



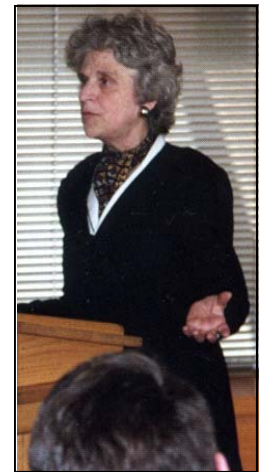
Sardinia, 1992

In Memoriam

Miriam S. Balmuth
1925-2004



At the Tufts-in-Italy Program, 1966



Professor Balmuth addressing guests at her colloquium at Tufts in 1995.

Professor Miriam S. Balmuth 1925-2004

Professor Miriam S. Balmuth, Research Professor in Classics and Art History, passed away on June 30, 2004 in her home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Professor Balmuth joined Tufts' Department of Classics first as a teaching assistant in 1962, and then as an Assistant Professor of Classics in 1964. From 1966-1967 she served as one of the core Classics faculty at the Tufts-in-Italy program. She went on in 1969 to become one of the first women to receive tenure in the Classics Department. She was promoted to Full Professor of Classics and Archaeology in 1977 and in 1990 was made Professor of Classics, Archaeology, and Art History.

Professor Balmuth was the driving force behind the creation of a formal, interdisciplinary Archaeology Program at Tufts. She was named its Director in 1981, serving in that capacity until 1995. The program she forged was, and is, truly interdisciplinary, uniting areas of history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, chemistry, geology, and physics in order to produce students who understand all of the intricacies of the field of archaeology.

She was also the pivotal force behind the graduate program in Classical Archaeology, and even after becoming Research Professor in 1998, she continued to actively mentor graduate students and involve them in her research.

She was a dedicated teacher and advisor who developed strong relationships with her students, both graduate and undergraduate. She genuinely cared about her students and looked at them as future colleagues to be mentored and nurtured in their intellectual development. Her own research was always a key aspect in her classroom teaching and her advising. She inspired generations of students to pursue careers in Classics and/or Archaeology and often included them in her own cutting edge research. In the 1970s and 1980s she spearheaded groundbreaking excavations in Sardinia, leading the first American expedition in 1975 and essentially opening up the field of Sardinian archaeology to international scholarship.

In 1992 at a banquet held in her honor, Professor Balmuth was presented with a *Festschrift* on Sardinian archaeology entitled Sardinia in the Mediterranean-A Footprint in the Sea: Studies in Sardinian Archaeology Pre-



Professor Balmuth in her Tufts Classics office, 1976.
(All photos courtesy of Balmuth Family and the Classics Department Archives.)

sented to Miriam S. Balmuth (Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology) with 41 essays representing the work of 53 scholars from seven countries, including former students who had worked with her in Sardinia.

The 1990s and early 2000s saw her focus her research on hacksilber. Professor Balmuth's research efforts culminated in 2001 with the publication of Hacksilber to Coinage: New Insights into the Monetary History of the Near East and Greece, which she contributed to and edited. The book was described by D T Potts (University of Sydney) in a recent review in the American Journal of Archaeology as "an extremely interesting collection of essays in this beautifully produced volume that will be of interest to a diverse body of scholars with numismatic, metallurgical, archaeological, historical, and philological interests. There is much food for thought in this volume, and not a little controversy."

Throughout the 1990s Professor Balmuth also became involved in the exploration of volcanoes and the landscape and materials they produce, as well as the classical writings they inspired. Three international conferences were held on the topic, and the proceedings from those conferences will be published later this year.

Miriam Balmuth had an iron will and refused, throughout her life, to ever give up or give in when faced with, at times, difficult challenges. She received her Ph.D. in Classical Archaeology from Harvard in 1964 during a period when female doctoral candidates, particularly in archaeology, were few and far between. She went on to thrive in the field of archaeology, building an international reputation, at a time when most of the leading archaeologists were male. All the while, she thrived in a loving 55-year marriage to her husband Norman (who passed away in 2001) and raised two sons.

She was a trailblazer, both in her scholarship and in her career at Tufts. Professor Balmuth was never content to follow the pack or accept the status quo, never afraid to face controversy if she believed her view to be right, and always looking to move forward and to open new doors of inquiry and analysis.

