



JUDITH TENDLER

December 30, 1938 - July 25, 2016

A Chapel service will take place Wednesday, 7/27/2016 at 1:00 pm.

Judith Tandler was born December 30, 1938 in Detroit MI. She was the daughter of first generation Jewish immigrants from Ukraine. Her family was very close and she loved her parents dearly. Her father, was a newspaper man who worked for the Detroit news in the beginning of the civil rights era and she was deeply affected by the power of his words, his activism, and his love of language. Judith always wanted to be a good writer and to make him proud with the power of her own words. Her mother was also an activist who taught Judith the importance of connecting to people, listening to their stories, and working for the powerless. Judith's mother went to work, after her husband died very young, to teach illiterate adults to read. Judith was clearly impacted by many of these early experiences and dedicated her own life to listening, writing, and empowering the disadvantaged. Her father, Louis Tandler, mother Mollie Medow Tandler, and sister RoseAnna Tandler Worth all predecease her.

Judith had many early academic successes. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of Michigan and then did her PhD work at Columbia on a scholarship from the Ford Foundation. She was an economist for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Brazil, worked as an economist for the Oakland Police Department, was a fellow at the Center for the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, and taught at UC Irvine, and

UC Berkeley before moving to Boston to work at MIT in 1984. She taught at MIT for almost 30 years before retiring. Her legacy at MIT covers not only a broad range of academic talks, articles, and books, but she was really known for her dedication to her students, who gave her work purpose and drive. She was relentless, making sure that they knew they understood the implications of their own work before sending them out to the rest of the world. She was then their strongest advocate once they left her nest.

Although Judith never had her own children, she was a dedicated aunt, who provided much love and guidance to her family. She is survived by Laura Susan, Greg, and Melanie Jensenworth, Nancy Lou, Drake, Mollie Rose, and Isaac Emerson Meadow, Sarah Elizabeth Worth, William Royce Price, William Tandler Price, and Charles Rabon Price.

Officiator:

Rabbi Alana Alpert

To further honor the memory of Judith Tandler, the family suggests you make a donation to

Alzheimer's association

25200 Telegraph Rd. #300

Southfield, MI 48033

248-351-0280

www.alz.org

or

Music & Memory

160 First Street

PO Box 590

Mineola, New York 11501

www.MusicandMemory.org

Cemetery Details

Hebrew Memorial Park Cemetery

33230 Gratiot
Clinton Township, MI 48035

Previous Events

Service

JUL 27. 1:00 PM (ET)

Hebrew Memorial Chapel
26640 Greenfield Rd
Oak Park, MI 48237
(248) 543-1622
info@hebrewmemorial.org
<https://www.hebrewmemorial.org/>

Tribute Wall

Jl

“ I had been Judith's esthetician for many years starting in the mid 80s. I lost touch with her several years ago and just found out she had passed. May she rest in peace.

Jill - December 15, 2020 at 01:48 PM

BH

“ I've seen various accounts stating that Judith had no children of her own, which technically is true, but she did have three legally adopted children, one of which is me, Becky. I am the daughter of the man she married when I was 11 and divorced in my mid-20s. That's a long time of being a mother. She definitely had children, and I know she cared for us.

Unfortunately, Judith and I lost touch -- which explains this belated post. I have great respect for Judith; in many ways she was a mentor, with her stories of her travels, the small trinkets she'd bring home from Brazil and other locales, her exceptional cooking, and her fabulous ability to entertain, including having any number of folks over for the most lovely of Thanksgiving meals.

She also had a wonderful aesthetic -- for art, home decor, you name it. She taught me how to sew. She taught me the value of hard work, on so many counts. She was central to my upbringing, and I miss her. I wish we'd been able to reconnect, as she was just so interesting. There was still much for me to know about and learn from Judith. Mostly, I'd have loved for her to know how much I appreciated her. I'd have loved for her to know my children. Her grandchildren.

Rest well, Judith. You are remembered, so very fondly!

Becky Hennessy - September 07, 2017 at 09:45 PM

MK

“ I met Judith in 1973, when we were both fellows at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. I read a very large fraction of her reports over the years. I heard of her adventures and worries. She was a model scholar and friend. We did not see so much of each other after she went to MIT and I had left, but she was always in mind, but I did stay in the "spare room" of her condo, and we shmoozed and loved being together.

