

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

MICHELLE ZIMBALIST ROSALDO (1944 – 1981)

Professor Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo's death from an accidental fall while conducting research in the Philippines this autumn robbed the University of one of our most accomplished, promising, and beloved young colleagues.

Born in New York in 1944, Shelly was educated in English History and Literature at Radcliffe College and went on to complete the Doctorate in Social Anthropology at Harvard University in 1972. She and her husband, Professor Renato Rosaldo, came in 1970 to Stanford where they developed their close partnership as anthropologists and as parents of Samuel Mario and Manuel Zimbalist Rosaldo.

After joining Stanford's faculty in the Department of Anthropology in 1972, Shelly rose quickly to national prominence as an anthropologist, sociolinguist, and feminist scholar. In her field research among Mayan Indians in Mexico and peasant villagers in Spain, and then more extensively, with Renato Rosaldo, among Ilongot headhunters of the Philippines, Shelly had become fascinated with how people in different cultures construe personhood and emotions. She drew upon her background in literary criticism, linguistics, and philosophy to make sense of the relationships among language, rhetoric, meaning, and knowledge. Her monograph, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), is a groundbreaking analysis of these relationships. She has also made major contributions to the linguistic theory of speech acts. She is equally widely known for her influential feminist reexamination of gender in cross-cultural perspective in her theoretical overview of the collection of essays she co-edited, *Woman, Culture & Society* (Stanford University Press, 1974), and her more recent analysis, with Professor Jane F. Collier, of gender in simple societies. Shelly shared and refined her contributions on these topics with feminist scholars throughout the country, with colleagues of various disciplines at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton (1976), and at the Center for Advanced Studies in Behavioral Science at Stanford (1979), and in Stanford's Faculty Seminars on Interpretation and Feminist Studies.

As Co-Chair of the first Committee on Feminist Studies (1980-81), Shelly initiated and helped develop the Curriculum for Stanford's Program in Feminist Studies. She was instrumental in creating a sophisticated, flexible, interdisciplinary, program that speaks to the feminist interests of students in all areas of the University. Both in the CROW research Group and in the Faculty Seminar on Feminist Studies which she coordinated, she inspired faculty members from several professional schools and disciplines to incorporate feminist approaches into their own teaching and research.

Everyone who learned from Shelly, colleagues and students alike, will remember her as an inspired teacher. She lectured expressively, with tremendous dynamism and wit, and with an extraordinary ability to render difficult ideas intelligible in all their complexity. She respected her students, engaged them at the level that challenged them, and inspired in them a deep

appreciation of scholarship. Shelly labored at teaching, both to improve her own and to assist others in improving theirs. She helped craft the University's policies and procedures for the evaluation and improvement of teaching. In 1979 the University bestowed upon her its Dinkelspiel Award for outstanding service to undergraduate education. She deserved it. And she took pride in accepting it.

In contrast to some who isolate their politics from their academic work, Shelly strove to sharpen one with the other. She opposed the oppressions of sex and class by speaking out against them publicly as well as in her teaching and scholarly writing. Shelly abhorred institutional injustices. She practiced what she believed and worked hard within the University, as in all the domains of her life, to better it in politically conscious ways. She openly voiced the opposition many of us felt towards the University's disciplining of English Professor Bruce Franklin and helped stimulate the formulation of the Statement on Academic Freedom. She struggled for affirmative action in our academic programs, for an ethical policy in University investment, and for improving the working conditions of University staff. In recognition of her intelligent articulation of ways to improve the University, her colleagues selected her to represent them in the 12th Senate of the Academic Council and asked her to serve on innumerable University committees.

Shelly died in the very midst of doing what she loved most. Through her Fulbright affiliation at the University of the Philippines at Baguio, she had begun to teach to young Philippine social scientists and to explore, with Renato, new research on gender, politics, and stratification among nearby Ifugao peoples. Her field journal and letters convey her excitement in learning about Ifugaos through their language and the joy with which she pursued her characteristically vigorous emotional and intellectual discourse with family, students, colleagues, and friends.

Shelly Rosaldo gave so much to us. We have only begun to experience the ways in which we will miss her.

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Estelle Freedman
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