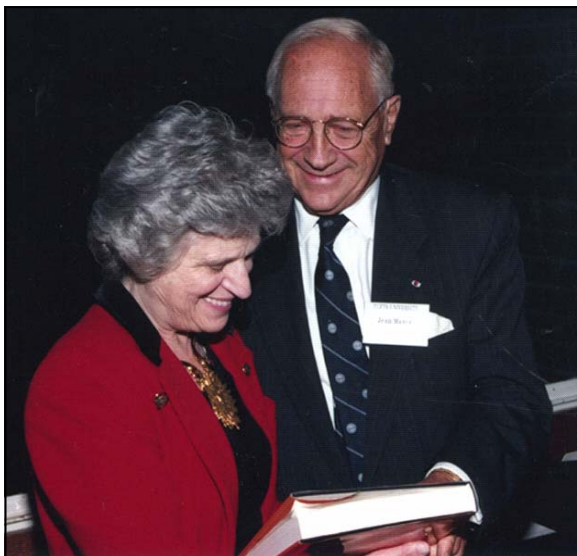
As the words shared below from family colleagues, friends, and students show, she will be greatly missed.

Portions of the above description come from the "Reflections on Miriam Balmuth" segment in Classical News, the Tufts Classics Department newsletter

From Jeremy Balmuth, Son

A sage once observed that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who like to get to the airport early, well ahead of their flight, and those who like to spend the least amount of time possible waiting in the departure lounge. The sage also observed that, invariably, these two types of people marry one another.

Mom didn't have a problem with the departure lounge, but she was busy, she didn't have time to waste. Dad didn't have time to waste either, but he wanted to avoid crises. There is a treasured family story about the time my mother was completing an article for publication before catching an 8:00 PM flight to Europe. Dad was waiting



Professor Balmuth is presented her Festschrift by Tufts Chancellor Jean Mayer at a banquet held in her honor in 1992.

to drive her to the airport. She did not appreciate his first updating her on the shrinking amount of time left before the plane's departure, and then insisting they had to go, and then begging her to leave if she didn't want to miss the flight. Finally, they leave, are lucky to have no traffic delays on the way to Logan, park illegally, rush to the gate, arriving with no time to spare. The agent at the desk tells them to relax, the plane has been delayed and is now scheduled to leave at 8:30. My mother turns to my father, and says, "See, I could have worked another half hour!"

This story encapsulates several truths about my parents. It highlights their work ethic; my mother's drive and success is well known, my father's was just as strong. The story illustrates my father's patience and devotion, and how he smoothed the way for my mother, just as my mother smoothed the way for us, and for so many of her students. The story ends with a punch line; my parents shared a wonderful sense of humor, which could lighten even the crisis my father strove to avoid.

My parents shared so much together, and with my brother and me. They shared their love of learning, their love of music, their love for their families, and respect for all people. They

shared their resources, their thoughts, their help. They were generous in big ways and small. My mom and dad loved to share a great meal. They liked to please people with food, but mostly they liked to share their company.

When I was growing up, I took my parents for granted. I didn't realize how great they were, how much they were giving me. Perhaps their biggest gift was the freedom they granted. It wasn't just the music lessons, it was the freedom to choose my instruments, to travel by myself down to the New England Conservatory. They let me make the arrangements and take the train to the New York Worlds fair in 1964, when I was 13. Giving me the opportunity to attend high school in Rome was another great gift from my parents, and this I did appreciate, even at the time.

But I guess the most important thing they gave me was the example of their own lives and how they conducted themselves. Role model, how hackneyed, but how true. When my father died, I knew I had to live up to his memory. Now, I have to live up to my mother's too.

From Linda Giering Balmuth, Daughter-in-Law

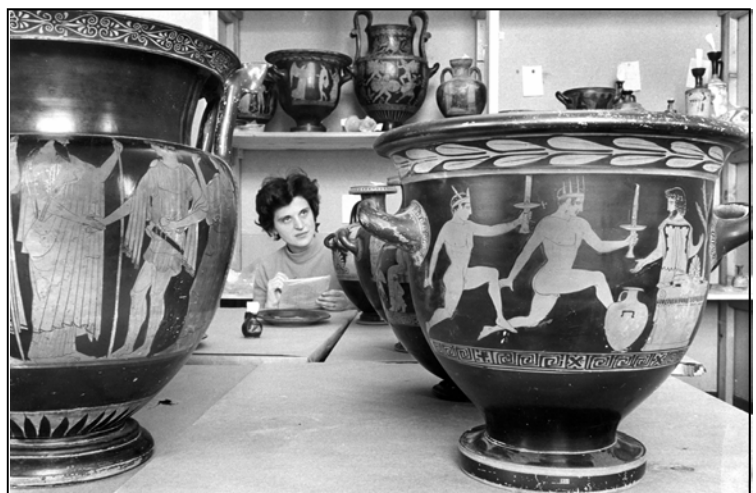
"I have been very moved over the past few months by the outpouring of love and respect for Miriam expressed in the cards and emails we have received since her passing. I always knew the facts of Miriam's career, but now I understand how personal her success was, the depth and breadth of her influence reflected in her students' and colleagues' devotion and eloquent testimonials. They made me wish I'd been a student of hers, wish I'd known her as a young woman, wish I'd known her longer.

