

## **BARBARA C. SCHOLZ, 1947–2011**

Barbara Caroline Scholz was a philosopher of the cognitive, biological, and linguistic sciences. She died on May 14, 2011, in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Barbara was born to Carl and Caroline Scholz in Troy, Ohio, on August 29, 1947. Her passion for learning led to her ultimately holding five degrees. After her B.A. in Philosophy and Religion (Urbana College, 1973), she went to Andover Newton Theological School (1976), partly out of an interest in Greek and Hebrew and partly to find other genuine pacifists after Vietnam war protest morphed into the terrorism of the Weather Underground. In her second year someone stole and distributed some love letters of hers, outing her as a lesbian, and she was ostracized within the school's community. She bore that bravely and calmly, completed the M.Div. (1976), and left Boston.

She taught community college courses for some years in Columbus, Ohio, but after some years she became aware that her real calling was philosophy, and she enrolled in the graduate program at The Ohio State University. There Stewart Shapiro became her primary doctoral adviser and lifelong friend. She earned the M.A. in 1985, won the 1989 William Fink Award for Excellence in Philosophy on the strength of an essay on the philosophy of mathematics, and was awarded the Ph.D. in 1990.

Her dissertation studied the implications of the Kripke's Wittgensteinian rule-following paradox for cognitive and linguistic science. She advocated a Millikan-style straight solution. While working on the dissertation she decided, with characteristic modesty, that she didn't know enough of the science she was philosophizing about, so she interpolated a year at the University of Edinburgh, satisfying the requirements for the M.Sc. in Cognitive Science (awarded 1988).

She accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Toledo in 1989. During a brief visit she made to California in 1991 a colleague introduced her to me, and we began a friendship that was purely intellectual at first but increasingly personal and important to us both as time went on. Bills for long-distance calls and airfares mounted (we saw each other at meetings of all three divisions of the APA). She finally decided to move to Santa Cruz, where I lived at the time, and we married there in 1994.

In California she began teaching philosophy part-time, first at De Anza College and UC Santa Cruz, and then more permanently at San Jose State University. She did logic, philosophy of linguistics, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of biology, and philosophy of religion. (As a Darwinist atheist divinity graduate, she made an interesting philosophy of religion instructor; I was surprised to find as Dawkins-style polemical atheism later became fashionable that Barbara despised it for being theologically shallow and sociologically ignorant.)

In 2004, Barbara and I initiated a group project with James Rogers of Earlham College in the applications of model theory in syntax. The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University agreed to support it for 2005–2006, and Barbara was offered the Frieda Miller Fellowship for that year. She applied for the necessary two consecutive semesters of unpaid leave from San Jose State. Astonishingly, this was denied. Her contract allowed her one semester, the administration said, but absence for a whole year would erase all her seniority and security of employment, and on returning she would have to reapply for her job and re-enter at the bottom of the ladder. She said farewell to San Jose forever and went to Harvard.

In 2007, when I was offered the professorship of general linguistics at the University of Edinburgh, Barbara happily agreed to move there — it was a city that she had come to

love when studying for her cognitive science degree twenty years before. The School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences at Edinburgh (closely allied with the adjacent School of Informatics, now host to the cognitive science M.Sc. course) offered perhaps the best intellectual environment in the world for her increasingly interdisciplinary interests. She became popular in the School for the care she put into the occasional teaching she agreed to do, and the generosity with which she advised and mentored graduate students in both philosophy and the unit studying language evolution within linguistics.

Her intellectual standards were demanding. No matter how much career advancement the world might confer on people who published reams of fashionable claptrap, she would have none of it. She expected originality, significance, precision, conciseness, and clarity — of herself as well as of others. I co-wrote several papers with her, so I know how tough the required standard was. She refused to take the paths that others had trodden ('We're not going to just repeat the usual blah-blah on this!'). The papers with the by-line 'Scholz and Pullum' were very much hers; I served mainly as consultant and amanuensis. But all of our joint papers, including the ones where I was main author, went through as many as thirty or forty full revisions before even being submitted.

Yet papers did get completed and published. Barbara's twenty publications (for a list see [http://ling.ed.ac.uk/~gpullum/barbara\\_scholz.html](http://ling.ed.ac.uk/~gpullum/barbara_scholz.html)) are full of subtle philosophical analysis, historical sophistication, and interdisciplinary vision. She contributed some influential ideas to the philosophical foundations of linguistics and developmental psycholinguistics, and there was much more: she published articles in aesthetics, cognitive science, linguistics, education, biology, and language acquisition.

After the completion of our commitment to Edinburgh in 2012, we were planning to take up positions that Brown University had offered us in the new Department of Cognitive, Linguistic and Psychological Sciences. Barbara was looking forward with great enthusiasm to this new adventure in Providence. But in December 2010 she was diagnosed with metastasized and inoperable terminal cancer.

She faced her impending death with extraordinary courage and rationality. No complaints, no anger, no denial. And no change in the work she loved: she finished teaching a course on the foundations of evolution, reviewed some Radcliffe Fellowship proposals for Harvard, refereed a paper in cognitive science, and then plunged into the process of writing a lengthy survey article on philosophy of linguistics for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (with Jeff Pelletier and me as secondary authors). She drove the project to completion, and got the entry written, refereed, and revised by the end of April 2011.

She continued absorbing new material and planning new projects, on topics like moral nativism, normativity, developmental systems theory, evolution of language, and Bayesian modeling approaches in psychology. She was expecting to have many more months to work, but she died suddenly and unexpectedly during a relaxed conversation about research as I enjoyed her company on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

She is survived by her twin brothers, both businessmen — Doug in Ohio and Mike in Montana — and by a collaborator and spouse whose life was immeasurably enriched by twenty years of her love, generosity, clear thinking, wise advice, and intellectual companionship.

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University of Edinburgh