

In Memoriam: Patricia Graham

Contours would like to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of Patricia (Trish) Graham to the Institute for the Humanities and its journal. Included here is a memorial from the Department of Global Humanities at SFU, as well as a short piece by Trish on the 2002 visit of Venerable Lhakdor from the 2003 issue of *Humanitas*. We thank Trish's son Nick Graham for kindly sharing the wonderful photographs featured throughout.



Left to right: Trish Graham, Alan Whitehorn, Jerry Zaslove. Photo courtesy of Nick Graham.

Patricia Graham: A Sort of Obit*

August 29, 2023



On August 13, 2023, the Department of Global Humanities, Institute for the Humanities, and Graduate Liberal Studies program lost Patricia Graham, a valued member whose years of tireless dedication to and passion for the humanities contributed to what the Department and its units are today. While the news brought deep sadness to all those who knew and loved Trish, we would like to celebrate her extraordinary life rather than mourn its shortness, as she had wished.

* The following memorial for Trish Graham appeared on the SFU Global Humanities Department's website on August 29, 2023. It has been republished with permission and has been edited and reformatted for publication. Please see: <https://www.sfu.ca/globalhumanities/news-events/news/2023/08292023.html>



Trish Graham

Patricia Graham, née Kilsby, was a working-class kid, born in Haney, BC, in 1954. She distinguished herself in high school, and developed radical political views and a taste for literature that led her to Simon Fraser University. According to her, she also ran a really fast 100-yard dash. She majored in English literature, receiving her BA in 1977. She considered pursuing a doctorate in either London or Moscow, but first stayed at SFU to complete her MA. She married a fellow grad student, Brian Graham, and they would have two boys, Julien and Nicholas.

While working, raising kids, and living in Vancouver's oldest co-op where she played a very active part, she managed to complete her MA under the supervision of Jerry Zaslove in 1989. Her thesis, on two working-class novelists, written under the intellectual influence

of György Lukács, entitled *DH Lawrence and Alan Sillitoe: From Critique to Critical Despair*, won an award at SFU.

Working closely with Jerry Zaslove, she went on to take a position as program administrator for the Institute for the Humanities from 1991 to 2011. She was responsible for day-to-day operations, assisted with funding initiatives, finances, publicity, and the organization of public events, including a human rights conference on “Madness, Citizenship & Social Justice” in June 2008, and edited and contributed to the Institute’s publications. Additionally, she wrote some excellent short stories and taught a few courses in the then Department of Humanities, while later assuming duties in Graduate Liberal Studies.

For those who worked with her at the Institute, in the words of one of those she mentored in the nuances of the Institute and the University, Alan Whitehorn, she was a guiding star. Grounded, practical, passionate, a loyal friend, and most of all a loving mother to two men and grandmother to two girls, it can actually be said that she was loved by all.

When she retired with her partner Wayne Knights, they lived a bucolic existence on Pender Island until cancer destroyed her life. She was a force that will be missed both personally and institutionally. *Venceremos*, Trish!



Left to right: Alan Whitehorn, Joy Kogawa, Trish Graham, Jerry Zaslove. Photo courtesy of Nick Graham.



Jerry Zaslove and Trish Graham at the Institute for the Humanities. Photo courtesy of Nick Graham.

Venerable Lhakdor Visits SFU[†]

Trish Graham

Venerable Lhakdor was born in Yakra, Western Tibet, in 1956. He left Tibet in 1962 following the communist Chinese invasion of 1959. He received his monastic ordination in 1964, and in 1976 he joined the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, where he spent seven years in specialized study. In 1989 he received his Master of Madhyamika Buddhist Philosophy from the same institute, and his Master of Philosophy from the University of Delhi.

In August 1989 he joined the office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and is now his official translator and religious assistant, as well as Joint Secretary of the Private Office of the Dalai Lama. In these capacities, he has accompanied the Dalai Lama on many of his extensive visits throughout Europe, North America, Australia, Africa, and Asia.

While Venerable Lhakdor ordinarily remains with the Dalai Lama, he was able to make a speaking tour in April of 2002 because of the Dalai Lama's being on extended retreat on doctors' orders. This marks the first time that a Secretary of the Private Office has agreed, with the blessing of the Dalai Lama, to travel to North America and to give a series of lectures to the general public, sponsored locally by the Institute of Asian Research at UBC. On April 10, 2002, during his first visit to Canada, he spoke to SFU faculty, students, and staff at the Halpern Centre.

Venerable Lhakdor told his audience at SFU that when the Dalai Lama travels and speaks to people, his focus is on three central issues: 1) he teaches that we need to break down the destructive barriers erected between peoples; we need to strive to see universal humanness in each other, rather than dwelling on the apparent differences in race, religion, and gender; 2) we need to

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teach religious harmony. Religion must not be used as a weapon which creates suffering: no religion is the right religion for all peoples; 3) and lastly, the Dalai Lama focuses on Tibet and the need to preserve its culture, which is in great danger of extinction. In summary, his focus is on promoting positive ethical values and religious harmony, as well as preserving Tibetan culture.

Venerable Lhakdor went on to elaborate on what is meant by “positive ethical values.” When one recognizes the interconnectedness of all life, he said, one takes more care. When one develops ethical values that lead to positive and life-enhancing actions, one’s behaviour has positive effects. Similarly, destructive actions have equally negative effects or reactions. We must take responsibility for everything that we do—or do not do—quite simply because we are not living as isolated or independent units, but rather live in a world where every action has a reaction. “Karma is not an external agent or force,” said Venerable Lhakdor. “It is something you do.”

We offer our thanks to Victor Chan, of the Institute of Asian Research, for arranging for the visit of Venerable Lhakdor to SFU. Victor Chan is currently in residence in Dharamsala, India, where the Dalai Lama lives, and is working with him on a forthcoming book.



Trish Graham and Venerable Lhakdor
Photo by: Donald Grayston