Miriam was the ideal mother-in-law; indeed, both Norman and Miriam were the best in-laws one could imagine. I too, had my first sushi dinner with Norman and Miriam. They were free in their affection, and they always took great interest in my activities and opinions. They were very generous to Jeremy and me, both in their lack of demands on us, and in their largess. But, I got the closest to Miriam only when she wasn't busy with her work, and that only happened after she was compromised by her health. But her character, which defined her as a scholar, mentor, and friend, never changed. Miriam never lost her sense of humor, she never lost her work ethic, though it was working at physical therapy to resume walking. She never lost the will to live as fully as she possibly could; if she could no longer read, she'd listen to books on tape. She never lost her joy of living, her joy in her family and friends. She continued to inspire the best in everyone around her."

From Joanne Besonen, Adjunct Professor, Sociology Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell

I met Professor Balmuth when our son, Mark, was her student at Tufts. I can't remember the reason why I was at Tufts that first time, but I do remember the conversation. Prof. Balmuth was telling me the story about Mark's desire to follow archaeology as a second major. She had instructed him to first speak with his parents about this decision, because her experience had been that most parents did not believe archaeology to be a valid professional choice for their children. She told me that she had been so surprised to hear that I was thrilled for Mark in his decision, and that I totally encouraged what some parents would not. I could not believe that others were not able to see the immense value of this discipline, and proceeded to tell Prof. Balmuth about my lifelong love of the classical world and my own fantasy of being an archaeologist. I must have gushed and overflowed with enthusiasm, because her response was that those of us who couldn't get enough of such things had obviously become "victims of the same disease."

Because of our shared "disease," I was often invited by Prof. Balmuth to Tufts to attend some colloquium or other archaeological function. I was totally in awe that I was even remembered, let alone asked to join those I considered experts in archaeology. And then I took the leap and made the decision to go back to school. Prof. Balmuth was right there to offer advice and encourage me every way she could. Each semester of my undergraduate work, in a completely different school, I would receive email from Prof. Balmuth asking how I was progressing and what my



Miriam Balmuth at the Fogg Museum in 1961 while working on her Ph.D. at Harvard University. From 1955-1962 she served as Keeper of the Ancient Coins at the Fogg.

plans were for the following semester. She was my professor and advisor long before I ever got to Tufts. I still can't understand why she took such interest or how she ever had the time to remember and encourage me.

I know that Prof. Balmuth had to have been instrumental in my acceptance to the Classics Department at Tufts. But it was very intimidating for me to find myself in the position of actually being her real student. I don't think she ever understood how much in awe of her I was. She was bigger than life to me and she had accomplished so much. Next to her I felt so tiny and unsophisticated. We shared the same love/disease, but I would never be able to touch the knowledge that she stored even in her fingertips. Prof. Balmuth once asked me when I would start calling her by her first name. I was overwhelmed and could only answer her that not until the day I had my own Ph.D. would I feel equal enough to address her so informally. To this day, I stand in great awe and deep respect for Professor Miriam Balmuth. She was one of a kind.

Thank you, Professor Balmuth, for the considerable role you played in leading me to some of the most incredible experiences of my life—the path of my life's fantasy.

From Susan Ernst, Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Biology, Tufts University

"I remember Miriam as a person of boundless intellectual and physical energy. She will be missed not only by those in the Classics Department and the Archaeology Program, but throughout the school."

From Sol Gittleman, University Professor and Former Provost, Tufts University

"She was the most honest, delightfully combative, and transparent colleague I have ever had. With Miriam, what you saw was what you got, and it was always right up front. She came into the profession when it was tough being a female, and she had to battle her way to the top. I am just proud to have been a companion on some of the journey."

From Heather Lechtman, Professor of Archaeology and Ancient Technology, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Center for Materials Research in Archaeology and Ethnology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts

I am here today as a close colleague of Miriam Balmuth and also as director of the multi-institutional Center for Materials Research in Archaeology and Ethnology. Miriam was one of the founding members of the center which opened in 1977, and she remained its representative from Tufts until her retirement from active teaching in 1998. So I am here, in part, on behalf of the colleagues with whom Miriam worked for 21 years – colleagues from Boston University, Brandeis, University of Massachusetts, Harvard, MIT, the Museum of Fine Arts, Wellesley College – the institutional members of an innovative consortium that drew its intellectual strength and deep educational commitment from Miriam and the small group of dedicated faculty who designed the center and taught our graduate students there.