Martin Krieger

Martin Krieger - July 13, 2017 at 08:27 AM

DM

“ Is it Judith's fault that I've lost some credibility with my more ideologically left colleagues? Perhaps. I started working with Judith on issues around small farmer access to traditional wholesale markets in El Salvador, convinced that the whole system is rigged and needs wholesale reform. And of course that's true. But Judith prodded me to look for the rarely examined instances in which things are working a little better, where a mayor is opening up “shelf space” for local produce, where a union has advocated successfully with a market administrator on behalf of small farmers, where tomato wholesalers stock local varieties due to consumer preferences. These pockets of success may point the way towards more systemic policy recommendations – at least that's the way I framed it in my thesis with Judith's encouragement! Would it have been easier to just tell a story of systematic exclusion with no nuance? No question. Would I challenge fewer people today in the NGO and social movement world to identify where things are modestly working, however imperfectly? Absolutely. I owe so much to Judith for helping me understand how to move progressive reform forward in the flawed world in which we live.

Judith Tandler presente!

Daniel Moss

daniel moss - October 11, 2016 at 12:19 PM

MR

“ Judith has been more than a teacher and an advisor for me; she was a mentor and a friend, and more than anything a constant inspiration. When she was my advisor at DUSP, at first I was fearing her “green” comments on my papers, but with time I realized that I was learning so much through them that I was looking forward to getting them. I would savor each single one of those (sometimes illegible!) mark ups and feel so grateful for the effort and attention Judith put into reading my papers. After DUSP, I was lucky enough to stick around Cambridge and continue my relationship with her. We would go out for walks, or eat a bite together and it was always so refreshing. After spending those evenings together, I would feel energized about my work and more passionate about my next project. She impacted my way of approaching work in a deep way, asking all those “whys” that she always asked her students and looking for some positive outcomes even in the most unlikely contexts. I feel really privileged to have met Judith in my life, and I will always carry a part of her with me.

Monica Romis
Cambridge, MA

Monica Romis - October 02, 2016 at 06:31 PM



“ 11 files added to the album New Album Name



Nancy Meadow - August 15, 2016 at 02:30 PM

MM

“ *Judith was a close friend and a close colleague. She contributed to improving my life in so many ways. I hope I made some contribution in return: I may be the only person who ever made detailed comments and suggestions on two separate draft of Good Government in the Tropics before it went to press. I have many great memories, and will ensure that Judith's work is still read.*
Mick Moore

Mick Moore - August 10, 2016 at 06:03 AM

“ For her students, Judith Tandler is a never-to-be-forgotten professor, because she undoubtedly left part of herself in them. Judith followed her students so close and carefully that their work was always a joint undertaking. She would spend hours revising her students’ papers, striving to improve their work, writing comments about each paragraph, some of these were often longer than the original one written by the student. So was she generous with her time and work to her students and colleagues.

I was always impressed by the power of her writing. Judith wrote as a craftsman, carefully choosing each word, and organizing sentences and paragraphs in a clever way in order to improve clarity and coherence of her work. And she could do the same with pieces written by others. Her ability to turn one’s work upside down or to deconstruct and reconstruct it to make it clearer and powerful was one of her best talents.

As a scholar, she could argue as no one, connecting ideas, facts and evidence with theory in a very convincing way. Judith would not take anything for granted, always demanding solid and clear explanation about whatever was said or written. I have never forgotten her advice about always asking why things happen, why they happen at one point in time and not earlier or later, why at one place and not in others, why in one way and not in other ways, and other “whys”. This was her way of analyzing projects and cases. And this is one part of her that lives in myself.

She had a brilliant mind and was an expert in finding how to promote changes, even in face of the hardest scenario. She would say: start simple, from where constraints are less, draw lessons along the way and then move on to the most complex problems. This strategy proved to be very powerful in many development projects I have worked or have followed.

I am very proud for having been her student. Having had her as professor and advisor was a true privilege, a fact that definitely enhanced my training as a planner and as an academic.

I will miss her forever.

Mônica Amorim

Fortaleza, Brazil

monica_amorim@terra.com.br

Monica A Amorim - August 04, 2016 at 10:27 PM

RG

“ 4 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Raquel Gomes - July 31, 2016 at 05:53 PM

AM

“ I met Judith for the first time in 1968. I was sitting in my office in the Bank of the Northeast in Fortaleza when she came in with Albert Hirschman. They were doing research on development issues in the Brazilian Northeast. I was struck by that young woman, her elegance and beauty and intelligence. I only met her again 19 years later, in 1987, when she returned to Fortaleza, this time doing research for the World Bank. We had a productive meeting (she asked me the questions of why things were like they were...) and after the meeting I told her that we had met before.

We started a friendship that lasted forever. We did many things together and I followed up on many of her projects in Brazil. She helped me in many ways. I got in touch with many of her students and learned how important she was in imbuing them with a true spirit of openness, objectivity and freedom from established theories.

