

Barbara C. Hodgdon

Barbara C. Hodgdon, retired professor of English (2005-2012), and an affiliated faculty member of Screen Arts & Cultures, died early March 22, after living so remarkably well with COPD and lung cancer for six years.

She had come to the University of Michigan from Drake University, where she was Ellis and Nelle Levitt Distinguished Professor of English, taught courses in Shakespeare and other literary subjects, initiated a College Honors program, and helped put in place a very early undergraduate Cultural Studies program. She was an exceptionally gifted, generous teacher, and Drake honored her with not one but two universitywide teaching awards.

In the Department of English at Michigan, she taught half a dozen graduate seminars and an equal number of undergraduate courses, served on seven dissertation committees, and organized the “Watching Ourselves Watching Shakespeare” conference/workshop in connection with a Royal Shakespeare Company residency (2006).

She was a member of six professional organizations, served as a Trustee of the Shakespeare Association of America (1998-2001), chaired its Program Committee (2001), was a member of that Program Committee (2012) as well as of the Program Committee for the International Shakespeare Conference (1996), and served on the editorial boards of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Bulletin* and *Journal of the British Shakespeare Association*.

A keen intelligence, wit, and melodious writing style marked Barbara’s extensive published work. She authored *The End Crowns All: Closure and Contradiction in Shakespeare’s History Plays* (Princeton, 1991), *Henry IV: Part One: Texts and Contexts* (Bedford, 1997), *The Shakespeare Trade: Performance and Appropriation* (Pennsylvania, 1998), and *Shakespeare, Performance and the Archive* (Routledge, 2016). She edited the 3rd Arden edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* (Methuen, 2010) and co-edited *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (Blackwell, 2005). She also published scores of essays in professional journals (several often reprinted), and the last one, “The Shakespearean Phonograph” (2017), announced a new direction in her research that has been cut short. She presented just as many invited lectures and conference panel papers — the latter in her much admired (now much missed) warm, rich alto, theatrically trained voice. A renowned scholar of performance, she was a consummate performer in her own right.

She received a Bachelor of Arts in zoology-pre-med at Wellesley College (1953), briefly assisted the Salk polio team, married (as women often did at that time) and raised a family in New Hampshire. After a divorce in the mid-1960s, she acted in a Children’s Theater group and worked in Buddy Haller’s famous Blue Strawberry restaurant in Portsmouth. But she then took the bold step of enrolling in graduate studies and received her Ph.D. in English at the University of New Hampshire (1974).

She is survived by her husband Richard Abel (retired professor in Screen Arts and Cultures), two sons and a daughter, a daughter-in-law (another son died in 2016), and five grandchildren and step-grandchildren.

— Submitted by Richard Abel