

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
Eleanor Winsor Leach
(1937-2018)

Eleanor Winsor Leach, Ruth N. Halls Professor of Classical Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, died on Friday, February 16, at the age of 80. It was characteristic of her indomitable spirit and absolute commitment to her field that she remained active as teacher and scholar up until the very end of her life. She will be remembered as an innovative scholar, a dedicated teacher and mentor, and a major contributor to her profession.

Ellie was born on August 16, 1937, in Providence, Rhode Island. Although her career ultimately brought her to the Midwest, she remained a New Englander at heart who was undaunted by Bloomington winters as a veteran of many a nor'easter. Her undergraduate years at Bryn Mawr College, where she took her A.B. *magna cum laude* with honors in Latin in 1959, not only laid the foundation for her future vocation but steeled her to enter a discipline and profession dominated at that time by men; she spoke frequently and fondly of her years at Bryn Mawr, and was a proud and loyal alumna. Ellie went on to earn her Ph.D. in English and Latin at Yale in 1963 with a dissertation on Ovid and Chaucer, which was a precursor of her interdisciplinary bent throughout her career. Ellie went on to teach at Bryn Mawr (1962-66), Villanova University (1966-71), University of Texas at Austin (1972-74), and Wesleyan University (1974-76). In 1977, she moved to Indiana University, Bloomington, as the only tenured woman in the Department of Classical Studies at the time, and soon became chair (1978-1985); later, she served as Director of Graduate Studies for nearly twenty years (1997-2016).

The wide scope of Ellie's scholarship is attested by the titles of her four books: *Vergil's Eclogues: Landscapes of Experience* (Ithaca, 1974); *The Rhetoric of Space: Literary and Artistic Representations of Landscape in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Princeton, 1988); *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples* (Cambridge, 2004); and *Epistolary Dialogues: Constructions of Self and Others in the Letters of Cicero and the Younger Pliny* (forthcoming with the University of Michigan Press). Ellie sought to read Latin texts against their contemporary social, political, and cultural background. Her subtle analyses of an astonishing range of Latin authors led to new ways of looking at literary texts—at once closely tied to particular authors, yet at the same time reflecting in complex ways various aspects of a broader cultural *mentalité*. Starting in the 1980's, Ellie also began to integrate the study of Roman painting, monuments, and topography into her work on ancient literature, bringing insights to visual narrativity in particular that complemented her explorations of textual narrative. While she eventually won widespread acceptance as a leading exponent of form and meaning in these fields, courage and persistence were required for her to continue these studies, as she met a good deal of resistance from some established figures in the field. Ellie set forth her ideas not only through her books but in over fifty articles and over a hundred invited lectures in the US and the UK, including numerous titled lectures. Her original and creative work won her ACLS, NEH, and Guggenheim fellowships, and many other awards and distinctions.

As teacher and mentor, Ellie had a huge impact on her students, especially on the twenty-six graduate students who wrote dissertations under her guidance at Indiana University. As a classroom instructor, Ellie conveyed her love of ideas, whether in the year-long graduate survey of Latin Literature she taught in alternate years or her introduction to literary criticism for classicists; she encouraged her students to test out new approaches to classical texts, and took great pleasure in the discoveries they made and their pursuit of these discoveries in professional papers, dissertations, articles, and books. Her commitment to her students did not stop when they received their degrees, as she supported and mentored them as they pursued their own careers in classics; she regarded her students as part of her extended family, and took great pleasure in hearing of their personal and professional adventures after leaving Indiana University. Ellie's personal touch was also evident in the way she cultivated a community among graduate students, whom she entertained

frequently in her home (her annual celebration of Horace's birthday was a major event). As one current graduate student put it, "She was just an absolute treasure."

Ellie's service to her profession was remarkable. While her contributions to the Society for Classical Studies (formerly, the American Philological Association) culminated in her presidency in 2005, she served it in a wide range of capacities, from fund-raising to membership on the Publications Committee; as Vice-President for the Program Division (1991-94), she helped usher in a new, more open process for members to participate in, and organize panels, for the annual program. She was a trustee of the Vergilian Society (1978-93) and second and then first vice-president of it (1989-92). Ellie's association with, and deep affection for, the American Academy in Rome, began with service on the Classical Jury (1980-82) and a stay as Resident (Fall 1983). In subsequent years (1986, 1989, 2008), she conducted three NEH summer seminars at the Academy, which in many cases proved seminal for the work of the students and faculty who took part in them; in recent years, she was a familiar presence at the annual Classical Summer School, frequently accompanying the group on site visits and generously volunteering to give guest lectures on monuments, wall painting, and Roman topography. She was active in regional classical associations, especially CAMWS, and closer to home, was a great supporter of the Indiana Classical Conference, and served as president of the central Indiana chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America (1985-87). Less conspicuous, but equally impressive, is the fact that Ellie wrote letters for some 200 tenure and promotion cases, and refereed more than 100 books and 200 articles for various presses and journals.

Although Ellie's vocation as classicist occupied her seven days a week, she had many other interests and passions. She was an avid reader of literature, ancient and modern; a devotee of NPR (she never owned a TV); a lover of opera (every Saturday afternoon, she listened to the Metropolitan Opera on her radio at her office); and a fan of baseball, which she regarded as a more cerebral sport than football. Ellie loved to travel, especially to Italy, where work and pleasure came together for her almost every summer. Her many students, friends, colleagues, and peers all over the world are very sorry for her passing, and will long remember her. She was a consummate scholar and teacher, and an inspiration to all who knew her. Ellie is survived by her daughter, Harriet, of Louisville, Kentucky, and her former husband, Peter, of St. Louis, Missouri.

This resolution will be presented in and become a part of the minutes of the Bloomington Faculty Council, and copies of the resolution will be sent to her daughter Harriet Leach after its presentation in the Council.

Compiled by
 Matt Christ
 Professor
 Classical Studies
 Indiana University Bloomington

with contributions from
 Ann Vasaly
 Associate Professor Emerita
 Department of Classical Studies
 Boston University

Teresa Ramsby
 Associate Professor
 Department of Classics
 University of Massachusetts Amherst