

A short *Lebenslauf* from a friend and colleague who misses him dearly

Eleanor (Ellie) Stebner

Jerry Zaslove was born in 1934 in Cleveland, Ohio.

He first studied at Case Western Reserve University and then did his mandatory stint in the US Army. He was stationed in Germany, which is where he met Sibylle, his future wife and life partner. They returned to the United States where he completed his PhD in comparative literature at the University of Washington.

In 1965 Jerry and Sibylle moved to Canada so that Jerry could join the English faculty at the newly opened Simon Fraser University. He was attracted to SFU—even turning down a job offer from UBC—because SFU promised him the opportunity to cross disciplinary boundaries. For the next three decades plus he taught literature, humanities, and the social history of art.

In 2000, under the then mandatory provincial retirement code—which he called draconian—Jerry was forced to officially retire. But he never actually did so. He continued to teach in Graduate Liberal Studies and at Vancouver Community College until just a few years ago.

He also, until his last days, mentored students, supervised theses and dissertations, and often participated in events sponsored by the Institute for the Humanities, of which he was the founding director.

He was a true Bibliophile and a true Europhile. (Both of which were reaffirmed as I laboured to clear out his office at Harbour Centre and find good homes for his books, prints, posters, and photographs.)

Jerry was the husband of Sibylle, the father of Andrej and Keira, the grandfather of Tara, Celina, Luca, and Max, and a brother to Arne, all of whom survive him.

Jerry was many different things—often overlapping things—to all the rest of us who survive him.

To some he was a colleague, a collaborator, a co-conspirator.

To others he was an influential and inspiring teacher, a trusted mentor, a second father.

To yet others, he was a pal, he was a friend.

To all who knew him, he was a presence.

I miss you, Jerry, but “I’ll continue to see you in all the old familiar places that this heart of mine embraces.” [paraphrasing a 1944 recording from Billie Holiday]

Eleanor Stebner I arrived from The University of Winnipeg in 2005 to serve as the J.S. Woodsworth Chair in the Humanities. Since taking early retirement in 2019, I am the Simons Fellow in Graduate Liberal Studies, where I continue to teach and mentor students.