience, such a capacity for moral indignation on such a range of ills that we were constantly challenged to be at least half as engaged, half as good. What a legacy, and what a loss.

*Trudy Goldberg, National Jobs for All Coalition
Professor Emerita, Adelphi University*