

“You can never have enough chocolate.” - Tracey Gladstone-Sovell



## Tracey Gladstone-Sovell

**August 22, 1954– February 4, 2009**

Of the many adjectives used to describe Dr. Tracey Gladstone-Sovell -- who died Wednesday at the age of 54 -- passion tops the list.

Tracey had passion for learning, teaching, and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She was also passionate about her family, friends, chocolate, coffee, conversation – and a black and white rescue mutt named Tuxedo.

“Tracey was a passionate, loving, giving person,” said her long-time friend, Mary-Alice Muraski, Information Technology Services. “She believed in all we are doing at this university.”

She taught political science, but she was so much more than a gifted professor to her students, campus colleagues, family and friends.

“Tracey was a wonderful, committed member of the UWRF community. She truly was called to help students learn, “ said Dr. Brad Caskey, interim dean College of Arts and Sciences. “She was a thoughtful, engaged and responsible citizen.”

“Tracey was an energetic, engaging faculty member on our campus and her friends were many. As her current and former students know, she was a dedicated teacher who gave her energy, enthusiasm, and vast knowledge to promote students’ understanding of politics and political

theory," said interim Chancellor Connie Foster. "Her passion will be missed, but she has also passed it on to so many of her students and colleagues, who will carry her spirit forward."

A New York state native, Tracey earned her bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University, and her master's and Ph.D. from Purdue University.

After five years at Northern State College in South Dakota, Tracey joined the UWRF political science faculty in 1986. Courses she regularly taught included Introduction to American Government and Politics, Western Political Thought, and The Media and American Politics.

In the classroom Tracey would pull appropriate political quotes from history, including Socrates and Nietzsche to spice up her lectures, but she could also tap pop culture.

She was fond of the Rolling Stone 's lyrics, and would repeat them on many occasions, including when a student complained about a grade. "You can't always get what you want, You just might find, You get what you need ...."

"Tracey was a great colleague, friend, and car-pool buddy. She had a big heart. She found great fulfillment in her life by working with her students. I, and many others, will miss her so much," said Dr. Davida Alperin, Political Science professor.

In her post tenure review statement in 2006, Tracey wrote: "When I entered academia I never had the goal of becoming the academic equivalent of rich and famous. I wanted to be able to help pass on my love of learning, particularly of the study of politics and political philosophy to others and to have students grow as people in the way that key professors helped me over the years. ..."

Tracey was active on many university committees, including General Education, served as Political Science department chair, and was involved with many civic engagement initiatives, including the American Democracy Project.

She gave numerous conference presentations, published more than 10 articles, and co-authored *The Web of Democracy – An Introduction to American Politics*.

The College of Arts and Sciences recognized Tracey with its Outstanding Advisor Award in 2004 and Outstanding Service Award in 2007. These awards were among many Tracey received for her service, teaching, and leadership.

Before she was stricken with cancer, Tracey said one of her favorite new sayings was, "It is what it is." A saying that became her reply when asked how she was doing.

"Tracey absolutely loved interacting with students, as a teacher, adviser, coach, and advocate. I don't think she could have chosen a better profession for her passions and skills," said Dr. Wesley Chapin, Political Science professor. "Most of her courses focused on political philosophy, and she thoroughly enjoyed talking about historical and contemporary political theory and philosophy with students."

“She loved incorporating technology into her courses, and for many years served on technology-related committees that helped to start transforming the campus from a low-tech to high-tech environment. She was a mentor to both students and faculty. I saw her on numerous occasions encouraging students to take on new challenges, to be confident in their abilities, and to work hard and succeed,” he said.

“A great many former students kept in touch with her over the years, attesting to the impacts that she had on them, something that was also reflected in their nomination of her for an advisor of the year award. Last year the Political Science Department held its first alumni reunion, and many of our former graduates spoke publicly about their experiences as students in our program, and about Tracey’s impact on them, in particular,” Chapin said.

While she will be deeply missed, faculty and friends said her legacy will live on in the students’ lives she touched.

### **Funeral service and memorials**

Tracey Gladstone-Sovell, 54, of Birchwood, passed away Feb. 4, 2009 after a year and a half long battle with cancer. Tracey was a political science professor at UW River Falls, and her teaching and her students were the focus of her life. She cherished the time she spent with her students and with her colleagues at UW River Falls, they were her UWRF family. Tracey was also an avid knitter, finding it to be a relaxing pastime. Tracey was preceded in death by her father, Arthur; mother, Shari; and brother, Gary. She is survived by her husband, Jim Sovell; and many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

***Funeral services will be held Monday, 1 p.m., at [Hodroff-Epstein Memorial Chapel](#), 126 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.*** Memorials preferred to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Ramsey County Humane Society, or UW River Falls. Gathering (Shiva): 4825 Lyndale Ave S., Minneapolis, Monday, 4 p.m.

**Memorials:** Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Ramsey County Humane Society, and UWRF Foundation in memory of Tracey Gladstone-Sovell to support the Political Science Department. .