Miriam and Norman Balmuth at their home in Winchester hosting a group of department colleagues.

In a recent issue of *Classical News*, put out by the Department of Classics here at Tufts, the "Reflections on Miriam Balmuth" comment that Miriam

... was the driving force behind the creation of a formal, interdisciplinary Archaeology Program at Tufts. She was named its Director in 1981 ... The program she forged was, and is, truly interdisciplinary, uniting areas of history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, chemistry, geology and physics ... to produce students who understand all of the intricacies of the field of archaeology.

This was the profile, the complexion of the archaeology we at the center were attempting to build in the late 1970s and early 1980s. An archaeology informed equally by the natural and the human sciences.

Miriam captured immediately the need to provide our enterprise with breadth, especially in what we presented to and demanded from our students. I know that in transforming our field her job was much more difficult than it was for the rest of us, because Miriam encountered a classical archaeology in which disciplines like anthropology and the natural sciences were barely present. Her design of the Tufts Archaeology Program was revolutionary, and her insistence on an inclusive intellectual position as the foundation for a liberal and liberating education were key to the architecture of her program and of

our center.

Miriam and I talked a great deal as colleagues during those years, but we rarely talked about our research. Two subjects dominated our concerns: the first was our students, and the second was the mechanics of how to manage and to move ahead in the face of often inflexible and even oppressive administrations within our respective, elite institutions.

Miriam's students know how deeply committed she was to them and how unwavering she was in her responsibility as an educator. Her colleagues at the center know that too, because we taught the Tufts graduate students Miriam sent to the center.

Initially the Tufts graduate Program in Archaeology was small, but Miriam's students whom she persuaded to enroll in the center's archaeological materials classes were often the very best students we taught – and I say that from personal experience. They were the most open minded, the most dedicated, the most excited by the ability to handle data assembled from a variety of approaches and to integrate those data meaningfully. That was what Miriam required of them.

Miriam and I acknowledged to one another that we were tough, outspoken, senior women faculty members pursuing aggressively new educational paradigms and programs – and that tough, outspoken women were not admired nor often supported at our respective institutions. We did not commiserate. We shared strategy: how to handle the negative reception to programmatic changes we deeply endorsed; how to maneuver around roadblocks; how to cope with administrators who valued in their male colleagues the qualities they disdained in us; and, ultimately, how to prevail within our intellectual arena that was considered neither central nor mainstream by our respective institutions.

All of us here know that Miriam Balmuth did prevail, that she was professionally acclaimed as successful in accomplishing the goals to which she dedicated her career. To quote, again, from the "Reflections" article:

Miriam Balmuth had an iron will and refused, throughout her life, to ever give up or give in when faced with, at times, difficult challenges. ... She was a trailblazer

What perhaps few of us here also know is how high a personal price Miriam paid. Yet she would not have had it any other way.

Miriam was ten years older than I. I looked up to her as courageous, flamboyant, loyal, and with integrity beyond measure. She was responsible for the proudest moment in my own professional career.

In 1989 the Archaeological Institute of America established a lecture series in honor of the renowned and dearly loved classical scholar, George Hanfmann. Jane Scott told me just a few weeks ago that Miriam initiated the effort to establish and to fund the lectureship almost single handedly. Miriam and Jane, as members of the Hanfmann lecture committee, chose me to deliver the inaugural lecture of the series.

I was stunned. My own area of research has focused on Andean prehistory and on Andean prehistoric systems of technology. I suppose I am classified as a scholar of the New World – an Americanist. Dare I confess that my education in the classical world is more than modest. Even so, Miriam and Jane had thought to honor George Hanfmann – whom I knew and with whom I shared an interest in early Mediterranean metallurgies – with a presentation by a student of New World societies.

I have the feeling – though I never discussed it with her – that for Miriam the choice of inaugural lecturer needed to reinforce the intellectual, programmatic, and educational positions she had worked for so long to achieve and to exemplify.

Anyway, Miriam introduced me at the first Hanfmann Lecture at Harvard. I never felt so proud. I was not proud for having been chosen. I was just so proud of Miriam. I thought: "That Miriam! Only she would pull off something like this!"

From Erica Hoadley Adams, Tufts and Harvard Universities

A treasured teacher, then colleague, Miriam was a valued friend who introduced me to her world, which largely figured Norman, whose open adoration of her was magical to all those around them. Regretfully, unable to visit them in Santa Fe, I would've been there the day Norman died. Shortly afterwards, Miriam called me. How lucky she was, I said, to have loved and been loved by Norman for over fifty years. I could hear her smile with her whole being.



