Names A Journal of Onomastics



In Memoriam: Lynn C. Westney

(1947-2021)

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On the day before Christmas 1947, Joseph and Alma Tvrdik welcomed a new baby girl into their home in Chicago, Illinois. They named their little girl, Lynn Carol Tvrdik ("Chicago Tribune" 2021).¹ An intelligent and inquisitive child, Lynn discovered the joys of reading and writing from very early on. She would remain true to those passions her entire life. After completing high school, Lynn applied to the undergraduate program of Loyola University. She was accepted and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. Still hungry for more, she went on to obtain a Masters of Science in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIC). It was there that Lynn discovered what would become her institutional home.

For 25 years, Lynn remained at UIC. Over the years, she became an Associate Professor and the Coordinator of Reference Collection Development for UIC's library system. Although today, Library Science in the United States is often seen as a typically female domain², at the time Lynn entered the profession, this was far from the case. According to statistics compiled by the Association of Research Libraries, between 1976 and 1977, 89% of all directorships were held by men (Irvine 1985, 236). Within a few decades, this glaring gender discrepancy in library science and other historically male occupations ended, thanks to a combination of two factors. The first was the passage of revolutionary legislation that forbade employment discrimination on the basis of gender and promoted the active recruitment and advancement of qualified women³. The second was a new generation of courageous female scholars who were ready, willing, and more than able to take on positions of leadership (Irvine 1985; Ruhig DuMont 1985; Swisher, Ruhig DuMont, and Boyer 1985); Lynn was just such a woman.

Lynn's entry into the professional world of library science came at a time when the entire discipline was undergoing yet another revolutionary change. With the introduction of affordable computer technology and the rise of the internet, the 1980's marked the start of mass digitization of library holdings. Gone were the days of card catalogs and microfiche. Data that had once taken up thousands of pages from stacks of printed books could now be stored on the space of an ordinary floppy disc, measuring only 5½ inches across. And this was only the beginning.

During a Joseph Leiter Lecture given in April of 1986, Dr. R. Davis likened the impact of computer science on library science to the archetypal "Big Bang," resulting in a cosmic shift in the way libraries were designed, utilized, and managed (3). In the past, the typical library was a majestic edifice of brick and mortar that served as a physical repository for a society's most revered printed artifacts (Lynch and Brownrigg 1986). In the future, researchers predicted libraries would become digital informational hubs "located everywhere and nowhere at the same time" (Davis 1987, 3).

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While some academicians fretted over the potential repercussions of this transformation, many far-sighted scholars like Lynn were quick to recognize the fantastic advantages it offered in terms of unparalleled convenience and access. Through most of her career, Lynn devoted much of her scholarship to celebrating the rewards of digitization without losing sight of the librarian's academic and civic responsibilities regarding this new information technology. As the editor of Educational Rankings Annual, a position which she held from 1991 to 2006, finding this professional balance was a frequent theme of her contributions. For the "Journal of History and Computing," she edited the regular column, "e-journals -inside out," which was devoted to critiquing the latest additions to this new form of academic publishing. While many colleagues looked askance at this innovation, Lynn, ever the maverick, rightly predicted that e-journals would raise the level of international scholarship by significantly increasing user accessibility and thereby "increasing the probability that often-overlooked but valuable articles will enter the mainstream."

Though an ardent advocate for technological advances in her field, Lynn never lost sight of the most important element of library science: people. It was that unique blend of passion for her field and compassion for her colleagues that made her a favorite at UIC. Upon hearing of her passing, S. Brantley, a fellow reference librarian who had worked with Lynn for more than a decade at UIC, wrote: "Lynn was a source of energy and fun. She was always a source of humor and positivity [...]. She loved education and helping students." A similar recollection was shared by R. Duplis-Devlin, another one of Lynn's UIC colleagues: "I will always fondly remember her character and style. We both shared an interest in ethnic food and I always appreciated her willingness to share her love and knowledge.'

Alongside her scholarship in library science, she was also an avid reader of onomastic sciences. She was a long-time member of both the Canadian Society for the Study of Names and the American Name Society. In 2007, she published an article for NAMES that provided an in-depth history of culinary names inspired by famous women. Entitled "From Courtesans to Queens: Recipes Named for Women," the investigation was featured in a 2007 special issue of NAMES devoted entirely to women's names and naming practices.4

The true breadth of Lynn's scholarship, however, has been obscured by her frequent surname changes—a problem faced by many female academics (Tescione 1998; Noordewier, van Horen, Ruys, and Stapel 2010; Kamalski 2011; Pellack & Kappmeyer 2011). Over her lifetime, she published under at least four different surnames: Tvrdik, Hattendorf, and Westney, both singularly and in combination (e.g., Lynn C. Hattendorf, Lynn C. Westney, Lynn C. H. Westney, Lynn Hattendorf Westney). Like so many female scholars, the variation in her professional moniker was a reflection of the many unforeseen changes that took place in her personal life. Born with the surname Tordik, at the age of 33, she adopted the new last name of Hattendorf, after marrying her first husband, William H. Hattendorf II. The two remained married until 1995, when William passed away, making Lynn a widow at the early age of 48. Sometime later, fate paid Lynn another unexpected visit when she met Robert Westney, the man who would become her second husband, until he too died in 2014.

Seven years later, on January 10, 2021, Lynn Hattendorf-Westney passed away in New Carlisle, Indiana. She is survived by two stepchildren, William Hattendorf III and Kim Skyelander; her two sisters, Ellen Jo Kraemer and Gail Ann Pawlowski; and their children. The American Name Society extends its sincere condolences to Lynn's family, friends, and associates. She will be missed.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all biographical information was retrieved from the Legacy obituary feature of the *Chicago Tribune*.

² According to Howard, Habashi, and Reed (2020), librarianship today in the United States has become "a female-dominated profession, with about one man for every five women" (664).

³ Now commonly known under the name Affirmative Action, this set of US legislation specifically stipulated that action "be taken by covered employers to recruit and advance qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans." US Department of Labor 2021.

⁴ For the complete issue, see NAMES 55, no. 3.

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