Mentee’s Cross-Country Shadow Visit with Mentor Provides Meaningful Experience

reprinted from Marquette Mentors Newsletter, May 2022 Dan DeWeerd, Director

In March, Arts mentee Corena Smith received the Marquette Mentors travel stipend to travel to the Washington, D.C. area to meet and shadow her mentor, Dr. Mary Hunt. Arts ’72 and co-founder of WATER, the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual. The visit was filled with many educational experiences for Corena as well as strengthening the friendship and partnership with Dr. Hunt, who has served in Marquette Mentors every year since the program was established in 2013.

Their two days together included meeting Dr. Hunt’s colleagues at the WATER office, touring George Washington University and American University Law schools, the area’s historic sites and Marquette University’s Lea Aspin Center for Government, which Corena considered a major highlight of the trip.

The pair have developed a meaningful partnership this year, so meeting for the first time enhanced the relationship on many levels, including the opportunity for Corena to see firsthand the organization Mary co-founded. “The community and network that WATER has built in 35 years is extraordinary,” Corena says.

“They have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. meet Mary and address my future career goals was really meaningful,” says Corena.

Throughout the program, she generously donated her time to support and connected me with so many inspiring people, which is so commendable.”

WATER’s Commitment to Justice!

We affirm that all of WATER’s efforts are focused on changing the cultural and intellectual assumptions that ground discrimination, exclusion, and destruction. We gather and work in service of a vision of inclusion, equality, and justice. All are welcome.

Thank YOU, WATER Donors! You are WATER!

You make WATER programs and collaboration available to our alliance, making religious and social change worldwide based on feminist religious values without regard for anyone’s ability to pay if we share, together we have enough.

Become a WATERgem! Give Every Month.

Join our monthly giving program and provide a steady stream of support for people who need WATER. Especially during this Covid-19 time, this convenient way to give ensures sustaining support for WATER’s life-giving programs. Donate at a level that is possible for you each month ($10, $25, $50, $100, or more) through our secure PayPal account. Click ‘Donate’ on WATER’s website at www.waterrawomensalliance.org for more information.

Rosemary Radford Ruether “In Memory of Her” By Mary E. Hunt

These remarks are adapted from an appreciation of Rosemary Radford Ruether published by the American Academy of Religion.

“If human beings are like stars, Rosemary Radford Ruether is a constellation. So many are her dimensions, so bright her light.”

That was my contribution to a collective poem organized by her friends and colleagues in 2016. Her death on May 21, 2022 in Pomona, California, means that the sky may be dimmer, but the light endures.

Rosemary Radford was born on November 2, 1936, in St. Paul, Minnesota and grew up in Washington, DC and Lajolia, CA. Her father died when she was twelve. She was raised by her mother, aunts, and her mother’s friends, so it was no wonder that she had early interest in matriarchies.

She studied Religion and Philosophy at Scripps College; Ancient History for a masters at Claremont Graduate School, and Classics and Patristics for a doctorate at CGS. She taught at numerous institutions, most notably Howard University School of Religion (1966-70) and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and Northwestern University (1976-2003) where, as the Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology, she was the first woman to hold an endowed chair. She taught at other institutions as well—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the like—but the only Catholic one was Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles where she began her career. Rosemary was largely persona non grata in Catholic institutions because of her scholarship on contraception, abortion, same-sex love, and ordination of Catholic women to the priesthood, all of which are now widely accepted views among Catholics. After she retired, Dr. Ruether was offered a lecturership at the University of San Diego that was disgracefully rescinded. The Catholic Church’s loss was the world’s gain.

From 1966-1999, she reported approximately 900 speaking engagements at major universities and church conventions with “international speaking engagements and teaching” in 24 countries. I would guess that in the following 15 years of her astonishingly productive career—47 books, hundreds of chapters and articles, lectures beyond counting—those numbers jumped substantially. Many people thought she wrote easily, but she clarified that writing took time and research.

Rosemary’s early civil rights work and her decade at Howard University grounded her intersectional analysis early in her career. Anti-racism predated even some of her work on gender-focused feminism. Her first scholarly foray into modernity, after a long immersion in the Patristic period, was occasioned by being a woman of childbirth age in a Christian denomination that banned contraception. It was not long before poverty and colonialism were in her focus; concern for Earth was always foundational.

She realized that women of color in the north and women from the global south had theological voices that were silenced or excluded and needed to be amplified. She produced anthologies, edited encyclopedias, encouraged conferences and networks, and published in the popular arena as well as in academic outlets. Her work was all in the service of empowering many voices and expressing new ideas.

Stories of her quiet, unshowy kindness are as plentiful as her publications. Many of her graduate students recount her care for them, her nurture and encouragement as they experienced sexism and discrimination through academic thickets. Women of my generation who had few role models learned from Rosemary how to be professional without being elite, how to be supportive of one another, how to keep family and friends in the foreground while engaging in a world spanning career, and how to enjoy our work and one another.

(continued on page 2)
Thank you, Rosemary Radford Ruether!