Professor Balmuth conducting a seminar on Ancient Portraiture.

Miriam's legacy is her belief in people and openness towards the future. Interdisciplinary—before it was understood to be our future—Miriam's enthusiasm for ideas traversed disciplines.

By the early 80's, already a legend among art students, Miriam was greatly loved by her Tufts Museum School MFA students: Continuously inspired and inspiring, Miriam's vibrancy and enchantment with art students was returned by students like myself, who often replaced art history – then lacking in dimension - with her cross-disciplined visionary approach. The roots of philosophical and logical thinking became clear as students explained, guided by Miriam, where and how they considered archeological fragments might connect. Art, economy, architecture, culture and agriculture—all folded into a continuum unearthed in Miriam's classes. Miriam's courses, ahead of the curve, are remembered fondly among Museum School students.

Miriam's public life infused into her private worlds, she profoundly touched many lives including mine - from graduate school in the early '80's through to my career as an artist and as faculty—at Tufts University and The Boston Museum School campuses—always a friend and colleague—Miriam was there—Her running critique included even her Festschrift roasts in 92 & the inclusion of her wedding movies—which I loved—at her 50th wedding anniversary at the Faculty Club.

Virginia Woolfe once said, “a good writer could reveal in the lifting of a teacup, a spiritual experience” – Miriam and Norman's life was so written: one winter's brunch with colleagues and students was full of laughter, endless coffee and sunlight overpowering their new sky-lighted dining area: As Norman lifted a croissant to give it to Miriam, the love in his eyes and gesture outshone even the room. Awestruck, we basked, suspended in this tender moment that I've never forgotten.

Her belief in individuals and openness allowed new ways of thinking about old beliefs and material culture: this energized students and an international arena of colleagues to do things they never considered before. Norman's supported Miriam as she, in turn supported her students.

Miriam's commitment extended beyond the classroom - into her interdisciplinary, international symposia - among her collegial friendships and, beyond my graduation into my life as an artist and as SMFA faculty: In 1987, Miriam's was the 'second reader' – of my written thesis, a deconstruction of annual report portrait [photographs] led in the 1990's, to my yearly lectures, in her classical Portraits classes in the Museum of Fine Arts connecting Karsh's photography to early American “spirit” portraits to Greek busts. By the late '90's, when her student Amy Smith, now a professor at University of Reading, in England, took over Miriam's Portraits class, we continued this lecture. In 2000, Amy and I offered a SMFA summer course in Greece that combined our disciplines of art and archeology. Miriam's engagement was evident in all of this.

Miriam's ability to see through and connect disciplines (and, avoid their doctrines) also guided my art thesis defense committee in 1987 towards a better understanding of my art-thesis exhibition informed by the vital, but then, poorly understood critical theory movement. Miriam understood my art work—altered photography and photo-sculptures—Post Modern before the word was coined. Miriam and Norman offered to buy an illuminated photomontage for their Medford home's entrance.

Clearly, Miriam's enthusiasm infused her intense and enchanted international symposia with their riveting topics and speakers—what remains is an effervescent image. I see a fully drawn cast characters. They charged the air of a complex microcosm with their sparkling conversations.



Professor Balmuth lecturing at Tufts in 201 Eaton Hall

What would be her last, international symposia – one on volcanoes- opened the worlds between literature and archeology, to name a few. Miriam, always spoke with directness and was energized by diversity. She remained open and present: We need Miriam now to ignite the silence choking our freedoms and erasing our vibrant diversity, to explain in her no-nonsense directness: “The Emperor has no clothes” ...To bring us back to our senses so we can construct a worthy future.

Miriam's directness and vitality was complemented by Norman's graceful empathy and kindness. These three day symposiums, always ended with Norman's quiet arrival to drive Miriam home just a few blocks away. They're home now, together.

From Gloria Ascher, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies, Tufts University

“I was shocked and deeply saddened by the news of Miriam Balmuth's passing. She was one of the first colleagues who welcomed me to Tufts, and she remained one of my favorites. I loved her spunky, no-nonsense attitude and her earthy humaneness, and admired her pioneering and significant scholarly activity.

