

In Memoriam: Anne Marie Ryan

Dalhousie University Announcements <DAL-ANNOUNCEMENT@LISTS.DAL.CA>

on behalf of

Dalhousie Notice <notice@DAL.CA>

Thu 1/27/2022 1:03 PM

To: DAL-ANNOUNCEMENT@LISTS.DAL.CA <DAL-ANNOUNCEMENT@LISTS.DAL.CA>

In Memoriam: Anne Marie Ryan

Anne Marie (Mia) Ryan, faculty member and University Teaching Fellow in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, passed away unexpectedly with her loving family by her side at the QEII Hospital on January 20, 2022 after an emergency surgery. Born in Ireland on May 17, 1955, she was the daughter of the late Pdraig O'Beirne and Eithne O'Beirne (née Gilsenan). She attended Dalhousie University (PhD), Mount Saint Vincent University (MEd), Acadia University (MSc and BEd), and University College of Dublin (BSc).

Anne Marie was a geologist, teacher, and leader. She was also an advocate for the important role of women in science and was an amazing, active example of such. During her early career she was attracted to "hard" rocks (igneous and metamorphic), and tectonics, but later she developed an interest in the new field of Medical Geology. Her PhD thesis project represented a completely novel direction focused on weathering of granites and mobility of uranium and radon. Her published work on the subject has been regularly cited, and influential in the field of environmental geochemistry.

Anne Marie was incredibly talented and passionate about teaching and learning, especially in the sciences. She understood the unique challenges, perspectives, and considerations of teaching science and worked tirelessly to ensure these perspectives were included at all levels of the institution. She approached teaching by not only ensuring that her students understood natural geological phenomena, but also focused on teaching the whole person – empowering her students to be effective citizens and act for positive social and environmental change. She pushed students to think outside the box, taught them how to ask good questions, and designed creative assignments that provided space for them to take risks. She helped students make connections between science and society, consider various perspectives when approaching a problem, and she wasn't afraid to teach about the non-linear messier side of science including talking about the moral and ethical dimensions of science. She also loved sharing her passion for the natural world by taking students outside to see and learn firsthand about the world around them. It filled her with joy to build relationships and create trust with, as well as to care about, each and every student.

Anne Marie pushed back against traditional views of leadership, focusing on the value and need of servant leadership – in which a leader shares power, puts the needs of others first, and most notably in Anne Marie's case, helps others to develop, perform, and achieve as highly as possible. With her students and colleagues alike, Anne Marie helped to guide, support, and encourage everyone to become the best version of themselves. She believed that all teachers can be amazing leaders, each in their own context. She wanted each of us to recognize who we are as a teaching leader through understanding what matters most to us, deciding where we think we can make a difference, and following through. She was a leader in the field of teaching and made significant contributions through teaching courses, supervising theses and student research projects, publications, numerous conference presentations, educator workshops, and contributing to online forums. In the Faculty of Science, she taught a Science Leadership course and was the creator and coordinator of the Science Communication and Leadership Certificate – connecting and sharing with students across all Science disciplines. Ten years ago, Anne Marie recognized a need for community amongst the newest hires in the Faculty of Science and so created Dal's first Faculty of Science Community of Practice (CoPSci). Anne Marie's ability to develop community and support personal growth was so successful, there are now several CoPSci groups that bring together dozens of faculty members from across all Science departments.

Beyond her teaching and the Communities of Practice, she was an active member of the Dalhousie community at all levels. She was a member of various Earth and Environmental Science (EES) departmental committees, acted as a first-year EES student advisor for many years, and provided much valued mentorship to new faculty in the department. At the faculty level, she played a pivotal role in providing support for faculty in Science as Dalhousie transitioned into online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. At an institutional level, she was the first Faculty Associate at Dalhousie's Centre for Learning and Teaching where, for fifteen years, she taught courses, held workshops, and inspired faculty and graduate students in teaching and learning endeavours

across the disciplines. She was a vocal member of Dal's Academic Quality Team (AQT), ensuring the voices of course instructors were included in institutional decisions pertaining to teaching and learning. She recently began co-leading Dalhousie Leading in Teaching Excellence (D-LITE) bringing together interested faculty from across campus to encourage leadership in teaching and learning. Whether in groups, or individually, she always took the time to have deep and lasting conversations, sharing her teaching wisdom, always supportive and challenging, while also listening and learning with others.

Anne Marie's substantial impacts on the world of teaching and learning are apparent in the institutional, regional, and national teaching and leadership awards she has received. Amongst the many awards, notably are Dalhousie's *Alumni Association Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching*, The Association of Atlantic Universities' *Anne Marie Mackinnon Educational Leadership Award*, and the *3M National Teaching Fellowship*, Canada's most prestigious recognition of excellence in leadership and teaching in higher education.

Anne Marie leaves a deep and enduring legacy focused on personal growth, risk-taking, kindness, creativity, and wonder, that will continue to live on through her Communities of Practice, her students, colleagues, friends, and all those whose lives she touched through her leadership and support. Despite all the accolades she received over the years, she recently wrote about the impact that she had on students saying that what mattered most to her was "to know that I could make a difference when I look back – that is gold."

Campus flags were lowered this week in Anne Marie's memory.

She is survived by her loving husband of 42 years, Dr. Robert (Bob) Ryan, her three daughters Fiona Ryan (Emily Jewer), Kerriane Ryan (Jarvis Googoo), and Erin Ryan Gale (Lloyd, Addison, and Alexis Gale); her siblings John, Richard, Dermot, and Gina O'Beirne, Donna Durkan, and Ursula Sortino; and many other biological and chosen family. A celebration of Anne Marie's life will be held in the spring and announced at a later date. Donations can be made in Anne Marie's name to Development and Peace and/or Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.