In Memoriam: Deborah Barreau

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Gary Marchionini *Dean and Cary C. Boshamer Distinguished Professor, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill*

Professor Deborah Barreau influenced countless individuals as a teacher, mentor, and colleague. She did so through her inherent belief that there is good in everyone and her willingness to act on that belief and devote time and energy to others. She truly cared about people, and many of the accolades she has received reflect this. In addition to being a gentle and caring human being, Deborah was also an influential scholar who made important contributions to the information field. She combined her training in sociology, organizational behavior, and information science to craft a research agenda that put people at the center of information systems. Her dissertation work introduced the importance of ephemeral information in the workplace and the roles that such ephemeralness (e.g., sticky notes on the desktop monitor) played in illustrating workarounds that people use to deal with monolithic or poorly designed systems. One of her early projects investigated how people organize their computer desktops and a resulting paper (Barreau, D. & Nardi, B. 1995. Finding and reminding: file organization from the desktop, *CHI Bulletin, 27*(3)) is often cited in studies of what has come to be known as personal information management (PIM). Over the years, Deborah continued to study the human and organizational factors that affect complex systems such as libraries and corporate offices, and more basic systems such as personal collections. She was one of the organizers of a series of PIM workshops that have taken place at SIGCHI, SIGIR, ASIST, and CSCW conferences over the past several years. She co-edited important publications that have driven the field forward (e.g., the special issue of ACM Transactions on Information Systems in 2008).

These contributions stand as testimony to her creativity and vision in defining important research trends and her careful attention to empirically grounded results that inform our understanding of human information interaction and system design.

Although she was an active researcher in this vibrant international PIM community, and was cognizant of her scholarly impact and legacy, she always believed that her first responsibility was to the people around her — her students and colleagues. She won teaching awards at UNC and nationally (ASIST) and was a mentor to many graduate students as they completed theses and dissertations. A warm smile and sage advice were more important to Deborah than publications and citations. This was her gift to all who knew her and we will miss her smile and advice but remember always how much she cared for others. For those who did not know her personally, her scholarship on the human elements of information systems will have to do, and it will surely do quite well to help us value people first in all our information work.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

A faculty member at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Deborah Barreau was also a founding editorial member of the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, and we dedicate this issue to her memory.