"Sardinia" will always conjure up memories of Miriam Balmuth for me. I can hear that familiar raspy New York voice, always tinged with a spark of ironic humor, sharing pointed remarks or memorable advice. Meeting her, talking with her, however briefly, on her occasional visits to Tufts in more recent years, always buoyed me up. En Ganedre ke este, May she be in the Garden of Eden, as we say in Ladino, in the Sephardic tradition, when someone dies. I hope that the Garden of Eden turns out to be an archaeologist's dream, with plenty of lively company, for Miriam Balmuth!"

From Joan Biella, Library of Congress

(formerly of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem)

"I first met Miriam and Norman in the early eighties in Jerusalem, where they were very good to me. Our friendship continued with occasional visits in Massachusetts and Santa Fe. I miss Norman very much and have often wondered if he was perhaps an angel in disguise—surely Miriam's guardian angel, at least! Now I will have to begin missing Miriam too, perhaps not an angel but a very benevolent spirit."

From Thomas J. Braun (GS'95), Art Conservator, Minnesota Historical Society

"I will always remember Miriam and Norman Balmuth with great fondness. As a recent college graduate in 1992, I was preparing for graduate studies. One of my closest advisors at the University of Minnesota was Sheila McNally, one of Miriam's classmates from Harvard. She suggested that I study with Miriam, as we both had interests in the scientific exploration of archaeology, but she suggested that I hurry, as a festschrift was already in the works for Miriam, and many of her peers thought she was close to retirement.

I found out quickly after entering Tufts University Graduate School that Miriam had no intention of retiring. She was so dedicated to her field, and never wanted to walk away from it. At that time, I drove an old beat up car, which was really more of a liability than an asset. For a period Norman generously let me store the car in their carriage house in Winchester. There were many times that I was invited to their home, frequently for their weekly sushi dinners, which they both loved. I think I was one of the last students to study under Miriam's tutelage, and I feel very fortunate to have done so. We spent two summers in Sardinia as I worked on my Masters thesis at Ortu Comidu. Miriam was so generous, sharing her knowledge and experience, and introducing me to her many international professional peers.

By the time I was preparing to graduate from Tufts and move on in my career, Miriam and Norman were spending more time in Santa Fe. Even in New Mexico, Miriam was inspired by the similarities she saw between the cave dwellings at Bandelier National Park and those in Sardinia. I will always remember Miriam for her unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and her endless drive to explore. I will remember Norman for his warmth and generosity. Miriam and Norman Balmuth are both an inspiration to me and will always remain so."

From Jean D'Amato (J'67), Professor Classics, Louisiana Scholars' College at Northwestern State University

"I first met Miriam Balmuth in my sophomore year in 1964. At the time, she was probably the most exotic woman that I had ever encountered in my sheltered, Catholic-school upbringing—which, as a commuting student, college had done little to change. At Tufts, at least then, commuting students were rather extraneous objects—or so I felt. In any event, I clearly recall Miriam waltzing into the classroom (rather like Loretta Young, I remember thinking) and beginning to lead us through Vergil's *Bucolics* and *Georgics*. The class was memorable for various reasons, not the least of which was Miriam herself, of course: sparkling, dynamic, and always ready with encouragement for us to be as creative as possible in our work. This was a novelty as my Latin training from Sister Mary Cornelia onward had placed little value on independent thought. Indeed, confident that she would not disapprove, I submitted as a paper (or I guess the substitute for a paper) a pseudo Eclogue making Vergil's shepherds into cowboys! I will get back to that.

Even more memorable in retrospect, from my perspective as a university instructor in the age of 'correctness' and accountability, was Miriam's very straightforward statement at grade time, with a simple apology, that she had lost our grades and would we be so kind as to tell her



Professor Balmuth on a class trip

what they were! The following semester, her pedagogical inventiveness really emerged, however. We read Horace, in particular the *Odes*. Being a music devotee (we heard that she had had, of all of the exotic things, chamber concerts in her home on Sundays!), she was fascinated by the idea that Horace's *Odes*, being lyrics, should really be sung. Accordingly, one of the students in the class, a pianist, played a score that Miriam had found in the scholarly literature and we all sang "persicos odi..." a melody which I still bring out from time to time in my Latin classes.

After my sophomore year, I never had Miriam in class again but came to know her some years thereafter when I was a graduate student. Our first post-undergraduate encounter was at an APA convention when her opening words were "Are you married yet?" To my negative response she commented with some disappointment that maybe it would happen after I got a job. In reality, only after many jobs did I actually get married, and also saw Miriam often in one place or another. For instance, I worked a while for the NEH as a Program Officer. Low and behold, one day I just saw Miriam waltzing again, this time into some bureaucrat's office and then I heard her confusing the poor civil servant with a rather bewildering exposition of an intended project.