This thank you is adapted from a prayer tribute to Rosemary Radford Ruether for the Women’s Council: North America Presentation on Hope and Resistance in June 2022.

You claimed your Catholic faith, challenged the kyriarchy, and encouraged resistance in your many books like Sexism and God Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology. We are indebted to you for your historical and theological scholarship and your passion for social activism.


You showed us how to apply our wisdom and calling us to do the same.

You brought together illuminating writings of Latin American, Asian, and African women in Women Healing Earth to address the intertwining issues of ecology, class and race, religion and its liberating energies.

You thank us for recognizing that women worldwide are in the struggles to overcome violence against women and nature, and to ensure ecological preservation and social justice.

You called us to create communities of worship and mutual support, to revise the sacraments and celebrate the Eucharist, and to develop women’s liturgies in our cultural contexts in Women, Church, Theology & Practice.

We are in communion church together! © 2023 Diana L. Neu, Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Critical DNeu@HERs.com

About Rosemary Radford Ruether:


Video: Mary E. Hunt speaking on Rosemary Radford Ruether, Circulating Juntas, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j8q7iXYSVU&ab_channel=CirculatingJuntas


Program Highlights for Spring & Summer 2022

Thank you to all who sat and participated in those Zoom programs. We had people from more than 20 countries join us! You can listen to the audio and find notes at wwwواترمعلوماتوو.ORG/Programs

WATERtalks

In January, Susan Thistlewaite, ordained minister, executive President of the International Theological Seminary, spoke on her new book What She Will Become, a mystery novel that shows feminism in action.

In March, Karen Morrison, ordained United Church of Christ minister, talked about her book Letters from Old Screamr Mountain and her pilgrimage to a place where southern white writer Julian Smith denounced white supremacy at mid-century.

In April, Dr. Yolanda Pierce, Professor and Dean of the Howard University School of Divinity, discussed her newest book in My Grandmother’s House: Black Women, Faith, and the Stories We Want.

In May, Jennifer Harvey, writer, teacher, and activist who has long been engaged in racial justice and white antiracism work explored ideas from her New York Times bestseller Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unequal America.

In June, The Rev. Dr. Lisa Allen, Emmy-award winning pastor, professor, and public theologian, discussed her new book in A Woman’s Theology of Worship, Liturgy, Justice, and Community Righteousness.

WATERrituals with Diana L. Neu

In January, Diana L. Neu led a ritual titled “Step into the Pool with Sophia Tér-Ter” where we raised up a wise African American woman by telling her story and challenging another one to step into the pool with the water and call us to do so.

In February, during the ritual “Honing the Faces of Cancer for World Cancer Day” we remembered those who have gone before us and assured those living with cancer that they are not alone.

In March, “Come to Wakes of Peace on World Water Day,” we celebrated our awareness especially from the war and Covid, and prayed for peace, health, and hope.

In April, the WATER Community joined together to “Prase the Sun for Summer Solstice,” honoring the longest day and shortest night of the year, sharing in fulfillment, passion, and creativity.

In July, “The Saving Grace of Fun” we celebrated fun as an integral part of salvation, a human-right that foreshadows the pleasure of eternal life.

WATERtalks


In March, we gathered for International Women’s Day on the theme of “Women’s Quest for Peace” and took the time to share what we are doing individually and collectively to bring a peaceful, just future.

In April, The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas led a discussion of ‘My Name is Paul Murray,’ a marvelous documentary about the life of Paul Murray, a remarkable civil rights lawyer, Episcopal priest, and so much more.

In May, WATER joined the Sisterly Group of Kirkgate Retreat Center to discuss the acclaimed 2022 documentary “Heal, Beings:” that tells the story of the Immaculate Heart Community (IHC) and how they refused to capitulate to a patriarchal Roman Catholic Church.

In June, Soaia, Diane Wear, and David W. McCauley, Jr. discussed Carla De Soaia’s new book Dancing with the Divine: A Flow of Grace, a collection of dancers’ stories including theological reflections, design, paintings, and poetry.

WATERmeditations

In January, Carrie Roach shared the words of Miriam Theresita Winter in her “Psalm of Grieving” with the group for contemplation.

In February, Brad Lutz led the session focused on “Finding Purpose and Identity in Times of Transition” using Naomi Shainberg Nye’s poem, “Famous,” as a resource.

In March, Lillian Lewis led the session titled “Solitude in the Vault” where we looked to the wisdom of spiritual leaders who seek solitude and invite us to imagine what we want.

In April, Jan Elsea sparked the meditation by reading Mary Oliver’s poem “Prayer” while offering her own insights.

In May, Cynthia Tootle, an expert on goddesses and a minister at the Takoma Metaphysical Chapel, led us in a time of reflection focused on “Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom.”

In June, Virginia Day used the song “’The World is Falling Down,’ I Hold My Hand” by Abbie Lincoln that stirred our discussion.

In July, Cheryl Nichols offered the poem “The Red Brocade” by Naomi Shainb Nye as a scribingboard for contemplative prayer under the theme of “Hospitality.”