

In Memory of Professor B. Sharon Byrd

On March 4, 2014, our beloved friend and colleague, Professor B. Sharon Byrd passed away. She lost her battle with cancer. She was buried on March 11, the following week, in Erlangen, Germany. Sharon, as her friends know her, is survived by her husband, partner and friend, Professor Joachim Hruschka.

Telling the story of Sharon's life is beyond the scope of this short memorial. However, I will try to do her the honor she so deserves. She was born on April 28, 1947 in Dayton, Ohio. From the way she told it, she was a precocious child. It is no small wonder, given her keen mind and array of talents. She went on to study at Smith College, earning her Bachelors degree in 1969, only to move to the other side of the country and begin law school the following year at the University of California Los Angeles. Several years later, after her graduation from UCLA, she decided to return to the academy, where she procured her LL.M. and J.S.D. from Columbia. From there, her adventurous spirit led her to Germany, to take a faculty post in the law program at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität in Jena.

Her academic life was and is quite impressive. Her editorial work on the *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik/Annual Review of Law and Ethics* is very well respected, having yielded over twenty years of top quality philosophy on Kant and jurisprudence. Moreover, she sat on the editorial board of *Law and Philosophy*, and with her beloved husband, Joachim, edited *Kant and Law* (Ashgate, 2006). However, it is her own work on Kant's political thought that is most notable. She is author to over eighteen articles on Kant's juridical theory, as well as most recently coauthoring with Joachim an extensive and extraordinary book, *Kant's Doctrine of Right* (Cambridge, 2010). Her desire to understand Kant's work holistically, as well as to garner support for its study is almost unmatched in our field.

However, it is Sharon's heart that she is most well known for. She was one of the most generous academics I have ever had the honor to meet. I reached out to Sharon while writing my dissertation on Kant's political thought. We corresponded for some time, and it was only towards the end of my graduate study that she suggested I come to Germany to work with her and Joachim for a few months. During this time, they opened their home and hearts to me, and it was then that I came to understand and truly appreciate this beautiful and strong woman.

In a way, she collected academics. She reached out to so many and responded in kind. If one valued Kant, there was a firm basis for friendship. Though she held onto her interpretations fiercely, she was open to many differing opinions. It is no surprise then, that so many people hold her in such high respect. She was thoughtful, kind, open, and caring; though, she brook no fools, and she pressed us for excellence.

She told me once that she had befriended Mary Gregor shortly before Mary died. Indeed, she said that she and Mary had formed a fast friendship, and that she felt it

was sad and unfair that Mary was taken from her when there was so much yet to discuss. This conversation with Sharon rings more poignantly today. Though I was lucky to have had years of correspondence and time with Sharon, learning from her and arguing with her, I now feel that she too has been taken too soon, for we also have so many things yet to discuss.

With love and respect for our dear friend, colleague and mentor.

Heather M. Roff

(First published in The North American Kant Society – Newsletter Vol. XXXVII, No. 37 [March 2014])

Mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Verlages aus:

Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik
Annual Review of Law and Ethics

Im Jahre 1993 begründet von B. Sharon Byrd,
Joachim Hruschka und Jan C. Joerden

Herausgegeben von
Joachim Hruschka · Jan C. Joerden

Band 22



Duncker & Humblot · Berlin