

## Remembrance of Tracey Gladstone-Sovell

by  
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I am a faculty member in the Political Science Department at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. Tracey was my colleague, friend, chair, mentor, and car-pool buddy, and I, along with those of you here, and many more who could not be here today, will miss her greatly.

I could talk a long time about Tracey's many accomplishments and attributes, but will limit myself to a few of the most notable aspects of who she was. I start, however, by mentioning something she wasn't. She wasn't tall in the conventional sense. She would have been the first to tell you that she didn't have the longest legs in the world. What she might not have told you, what she might not have even been fully aware of, or maybe too modest to mention, were the length of her wings. (Yes, you heard me right – wings – like on a bird.) She had some of the broadest & longest wings of anyone I've even known and she put a lot of people --- students , faculty, & staff, under those wings. I was one of them.

She took so many new faculty members and staff, whether they were in Political Science or not, whether they were her official mentees or not, under her wings. She did everything she could to help us succeed. She was a people person and knew most of the people on campus. She knew their academic and outside interests, where

they had gone to school, and of course the names and breeds of their dogs. Once you arrived on campus, she helped you make connections with others on campus who had similar interests. She helped you figure out where your talents would be appreciated, and what opportunities would help you succeed. This help and support from Tracey continued long after we were no longer new arrivals. You could always go to Tracey for advice on teaching, for training on the latest educational technology, or for answers to questions about arcane gen. ed. requirements. You could even go to her when you were just having “one of those hard days” for a chocolate from the stash she kept for just such occasions.

She made room under her wings, not just for us, but for enormous numbers of students also. She did so while they were on campus, when they were first getting launched in their careers, and long after they graduated. She promoted their intellectual curiosity, challenged them to separate facts from opinions, and taught them how to express their ideas more clearly. She found opportunities for students to present their work at undergraduate research conferences and to participate in politics. She helped them think through career options, network, get into graduate school and law school, and find jobs. She even promoted businesses that they started. Again, her interest and attention extended beyond Political Science students. As one alum wrote on this funeral home’s online guestbook, “Tracey was a great professor. She was a

wonderful role model. I wasn't even a political science major, but she went out of her way to provide guidance to me.”

Tracey provided all this support and attention, not just because she had such a big heart, which she did, but also because she wanted to make the world a better place. She found she could do this through her teaching. She supported other faculty and staff at the university, not just because she wanted to help us, but to promote the larger mission of the University. She guided and nurtured students, not just because she cared about them personally, which she did, but because they would go out into the world and make it a better place through their own careers and through political engagement. It did not matter whether they shared her political views or not. It did matter to her that they thought, analyzed, and acted as responsible citizens.

This work extended beyond the River Falls campus. By serving on nationwide political science professional committees, presenting at American Democracy Project and Political Science conferences, by publishing articles and two editions of an innovative American Government textbook, Tracey reached far more people than even her very large wings could cover.

I want to extend my sympathy to Jim and the rest of her family, here and out east. While she wasn't born a Sovell, I

know she felt the full warm embrace from Jim's family, young and old, and in that sense became a Sovell, in addition to being a Gladstone. She adored Jim. I can't tell you how many times in the car pool she agonized over what to get him on his birthday, Valentine's day, and Christmas. He's not at all materialistic, you know, so it wasn't easy because she wanted to give him something very special. And the love and caring went both ways. No one visiting Tracey during her illness could miss the tender and thoughtful care that Jim gave to her. It is simple justice that such a loving and caring woman was herself the recipient of such compassionate love.

She will be missed by us all. I know there will be times I'll start to forward her some interesting article before I remember she's gone. I'll hear a Springsteen tune or see a dog that looks like Tux and think of her. Tracey would want us to carry on and to use our memories of her to help us reach out our wings over others in our lives, to nurture and encourage them, just as she did for us, and to make the world a better place.