

InterActions serves as core research component in the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. In an effort to be of service to this community, we would like to take the opportunity to recognize those who dedicated their lives to activism and scholarly pursuits in the academy and in the community, and who have tragically and recently passed away. We do so to pay tribute to their academic work, their passion, and their service. Students with such multi-disciplinary talents truly embody the potential of the next generation of up and coming academics.

As we grieve the loss of their life, we also want to celebrate their accomplishments, and have included a brief description of their lives and work, which we invite you to explore through the remembrances and links below.

InterActions Editors

Susana Maria Halpine

On Tuesday November 6th Susana Maria Halpine died unexpectedly leaving a great void in the many people whose lives she touched. Susana's rare combination of talents—biochemist, professional artist and educational researcher—grew out of an insatiable desire to explore life, to understand how things were inter-connected, and then to impart that knowledge to others.

In the 1980s she worked at the Protein Analysis Facility in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at Columbia University under Nobel laureate Eric Kandel. At the facility, Susana pioneered the use of protein analyzers and DNA synthesizers. She went on to transfer this state-of-the-art bio-technology to art conservation and history research under the auspices of a Mellon Fellowship at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Susana was also an artist, exhibiting her oil paintings in New York City, Washington, DC, Southern California and greater Boston area galleries. She received an artist-in-residence grant at the Milay Colony for the Arts. Her work won several "Best of Show" awards and was reviewed in the Washington Post and the New York Times.

Her pursuits in science and art came together in her passionate commitment to the education of future scientists and artists. When she moved to Los Angeles in 1996 she began developing award-winning interactive educational animations, videos, CD-ROM's and Websites for publishers Scholastic and W.

Yolanda Retter

Yolanda Retter, an activist, librarian, archivist, and author, best known for raising the visibility of lesbians and people of color, died at her home in Van Nuys on August 18, 2007. She was 59. For the past four years, Retter was Head Librarian/ Archivist at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, but she was also an integral member of the Department of Information Studies, where she ably filled multiple roles as a student pursuing additional certification, an activist working on behalf of students, an adjunct professor, and a conscience- and consciousness-raising force.

Among her many accomplishments—too many to name here—Yolanda was strumental in organizing lesbian history repositories at UCLA, USC, and in West Hollywood. She co-edited and co-wrote three books: *Queers in Space* (1997), *Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States* (2003), and *Great Events from History: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Events, 1848-2006* (2007).

Yolanda was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1947. She attended Pitzer College in Claremont in 1966. During the 1980s, she earned master's degrees in library science and social work from UCLA and thereafter a doctorate from the University of New Mexico in American studies. Her dissertation was titled, *On the Side of Angels: Lesbian Activism in Los Angeles, 1970-1990*.

In 1978, Yolanda directed a program to address the needs of lesbians at the Los

H. Freeman. Her TV piece for UNICEF on a child's right to proper nutrition and healthcare was presented at the Annecy International Animation Festival.

Susana argued passionately that science and art were closely coupled historically. She believed that an understanding of science and technology benefited from one's artistic ability to envision, visualize and represent scientific concepts. Accordingly, she believed that the separation of science from art was a recent and serious flaw in the modern curricula. To address that flaw, Susana conducted workshops at the Smithsonian, the American Chemical Society and schools in the Los Angeles area. These workshops evolved and cohered in 2001 when she developed [STArt!](#), a program designed to teach science through art and help students and teachers address the new California Science Standards. She received three consecutive Artist-In-Residence grants from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department to implement the STArt! program in LAUSD schools.

Her unique blend of talents allowed her to publish on a variety of seemingly disparate topics such as amino acid analysis and high-pressure liquid chromatography (HPLC), art conservation and science visualization, and education. At the time of her death, she was working on several articles that argued persuasively, with empirical evidence from the STArt! Program, that science education should start early in grade school.

Susana spent her life giving unselfishly of her time. She was a fixture in local environmental causes, always fighting large institutions for a better environment or educating the young about the environment they were inheriting. In dogged and loving pursuit of her many interests, Susana touched many lives, imparting her creativity, intellect and spirit to future generations.

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Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center, then the Gay Community Services Center. In 1988, she appeared, along with three other lesbian separatists, on the Oprah Winfrey Show, voicing the belief that lesbians can empower themselves without men. Between 1989 and 1991, Retter managed the Los Angeles Public Library Chicano Resource Collection, where she created the first Latino biography database.

Throughout her life, Retter devoted her energies to the empowerment of women and minorities. After college, she worked as a prison guard at the California Institution for Women in Corona and managed a halfway house for displaced women in Los Angeles. During the 1970s, she helped organize the lesbian liberation movement, becoming involved in groups such as Latin American Lesbians of Los Angeles and Connexus Women's Center/Centro de Mujeres.

Her often confrontational, abrasive style and radical stances earned her the nickname, "Yolanda the Terrible," but she will be sorely missed. We in particular shall remember her as an indefatigable friend to *InterActions*: a source of invaluable and unwavering support for its authors and editors and the embodiment of its very spirit.

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¹Keilty, P. (2006). LGBT and Information Studies: The Library and Archive OUTreach Symposium at UCLA; *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*. Vol 3. Issue 1, Article 6
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/gseis.interactions/vol3/iss1/art6>

Yolanda Retter served as a panelist at the [Library and Archive OUTreach Symposium](#) at UCLA on November 17, 2006.

For video and audio clips from the event:

[Yolanda Retter](#)

<<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?filename=22&article=1128&context=gseis/interactions&type=additional>>

