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A Tribute to Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico

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March 9, 1947 – June 24, 2020

As 2020 comes to end, how will we remember it? For many of us, it'll be remembered as the year of a pandemic, of quarantine, and of loss. For those of us in the College of Education, California State University, San Bernardino, we too, will remember it as a year of loss, our collective loss of Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico. Her life and death continue to remain in my consciousness as we spend the remaining few days of 2020 reflecting and remembering the events that forever changed our lives.

Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico

Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico passed away on June 24 at her home in Redlands, California, after a short bout with pancreatic cancer. Dr. Díaz-Rico was a professor at California State University, San Bernardino, teaching in the College of Education's Department of Teacher Education & Foundations for over thirty years. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on March 9, 1947, Dr. Díaz-Rico was educated at University of Pittsburgh, and received her Doctorate of Education from Interamerican University in Puerto Rico.

While at Cal State, Dr. Díaz-Rico founded a successful master's program in education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). She was past President of the California chapter of TESOL, a professional organization with over 1,800 members.

Dr. Díaz-Rico is the author of over fifty publications, including the definitive textbook for English as a second language instruction, *Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development Handbook, The: A Complete K-12 Reference Guide*, now in its sixth edition,

and *Strategies for Teaching English Learners*. Throughout her life she traveled extensively throughout the globe to deliver lectures and presentations. In addition to her professional duties as a writer and professor, Dr. Díaz-Rico was an avid reader and reviewer of books. A former stained-glass artist, she was known for her curious mind and deep knowledge of topics such as visual art and craft, European history, Chinese philosophy, and United States Indigenous cultures. She wrote, for example, two volumes on the history and folklore of the Serrano people, a project commissioned by the San Manuel tribe of Southern California.

Lynne had many colleagues and friends who graciously shared their memories of her.

Shani Sims in the College of Education had a long working relationship with Lynne:

I am so sad to hear of Dr. Lynne's passing. She was such a great woman with a big heart. She was passionate and caring and so dedicated to all of her students. I worked closely with Lynne for about 12 years and she was always so thoughtful. I remember running into her at my daughter's school's fall festival about 8 years ago because her TESOL students were volunteering and she decided to help out as well. She would always encourage her students to get out there and get involved. She always had a hands-on approach. I am truly grateful for the guidance she has given me and the friendship we had.

Dr. Rob Garcia, College of Education, spoke of being a "next door office neighbor" to Dr. Díaz-Rico:

Greetings, I had such a good friendship with Lynne. We became buddies in the college of education where our offices were right next to each other for a few years. I knew Lynne as an incredibly intelligent,

confident, passionate and dedicated educator. Her commitment to her students and to her craft were second to none. If you knew Lynne well you knew her as a fierce advocate on behalf of her students and she wouldn't hesitate to defend her position on any subject matter. In fact, for those who knew her best, at some point you probably had a verbal jujitsu match with her, and she almost certainly won. I was on the losing end on several occasions but I wore that like a badge of honor. I learned so much from her. I'm an honored to have had her as a friend. The world was a better place while she was in it. I will miss her deeply.

Dr. J-David Jerez-Gomez, Professor of Spanish and Humanities in the Department of World Languages and Literatures wrote:

Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico was always a kind and understanding colleague in the different committees in which I had the fortune to serve with her. I learned a big deal from her experience, her integrity, and her dedication to the mission of our university to serve our students. It's a blow to hear of her passing that leaves many of us mourning her loss. She will be always remembered and honored.

Janet Miller, in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling had fond memories of Lynne's commitment and dedication to her students:

Lynne will be truly missed in the COE and yes she was very dedicated to her students. Many years ago, the October winds knocked her to the ground, she broke her wrist but before she went to the ER she taught her 6-10pm class. My prayers are with Lynne's family and friends.

Dr. Donna Schnorr, Interim Department Chair of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, and Educational Leadership and Technology faculty spoke of Lynne's dedication to students:

My heart is deeply saddened. I had the opportunity to get to know Lynne through a variety of activities. One of them was during the early stages of the College of Education research symposium. During that time, I was touched by her dedication to the learning experiences of her students. She would come to watch

her students practice their presentations to support them even though it was not a requirement. It was during this time that I developed a deep respect for her commitment and conscientiousness. She has had a lasting impact and she will be missed.

Lisa Gordon from the Department of Marketing, spoke of sharing good times with Lynne:

I remember working with Lynne, in the college of education in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Culture. We spent time together in her home in Redlands enjoying wine and friendship. She really cared about her students and I appreciated her passion. My condolences to her friends and family.

Dr. Marc Fudge, former Interim Department Chair, Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling

I am saddened to hear this news regarding Lynn. It is simply another reminder of how precious life is and how we should embrace every day we are blessed with. My sincere condolences go out to Lynn's family and friends. She will be missed dearly.

Dr. Diane Podolske, Director of the Office of Community Engagement wrote this very special memory of Lynne:

I would also like to add my condolences to everyone who was a friend or colleague of Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico. Lynne was an early supporter of the Office of Community Engagement (at that time named Community-University Partnerships) and led several community-based projects, including a school garden project that promoted nature literacy and multicultural awareness, a visual literacy/ multi-media project to promote second-language acquisition, and an innovative tutoring program for low-literacy adolescents. Her book, "Strategies for Teaching English Learners" included sections on service learning, and the most recent edition (March 2012) included information on virtual volunteering, a concept that is very much in the national conversation today. She was truly a scholar and practitioner, and K-12 students, CSUSB students, her campus colleagues and the profession benefitted from her dedication.

I remember Lynne – encouraging the dreams of young people with her unwavering commitment to develop their literacy skills. Rest in peace, Lynne.

These colleagues' comments and reflections represent the impact Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico had on our College of Education, our students, and our community of scholars. Her life's journey may reflect a loss in 2020, but the loss is greatly overshadowed by the life she shared with us to enrich us, challenge us, and to honor us.