

Sally Westerman Jacoby, 1949-2007

Sally Jacoby, one of the founding editors of *Issues in Applied Linguistics* and a graduate of the doctoral program in Applied Linguistics at UCLA, has died of the complications of lung cancer in Dover, New Hampshire. (She had never smoked.)

Sally brought an extraordinarily strong academic and professional background to her work in applied linguistics. She completed four degrees: a science degree in theatre from North Western, an arts degree in linguistics from Tel Aviv (born in New Jersey, she lived in Israel from 1971 to 1988), an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from Birmingham, and then her Ph.D. She had extensive experience in theatre (as an actress and in production) and in language teaching, was educated in both the British and American traditions of applied linguistics, and had a deep understanding of foreign language teaching and learning (she also worked as a Hebrew-English translator in Israel). She combined a deep intellectuality with an understanding of the practical contexts to which applied linguistics was relevant. She also had the critical temperament of a true scholar.

Sally relished intellectual life. She flourished in the vigorous intellectual atmosphere of UCLA in the early 1990s, when Elinor Ochs and Manny Schegloff were challenging many of the orthodoxies of mainstream applied linguistics in a department and program that had already established itself as one of the very best in the world. The high standards that were the hallmark of her editorship of *Issues in Applied Linguistics* were entirely characteristic of her: Sally was the ideal student, curious, questioning, formidably intelligent, hard working, meticulous, independent, lively, intense. Her Ph.D. dissertation was a study of a team of physicists at UCLA, rehearsing conference presentations. She was attracted to the idea of rehearsal and performance from her theatre days; her study combined an ethnography of the setting, reflecting the influence of Elinor Ochs, with a Conversation Analytic account of the presentations and the subsequent feedback, reflecting the influence of Manny Schegloff. She demonstrated conclusively the crucial role this kind of fundamental research plays in understanding applied questions of teaching and assessment in specific purpose language contexts. Her critique of many notions in ESP and EAP is far-reaching, and constructive, and her work is having a lasting impact on those studying how to improve the communication skills of international students in academic contexts all over the world.

Sally loved intellectual discussion and argument; she was a brilliant teacher and communicator, both on a one-to-one level and in public presentations. In 2003, at the American Association for Applied Linguistics meeting in Portland, OR, she took part in an invited colloquium on Co-Construction, for which I was a discussant. An inveterate perfectionist, her own worst enemy in this regard, she had struggled to get the paper ready on time, and in fact had written out what she wanted to say

by hand, on the long flight from the east coast. She gave me the handwritten copy only a few hours before the colloquium. The paper was a *tour de force*, by universal agreement the clearest and best paper in the colloquium, tackling in a way none of the other panellists had managed to do the thorny issue of joint performance in interaction and its implications for research on language learning.

As a friend, Sally was loyal, courageous, fiercely honest and critical, warm, demanding, generous, compassionate. She dealt with her illness with all the intelligence, energy, and unrelenting honesty that were typical of her personality. In characteristic fashion, Sally wrote her own obituary in the final weeks of her life ('I'm a control freak,' she said), which appeared in the local newspaper in Dover, New Hampshire, where she worked as a Professor at the University of New Hampshire. She remained a student of interaction to the end. "It's amazing the calls I'm getting since my diagnosis,' she told me, 'from people I haven't heard from for years. The way they begin the call, and introduce their reasons for calling – I'd love to make a study of it, it's fascinating."

Sally's early death is a terrible loss for our field, and to all who knew and loved her. She will be remembered not only for the originality and relevance of her work, but for her warmth, courage, fierceness, humour, brilliance, impatience, style, and her intense physical presence: the perfectly manicured fingernails restlessly drumming, and her intense red hair.

Tim McNamara