At one time, I brought her to visit my home town in Ceará and to talk with simple people of the semiarid lands. She enjoyed talking with everyone and never stopped asking questions and valuing the responses of the simple people of the interior. She always wanted to learn about the hopes of everyone and how they could be accomplished.

Besides being an illuminated researcher who always wanted to know what works well (she gave less importance to negative lessons), she was a faithful friend and a beautiful human being. I miss her very much.

Antonio Magalhães, Brasilia, Brazil

antonio r magalhaes - July 29, 2016 at 08:59 AM

EB

“ We at DUSP were saddened to hear that our colleague and dear friend Judith passed away. Judith was a wonderful friend and an amazing scholar. She will be sorely missed.

Please see the in memoriam pages on the department and MIT news web sites.


<http://dusp.mit.edu/>

<http://news.mit.edu/2016/judith-tendler-dusp-professor-emerita-dies-0727>

Yours in sympathy

Eran Ben-Joseph and the DUSP family

Eran Ben-Joseph - July 27, 2016 at 08:04 PM

 Laura Orlando

“ In the classroom, Judith Tendler asked us to connect our hearts to our heads. She had us look at what works and why. Long before Rebecca Solnit wrote so beautifully about hope, Judith Tendler was showing her students and readers hope's bones. The stuff that holds it together and makes it more than a wish for something other.

It's hard work, keeping the heart connected to the head. But thankfully I've got her words to return to, and memories of a vibrant, thrilling classroom at MIT to remind me.

Laura Orlando

Lorlando@bu.edu

Laura Orlando - July 27, 2016 at 05:13 PM

MT

“ *In the last stages of my dissertation process when I was in the throes of a major writing block, Judith took me out for dinner. We went to get Sushi at a favorite place near her home....and then walked over, in that pleasant Fall evening, to her place for coffee.*

*All that while there was no mention at all of the writing block, or the agony or guilt that I felt about it....the mood that Judith created was just the opposite....light, relaxed, pleasant, fun. She talked of the books she was reading, incidents from her field trips, thoughts she had about various projects, even a movie. It was a magical evening. Then when she was getting ready to drive me home, she picked out a book from under her living room table that she had been reading: Flannery O'Connors *Mystery and Manners*. She opened it to a chapter she said she wanted me to read...about how writing is about solving a mystery. On the drive home we talked about Flannery O' Connor, her style of writing, her short prolific life, her Catholic faith and its deep influence on her life and her mastery of the craft of writing....how she turns to O'connor when she is stuck and how each time she comes away inspired. She said to keep the book, its a gem. That was the kind of mentor she was....that was the kind of human being she was...beyond compare, one of a kind...*

I am so grateful for the good fortune of having had her in my life....as my teacher, mentor,friend...supporter.... and a role model without peer. A brilliant mind, an intense, beautiful soul. One who will live on in our hearts forever...thank you for everything...

Meenu Tewari - July 26, 2016 at 10:01 PM

ME

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Marcy Epstein - July 26, 2016 at 08:23 PM

ME

“ *I shared Judith's most coveted family-- her nieces and grand-niece and nephews. I shared family suppers and holidays, raising a glass, snuggling babies. I shared her birthday. This year when I turned 50, I spent it with Judith on our birthday, sharing chocolate babke and schmoozing, holding her hand for the first time. I shared with Judith my academic yearnings, a position of strength in the face of intellectual havoc, especially with our losses, especially in the face of Alzheimer's. I shared the news and knitting with Judith, tried to read Portuguese with some sort of grace, squinted with her under the sun. I really don't know what Judith has shared back with me in all this time. I want to share with you all how she smiled a lot, rolled her eyes, ate sweets, sat quietly and at peace, followed conversations, laughed, ran, and more. I only know what I shared with her. But in my best imagining, I remember Judith as an evolving bright soul of great sensuality and taste, and I feel imbued with her, like sharing, from just these recent years. And I only imagine what I missed of this great person. I don't like parting from her. It's much harder to share in this.*

Marcy Epstein - July 26, 2016 at 08:20 PM

JB

“ I was one of her many students, in awe of and somewhat terrified of the green pen. Her approach shaped us profoundly. She was always there with another question, digging to get past the obvious. She taught us but also helped us form our ideas and express them clearly. I am so grateful she agreed to include me among her students.

Julia Bucknall - July 26, 2016 at 07:15 PM

S(

“ This will be short. Judith would expect that from her student. (And I see the green pen looming in the distance, ready to pounce). Judith was the kind of true mentor who, in any one life time, a rare few would have the fortunate to experience. Her lessons have shaped so many of us and provided us the foundation for success. I will miss her deeply.