Later, after I left the NEH and went back to teaching, I gave a paper at one of the symposia on volcanoes that she organized at Tufts. My paper was a bit out of the ordinary, I guess, for at the dinner afterwards I overheard her talking to colleagues about my presentation. To my amazement, she explained (or defended) my talk by telling the story of how, as an undergraduate, I had taken an Eclogue of Vergil and transformed it into a cowboy song! The Vergil class was in 1964 and the Symposium in about 1994. To me, Miriam's memory of that minor episode and what it told of her commitment to her teaching more than anything else epitomizes why the memory of Miriam herself will never leave the minds of any of her students."

From Alan Griffiths , Senior Lecturer in Greek and Latin, University College of London

"I remember scary drives through the mountains of Sardinia and a particularly memorable drive into the copper mine at Funtana Raminosa—down boulder strewn tracks (not roads) with cliffs perilously close to the car tyres. I remember great meals in Sardinia with Norman, Miriam and Franco Staffa—and trips to Sulcis where Miriam showed me the Phoenician remains. Memories are constructed out of small kindnesses and great thoughts—Miriam gave me both for which I'm really grateful."

From Judith P. Hallett, Professor of Classics, University of Maryland

At times that try our souls, on occasions of reflection and recollection, our clan of classicists—even the relatively few Jews in this clan like Miriam and myself—often turns to our Holy Scripture. Well, to words, some



Professor Miriam S. Balmuth

of them sobering, others encouraging, from the epic poems that classicists communally cherish as fountains of wisdom. Words from the Greek and Roman equivalents of the Old Testament and the New: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, generally dated to the eighth century BCE; Vergil's later *Aeneid*, left unfinished (but ultimately published all the same) at its author's death in 19 BCE.

And so I have chosen two passages from the epic poetic Scripture beloved by us classicists to remember some aspects of Miriam. So that I might capture a few marvelous, life-enhancing and mind-expanding, qualities that she embodied. The first, from our Old Testament, Book Two of Homer's *Odyssey*, is about Mentor. To quote from Robert Fitzgerald's translation, Mentor was "comrade in arms of the prince Odysseus", to whom Odysseus, when he departed from his kingdom of Ithaca to fight at Troy, "left...authority over his house and slaves, to guard them well." Mentor fiercely condemns the arrogant and unjust behavior of the Ithacan nobles vying to wed Odysseus' wife, and the moral lethargy of the Ithacan community for allowing this unconscionable behavior.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the word "mentor" now signifies "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher", because, in the guise of Mentor, Odysseus' trusted counselor, the goddess Athena—an inspirational female presence—"became the guardian and teacher of Odysseus' young son Telemachus." Miriam became one of my mentors, a fiery and feisty if disguised Athena, in 1965 when I, as a senior in college (of approximately Telemachus' age) took over from my friend Karen Hanson as Jeremy Balmuth's Latin tutor. For nearly forty years thereafter. Miriam provided me with wise and trustworthy, nurturing and feminist, counsel.

Miriam did so without ever actually being my teacher. I am a philologist, specializing in classical languages, literature and history; I have yet to take a single course on classical archaeology, and know almost nothing



**Professor Balmuth and Tufts
President John DiBiaggio**

about Miriam's scholarly passions: ancient coinage (much less its Near Eastern and Mediterranean origins in Phoenicia, Palestine, Greece and the Roman lands); Sardinian excavations; volcanoes. But Miriam's splendid example and model empowered me to pursue a doctorate in classics at Harvard as she had done. They, and her indomitable optimism, not only about my own capabilities but also about the importance of principled protest, sustained me, through difficult hours, in the face of arrogant and unjust behavior as well as moral lethargy by mostly male colleagues and administrators, in my efforts to combine research, teaching and family. So here's Homer, on how Athena, in the guise of Mentor, heartens and empowers Telemachus. "Athena was nearby, and came to him, /putting on Mentor's figure and his tone, /the warm voice in a lucid flight of words: / "The son is rare who measures with his father, /..but you will have the sap and wit /and prudence—for you get that from Odysseus—/to give you a fair chance of winning through. /So never mind the suitors and their ways, there is no judgment in them, neither do they / know anything of death and the black terror /close upon them—doom's day on them all"

