

Memorial Minute for Helen Krich Chinoy

Read by Kiki Smith at the October 27, 2010 Faculty Meeting. She noted that Deborah Lubar contributed to the remarks:

Our beloved friend and mentor Helen Chinoy, Professor of Theatre, died this May. While we of her huge theatre family mourn her loss, we are happy to celebrate a remarkable colleague.

We celebrate her landmark scholarly works that she edited and co-wrote, all essential texts for both theatre students and professionals for nearly 50 years. She won praise and prizes for her work ranging from her election to the College of Fellows of the American Theatre to an Emmy award for her contributions to a PBS documentary on the Group Theatre.

Of course, there is much more of Helen to celebrate. She guided and inspired countless students, but it wasn't just her students who were inspired. All of us in the profession, whether playwrights, designers, actors, directors or historians were nudged and nurtured toward playing our own part and making a meaningful mark on the rising force of women in American theatre. We benefitted from her sharp, critical eye and marvelously opinionated sensibility as she challenged and encouraged us in our work. Professionally she was on our backs but then she would have us to her home, feed us and support us through personal joys and woes, our professional successes and failures, chatting all the while about the entire sweep of American theatre and its geniuses, half of whom she had known. She evoked in us a sense of the traditions we came from, and courage to move them forward.

She wrote "I feel as if I was marked for life by the idea of theatre as culture, community and commitment." She left her mark on so many of us who will forever be grateful.