It was an enormous honor for me to be able to give the commencement address to the DUSP class last month, and to acknowledge just a few of Judith's pearls. I share a bit from that speech below:

"Now I must pause a moment to pay tribute to Judith Tendler, whose lessons I have applied for more than 25 years and who truly was the most outstanding mentor, teacher, advisor and researcher I have ever had the honor and privilege to know. Please raise your hand if you have had the opportunity to work with Judith, read her works, or hear about her teachings.

Let me share just a few of the lessons/wisdom I gained from Judith:

- *You can learn much more from studying what works (best practice) than studying what does not work.*
- *Qualitative research methods are undervalued/utilized as a tool for effective data collection and can yield findings that change scientific paradigms*
- *No paper is worthy of peer review until it has undergone a minimum 72 rewrites.*
- *Be specific – be concrete. It should really take no more than one page to say anything worth saying*
- *Never use the passive voice*
- *Read widely and outside your disciplinary boundaries*
- *In conducting your interviews, “Just ask why”, that’s how you’ll get to the truth.*
- *There’s no such thing as a stupid question*
- *When conducting interviews in Brazil or anywhere for that matter, it doesn’t hurt to bring a bottle of tequila.”*

Delivered at the 2016 DUSP Commencement Lunch on June 2, 2016 (Sara B. Newman-Freedheim, DUSP Class 1993)

Sara Newman (Freedheim) - July 26, 2016 at 04:39 PM

GK

“ *I heard about Judith's passing while sitting in the library revising a book manuscript that, while conceived after my time as her student at MIT's DUSP, still has her mark all over it. Judith shaped my thinking profoundly: topics like bureaucracy and sewer systems became mysteries to unpack, and unexpected bright spots in local government became reasons to celebrate and to probe ever deeper into the puzzles of state-society relations. Above all, I inherited from Judith a "bias for hope" (to quote Judith's own mentor, Albert O. Hirschman). I am honored to have called Judith my mentor and friend. Part of her will carry on in the many, many students she influenced. (I saved one of her infamous green pens that she used to vigorously mark up her students' work for use in revising my book -- it's a color of ink that I will forever associate with Judith, pushing me to greater depths of inquiry and precision.)*

Gabi Kruks-Wisner

Gabi Kruks-Wisner - July 26, 2016 at 03:36 PM

MG

“ With unerring precision, Judith could ask the question that would set a research project on an intellectual adventure, questioning conventional wisdom, finding important insights into overlooked details, and stimulating new ways of thinking about what was to be considered, measured, or observed. She asked me such questions whenever I set about some project or other, and they inevitably refocused my ideas and energized a continuing discussion, one often pursued over a glass or two of wine. In many ways, she was my scholarly muse. She was also a dear friend, and we shared lunches, dinners, travels, and tales of woe and joy for years. She created a legacy of warmth, respect, and caring among friends, colleagues, students, and family. When she asked her most important question--what surprised you?--the enduring answer for all of us now is "You did, for you shaped and guided us in lasting ways."

Merilee Grindle

Merilee Grindle - July 26, 2016 at 11:06 AM

TB

“ I wish to stop thinking of anything else for a while, to remember the voice, the teachings, the lively creative ideas that Judith put in teaching and research.

I met her as an adult, and only for this reason I didn't idealize her, but appreciated the value of what she has given to all of us - her students - in addition to her value as a rich and deep human being. I hadn't spoken to her for a few years, and heard about a terrible disease that was taking her away from us little by little. However for me she was always there as a presence, representing the proper way of doing our work.

I feel very connected to her and to many of her students by the common passion for research and discovery, for the art of doing something concrete for social equality. I have also always felt very close to her broad, non-specialistic way of being an academic.

I wish many of us who have been her students could find a way collectively to keep her method and her spirit alive. She would like it.

