

In Memoriam - Patricia Monk

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In Memoriam – Patricia Monk

The Department of English and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Dean's Office wishes to share news of the passing of Dr. Patricia Monk, the first female Full Professor in Dalhousie's Department of English, where she served for many years. The memoriam below was prepared by Dr. Monk's colleague, Professor Emerita Dr. Marjorie Stone.

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Patricia Monk, who taught in the Department of English at Dalhousie University from 1975 until her retirement in 2003, passed away in Halifax on December 29, 2021 at the age of 83.

Born in Stockport near Manchester in the UK, Patricia was the daughter of the late Bill and Kay Monk, and is survived by her beloved sister, Kitty Monk, who lives in Auckland, New Zealand. Patricia obtained her undergraduate degree from Reading University (with her tuition, books and accommodation covered by the Stockport Education Committee), and then moved to Canada, obtaining her Masters degree from Carleton University and her PhD from Queen's University.

A specialist in the fields of Canadian Studies and of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Patricia was the first woman to be promoted to the rank of Full Professor in Dalhousie's English Department. In Canadian Literature, Patricia was known especially for her work on the Canadian writers Robertson Davies and James De Mille, through her books *The Smaller Infinity: Jungian Self in the Novels of Robertson Davies* (1982), *Mud and Magic Shows: Robertson Davies's Fifth Business* (1992), and *The Gilded Beaver: An Introduction to the Life and Work of James De Mille* (1991). She also published essays and articles on these authors, as well as on Thomas Keanelly, and subjects such as the image of Africa in Canadian literature, and Canadian Maritime poetry. At the time of her retirement, she donated her papers relating to De Mille to the Dalhousie Archives. As a Canadian Literature specialist, she taught many classes in the field during her years at Dalhousie, and also served on the supervisory committees of many Masters and PhD students.

Patricia combined her teaching and scholarship in Canadian Literature with path-breaking work in Science Fiction and in Fantasy literature, introducing classes in these fields at a time when they were often not yet incorporated in mainstream literary studies and the curriculum. In these fields, she also published numerous articles and essays, some focusing on the representation of the female hero, as well as her widely influential

book *Alien Theory: The Alien as Archetype in the Science Fiction Short Story* (2006). As colleagues and friends will remember, Patricia's fascination with the representation of aliens and alien language in science fiction and fantasy was reflected in the button she regularly wore, inscribed "Just Visiting This Planet." Patricia continued to work on publications in sci fi and fantasy after her retirement, including an article on genetic engineering in science fiction in 2016, and most recently, in 2018, an article on George Martin's epic fantasy series *A Song of Fire and Ice*, the basis of the HBO series *Game of Thrones*. Published in the open-access journal [Mythlore](#), this incisive analysis of the dwarf Tyrion Lannister as the "fulcrum" of the series demonstrates Patricia's wide-ranging expertise. Fans of Tyrion will appreciate Patricia's exploration of his archetypal journey as hero and his capacity for independent thinking in a rigorously hierarchical feudal society – "as though he were a cat in a world of dogs." Patricia's academic bio in *Mythlore* ends with the words, "She is very fond of cats" and one of her articles is titled "Goddess of the Hearth: The Archetypal Significance of the Cat in Modern Fantasy." She remained a lifelong Manchester United soccer team fan.