

PROFESSOR LYRA RIABOV (1939-2024)

(From *Union Leader*, May 14, 2024)

“We lost a Great Person, our friend and colleague, who also was a diligent reviewer for the *Rivier Academic Journal* since its first edition of 2005. We express our deep condolences to her family and colleagues from Southern New Hampshire University.” – Dr. Vladimir V. Riabov, Editor



Lyra Riabov (née Shusterman, formerly Bentsman) 84, died May 12, 2024, at her home surrounded by her family, in Bedford, NH.

She was a long-time professor at Southern New Hampshire University where among her many achievements, she collaborated on founding the TEFL program.

Lyra Riabov was born in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), Russia and immigrated to the United States with her first husband, their two twin daughters and their surviving parents in 1982. In 1992, she married Vladimir Riabov with whom she settled in Bedford. They had a wonderful life together, continuing their rewarding careers and traveling the world.

Lyra is survived by her husband Vladimir Riabov, her twin daughters Olga (Daniel) Barron and Julia (Seth) Osher, and her grandchildren Aaron Osher, Dov Osher and Chai Osher, her sister Tatyana Dudochkin (Alex Belayev), her niece Yelena Dudochkin (David Berry), and grandnieces Katerina and Alisa.

Services will be held at Stanetsky Memorial Chapel (1668 Beacon St, Brookline, MA) on Wednesday, May 15th at 11:30 a.m., followed by the burial at the Puritan/Mt. Sinai Cemetery on Baker St, West Roxbury, MA. ■

OBITUARY

Lyra Riabov was a dedicated mother and grandmother, a loving wife, an exceptional educator, linguist, and a force of nature. She was the light in the room for everyone who knew her. Born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in the Soviet Union at the onset of WWII, the 900-day siege from which her mother escaped, on the last train out of the city, with the toddler Lyra in tow. Lyra spent her formative years and university education in Stalingrad (later Volgograd), where her father was stationed after the war. Her exceptional talent for linguistics and simultaneous interpretation was quickly noticed by the powers that be, which led to an exciting first career in Intourist, where she thrived professionally and got to see a large part of the country, as well as formed lifelong friendships that reached all the way to New Hampshire.

Once she started her family, she transitioned her career into teaching, and it was only a few years before she started an underground school for Jewish families and Refusniks who wished to emigrate to create a better life full of opportunities and free from discrimination and persecution. More than 2000 students passed through her home school in Leningrad. By the time she and her family were able to emigrate themselves in 1982, the vast network of her alumni spanned all corners of the U.S., Canada, Australia, Italy, and of course, Israel. She taught them English; they explored their Jewish culture and

faith together, she opened their eyes to the world outside the iron curtain, as well as shared her wisdom in helping them achieve their emigration goals.

Lyra immigrated to Manchester, New Hampshire with her first husband, their two twin daughters and their surviving parents in April of 1982. Her determination to give her children a better future was unshakable, and she moved heaven and earth to make it happen. From finding a way to get them into an English school where they lived in Leningrad, even though the school's principal wasn't inclined to admit Jewish children, to supporting them in every way after immigrating to the United States, she was the definition of a mama bear for her twins. The girls' B'Not Mitzvah was one of the first mileposts of their lives in America that affirmed her decision to emigrate from the Soviet Union. One of her proudest moments as a mother was when the girls were accepted and decided to attend the University of Pennsylvania.

In the meantime, her career thrived. She was one of the founding members of the American Language and Culture Center at New Hampshire College (now Southern New Hampshire University) and the graduate Teachers of English as a Foreign Language program at SNHU. She developed and implemented new techniques using the latest technologies and pushed the program forward to exceptional standards. Her talent was unsurpassed. She was regularly invited to present at annual international and regional conferences, and her students continued to seek her out years after graduating to thank her for her contribution to their success. She was a great educator and linguist, but she was also incredibly kind and nurturing to her students, friends, and family. She did not retire until she was 75, and only did so because of the increasing challenges from her Parkinson's disease.

Stories about Lyra's incredible life could fill up volumes, but one of the most remarkable chapters in it is a very human one. Lyra met the love of her life in her second act. During the years of the Soviet Union's reforms, Lyra was approached to help orchestrate and develop a program for Soviet executives to learn about American business practices, culture, and economics through SNHU. In the very first group, she formed a bond and friendship with Vladimir, leading to a great love, a beautiful marriage, and a lifelong partnership. Vlad was embraced by her whole family from the start and has been at the heart of it ever since. Lyra and Vlad travelled the world together, saw their family grow through the twins' marriages and enjoyed adventures with their three grandchildren. Vlad has been her rock and continues to be one for the whole family. The void she leaves behind is unfillable, but the love, strength, and tenacity she poured into all who knew her is unshakable.

Lyra is survived by her husband Vladimir Riabov, her twin daughters Olga (Daniel) Barron and Julia (Seth) Osher, and her grandchildren Aaron Osher, Dov Osher and Chai Osher, her sister Tatyana Dudochkin (Alex Belayev), her niece Yelena Dudochkin (David Berry), and grandnieces Katerina and Alisa. ■

REMEMBERING LYRA RIABOV
(A tribute from former SNHU students and colleagues)

May 21, 2024

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of former SNHU Professor Lyra Riabov. Lyra's obituary can be viewed here. Below is a tribute from her former student Dastan Banae.

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the passing of Professor Lyra Riabov, a revered member of the Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) community. Professor Riabov, who

dedicated over three decades of her life to SNHU, including a distinguished tenure until her retirement, left an enduring impact on our institution and the lives of those she touched through her dedication to language education.

Throughout her tenure at SNHU, Professor Riabov played a pivotal role in shaping the Institute for Language Education. Her commitment to excellence in teaching and research was evident in the diverse range of courses she taught, including Development of Academic Listening Comprehension, Development of Academic Reading, Understanding English Grammar II, and Comparative Culture Studies, among others. Her expertise extended to the realm of technology, where she explored innovative approaches to language learning through her research in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).



Beyond her academic pursuits, Professor Riabov was instrumental in fostering cultural exchange and understanding among students. Alongside her colleague, Professor Audrey Rogers, she developed models for combining classes to achieve shared and departmental objectives, thereby promoting connections on campus, and advancing the learning of culture and language.

Professor Riabov's impact extended far beyond the confines of the classroom. Her genuine care for her students and colleagues left an enduring legacy of kindness and compassion. She served as a mentor and inspiration to many within the SNHU community, leaving an indelible imprint on their lives.

As we mourn the loss of Professor Riabov, we also celebrate her remarkable contributions to SNHU and the field of language education. Her dedication to fostering a global perspective and nurturing the next generation of educators will continue to inspire us all.

Professor Riabov's presence will be deeply missed, but her legacy of excellence and compassion will endure at SNHU. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time.

Rest in peace, Professor Lyra Riabov.

Your memory will forever be cherished at SNHU. ■