My condolences to her family and to the many who, like me, have loved her

Tito Bianchi - July 26, 2016 at 10:38 AM

GC

“*Judith was a beacon of light for all her students. She was mighty, fierce, razor sharp smart, sassy, and a brilliant mind. She drew us in and then held on tight. Being the towering but grounded intellectual that she was, she was protective and nurturing of us all the while holding our feet to the fire. She made us write, and re-write, and be very clear about what on earth we were trying to say. Writing was a craft. Research was a skill. Comparisons were a tool. Empathy was a value. And language was everything. When we found ourselves drowning in our own muddled thoughts, she dove in and found the gems when we were too blind to see them. She straddled development as a field weaving in economics, new public management, and organizational sociology. She said philosophy was good for us because it taught us to think. She said there was no such thing as a stupid question. She valued studying the Italian post-war south, as much as the American New Deal, as much as inequality in contemporary Brazil. She wanted to know what worked and why, not a great litany of failures. She was one of my best teachers in life and I cannot say this strongly enough: the fact that generations of her students now work in the public sector, focusing on what works and why, and trying to bring change for the betterment of society, is the greatest tribute to a master mentor. Judith will be remembered by hundreds of her students at MIT. My condolences to her family and friends. I hope the fact that hundred of us, unknown to you, mourn her loss deeply. She was a true beacon.*

*Genevieve Connors
gconnors@worldbank.org*

Genevieve Connors - July 26, 2016 at 09:21 AM

GH

“ Judith was a dear friend, and a colleague who I helped recruit to MIT. Her work was remarkable, on the ground research about how institutions functioned to improve everyday life in the developing world, and she worked with students on every project. She taught through her work and shaped the lives and careers of dozens of students.

She was also a personal friend, caring, never afraid to expose her vulnerabilities, welcoming us into her home. I left Cambridge 20 years ago and was not present for her decline, so she remains as I knew her. I will miss her greatly. Nobody was like Judith.

Gary Hack

Gary Hack - July 26, 2016 at 08:52 AM

BS

“ To me she was Judy and she lived on Calvert near Dexter. We went to Durfee Intermediate School and we were friends. One of my fondest memories of Judy was meeting her on the corner of Joy Road and Dexter on many a cold/cool Saturday morning and going by bus all the way to Rouge Park to go horseback riding!!! We spent more time on the buses than on the horses! When we finished 9th grade I believe Judy went on to Central and I went to Mumford and we lost touch. I remember Judy as a good friend and I have thought of her often over the years. She holds a happy and dear place in my heart.

Belinda Salzberg - July 26, 2016 at 06:54 AM

MP

“ Judith was a role model to many of us, academics concerned with social and economic development. A really, really tough academic advisor - for me the toughest one ever - she would leave no word unturned, would not accept any statement without evidence, had every single sentence revisited thousands of times, and would not take one single idea for granted. She was tough and bright. She taught many of us how to think, chastised us in search of clarity and cohesiveness, and worried about disseminating policies that would promote people's well being and welfare. She cared about the half full of the glass and made us believe that it was possible to change the world by paying attention to small things that wroked. All in all, she left an imprint. RIP now.

Monica Pinhanez

Monica Pinhanez - July 25, 2016 at 08:55 PM



“ Judith was someone that changed my life for the better. She was my advisor when I went to DUSP-MIT from 1998-2002. A friend who gave me support in difficult times and the most interesting person I have ever met.

I still remember when she used to push me to write in a clear way and to challenge mainstream ideas. When I went to MIT, I had many ideas about what was wrong and right in economics. In her best way, Judith turned my word upside down and taught to be more open mind and more humble to accept different ideas.

I had the chance to have many “caipirinhas” with her in Brazil, share her lovely Brazilian desert “Doce de Leite” and share her friendship. Sometimes I find myself reading again some book she suggested to me when I was at MIT.

It will be very difficult to go again to Boston/Cambridge and MIT without having Judith around. It will be very difficult to go to Harvard Square, Central Square, Copacabana (RJ), Fortaleza (CE), Mossoró (RN), etc. without thinking about Judith.

I miss the right words to express how she was important to me. I am not sure if I ever had ever the chance to tell her how she changed my life and to thank her for everything she did to me.

The world today will be a little less interesting knowing that Judith is not around. And she must be happy at someplace talking with Albert Hirschman about her endless research, and waiting for us to catch up with her.

My sympathies for her family and friends.

*Mansueto Almeida + 55 61 -99119-7135
mansueto_almeida@uol.com.br
Brasilia, Brazil.*

Mansueto Almeida Jr - July 25, 2016 at 08:24 PM

MM

“ *Ms Judith Tendler was a great academic and a special human being! The last time I got in touch with her was in 2012. She was a distinguished Brazilianist and an expert on development issues in the Northeastern region of Brazil. As she passes away the world loses a bright scholar. However, her outstanding contributions to development theory and practice are durable because they have helped improve the lives of so many people in many countries. May God receive her in His glory!*

Jose Nelson Bessa Maia, Brasilia, Brazil (e-mail: nebessamaia@gmail.com)

MR. JOSE NELSON BESSA MAIA - July 25, 2016 at 08:20 PM