

Tribute to Bernie Millar by Chris Winberg, James Garraway and Jenny Wright (CPUT)

Bernie first and foremost was a teacher – a scholarly teacher and a worthy TAU fellow. She practiced the scholarship of teaching and learning, being inspired by educational research and taking on PhD studies in higher education later in life. As a university lecturer, she was adored by her students to whom she became a mentor and a friend. Her practice was innovative and inventive, and she generously shared her ideas with colleagues. She facilitated lively academic development training sessions at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, particularly in the Clothing and Textiles Department where she worked, and in the Emergency Medical Sciences Department, which was the focus of her PhD study. She taught academic literacies (and so much more!) and was regular presenter at the Senate Language Committee's quarterly 'language *indaba*'. She facilitated many of the sessions on the regional Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching and Learning, a qualification shared between the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, and the University of the Western Cape. She was a sought-after speaker at national educational conferences.

Bernie was interviewed shortly after receiving the TAU scholarship and was asked what made her such an outstanding teacher, and her reply was:

It just know that I need to keep improving because I need to keep responding to the students who are different every year... I think that I'm as much a learner as I am a teacher because I learn from the students every day. ... I see teaching and learning as a communal enterprise between me and the students.

Bernie was a champion of social justice and fought against oppression wherever she saw it, but this did not prevent her from seeing the funny side of life. In her work in the Extended Programmes, Bernie's passion was in assisting students to gain access to university knowledge and ways of thinking. Bernie was also interested in promoting and supporting student voices. She thus introduced freewriting as an approach to both develop writing ability and as a platform for students to express their interests and concerns.

Bernie loved and cherished her family, friends, colleagues, and students. She shed warmth and light in the darkest places and was a blessing to so many. Thoughtful, thought-provoking, kind, generous, funny, passionate, fearless, and authentic, she spoke her mind and railed passionately against injustice. Her academic legacy will continue beyond her formal academic contributions, fine though those are: beyond her solid knowledge of and passion for excellence in teaching and learning, she was a legendary mentor and encourager of both her colleagues and students. Her positive influence will live on in their and our lives. We were privileged to know her and call her 'friend'. She will be missed.

Tribute to Bernie Millar – Chrissie Boughey.

I first met Bernie Millar when we were both working at the University of the Western Cape in the late 1980s. Bernie was working in the Classics Department mostly involved in teaching Latin to Law students. UWC had opened its doors to all students in defiance of the apartheid state and was suffering for this stance with a heavy police presence on campus. Many students were enduring enormous hardships just to attend classes.

The concept of a 'humanizing pedagogy' is now a relatively common term in teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa. This was not the case in the 1980s. Nonetheless, Bernie had an instinctive understanding of what the need to study Latin might have meant to a young person from a township. She made personal connections to students and supported them any way she could even if this meant driving miles to collect a young man using a wheelchair so he could get to campus. Bernie often joined students in protests and, on one occasion joined a march from the UWC campus in Bellville to the police station in Roeland Street in Cape Town where some protestors were being held.

In the early 1990s, Bernie was doing a PhD in Egyptology, one of her intellectual passions. A fulltime job, family and busy life meant this was never finished. In about 2010 she enrolled in the Rhodes' Doctoral Programme in Higher Education Studies. Sue O'Keefe and myself co-supervised Bernie's research. I suggested to Bernie she consider using Bhaskar's critical realism as an 'underlabouring philosophy' for her study. Another good friend and colleague of Bernie's at CPUT, Jenny Wright, described Bernie coming into her office and saying 'Now, tell me about this bloody critical realism I'm supposed to get my head around'.

Bernie more than got her head around critical realism and ended up using transcendental realism in a study that looked at the development of graduate attributes in students in a paramedic programme at CPUT. Bernie's thesis ended up challenging the very concept of the attribute itself. Near the end of her thesis, I felt confident asking Ron Barnett, possibly the most foremost 'philosopher' of higher education, to serve as an examiner. Ron agreed and engaged with Bernie's thesis in an extraordinary way - as if he had met a like mind. He certainly recognised Bernie's considerable intellect as his examiner's report made clear.

Bernie's passion for teaching, her endless quest to get a better deal for students in our universities and her own belief that she could always do better led her to join TAU. Bernie was well loved by her fellow students on the Rhodes Doctoral Programme, who saw in her someone who was good academically but who didn't try to gain status in the group because of what she knew. They also saw her as someone who would always help them and who never thought explaining anything meant she was better than the person asking for the explanation. I have no doubt that this is the way her fellow TAU participants also experienced her warmth, caring nature, and considerable intellect.

Bernie is survived by William, her husband of nearly fifty years, and her children, Liam, Catherine, and Xavier. We will all miss Bernie as a friend and colleague.