My words from Vergil's *Aeneid*, in the Allen Mandelbaum translation, describe a Semitic woman like Miriam and myself: the Carthaginian queen Dido, who rescues Aeneas and his band of storm-tossed Trojan exiles. Herself a refugee from the Phoenician realms that piqued Miriam's numismatic interest, Dido shares Miriam's energy and verve, her elegance and panache, her take-charge manner, as well as her abiding commitment to justice progressive human values. In Book One, when Aeneas first catches sight of Dido " In her joy, she moved among the throng / as she urged on the work of the coming kingdom. /...She took her place on a high throne. /Dido was dealing judgments to her people /and giving laws, apportioning the work / of each with fairness or by drawing lots". Three books later, as Aeneas and Dido embark upon a fateful hunting expedition, "the chieftains /of Carthage wait at Dido's threshold, [yet] she /still lingers in her room. Her splendid stallion, /in gold and purple, prances, proudly champing / his foaming bit. At last the queen appears /among the mighty crowd; upon her shoulders / she wears a robe of Sidon with embroidered / borders. Her quiver is of gold, her hair /has knots and ties of gold, a golden clasp /holds fast her purple cloak."

Miriam, of course, enjoyed a much longer, considerably happier and far more mutually supportive relationship with Norman than Dido's short-lived, tragic union with Aeneas (so, too, precious few regard Aeneas as what everyone judged Norman: a mensch, in every sense of the word). By the same token, no one detects even a glimmer of wit, much less Miriam's warm and ironic sense of humor, in Vergil's Dido either. Still, to my mind, despite her diminutive stature, Miriam was in many ways larger than life. If she has evoked towering figures of ancient Greek and Roman myth and legend—a goddess and a queen—it is because she made such a difference in my own life, and the lives of others. And because she, like these figures in our classicists' sacred Scripture, has achieved a certain, well merited, immortality by making such a difference.

From R. Ross Holloway, Elisha Benjamin Andrews Professor of Central Mediterranean Archaeology, Brown University

"In my days of digging and delving I have had numerous associates. I never had another collaborator with the often whimsical good nature that Miriam brought with her everywhere. I am very happy that fate crossed our paths, and I remember her with pleasure. I hope the sun shines on the services in November, but even if the sky turns New England grey, Miriam's laugh and Norman's smile will be with us."

From Gertrude Howland, whom the Archaeological Institute of America honored for her exceptional service as an international conservator, from a letter she wrote to Miriam on the occasion of Miriam and Norman's 50th Wedding Anniversary in 1996

"Do you remember our weekend trip to those strange towns, Matera and Albergo Bello and my birthday party on top of the mountain during a full moon? First there was a violent crash-banging thunder-storm, and then the moon came up. That Italian man, Yorka, had made a firework to celebrate my birthday, but when it was sent up it only went about ten feet and sprayed every one and every thing with silver dust. It stuck where ever it hit, and we gleamed strangely in the moonlight and for three days afterwards.

Do you remember that wild luncheon when the cook used up all our money on the local dignitaries, and though I spoke not a word of Italian, got a proposal of marriage, and all those lovely, lovely summers at the Certosa? I remember one summer you had a very becoming straw hat of woven straw. Jerry arrived and offered to cut

holes for your ears. How the place rang as he practiced his horn, as I restored ever more pottery.

Remember that time we got stuck on Corfu? We didn't know our boat tickets were for a week later, and only a bribe got us on the boat we needed to take. Every time the ship's bell rang asking for someone to come to the purser's office we thought we were headed for a Greek jail. We arrived at Patras in a state of collapse.

Then there was our hilarious trip searching for the Philistines in Sardinia, Corsica and Sicily. Those maps the Dothans gave you looked so clear cut and sensible; all roads and sites to be investigated clearly marked. However, they failed to indicate that some roads were six lanes, some single, unpaved roads winding around mountains without barriers and others plunging into gorges where there was nobody else but us. Do you remember we stopped to ask directions of two men in Corsica, and they got into a fight over which way we should go?

The oddest was our last night in Sicily. It was November with a bright full moon at six pm. We were only three miles from one more place to investigate, and with that moon it was bright as day--so off we went. The site we were looking for had tombs in a bluff by the sea. It was said to have low relief carvings on the doors. We turned off the highway on to a narrow road leading to the biggest oil refinery I have ever seen; great flares up in the sky and horrid clanking noises. There was a barrier to stop cars, but there was a pedestrian gate with a box for a guard—but no guard.

Off we went on foot to the sea by this monster, and I told you if a guard came, he would take us for terrorists and shoot us! You said, "Why would any one think two nice looking ladies like us are terrorists?" On we went past that huge horror to the moonlit water, and went up the beach. You found the tombs, and sat down humming happily sketching away, while I stood there shivering in a cold wind, utterly terrified. I was afraid to sit down. I thought if I stood up no one would think we were trying to hide our presence. Then you started crawling in the tombs where I was sure there were rats, scorpions and poisonous snakes. Eventually you were finished and we had to go back past the monster--still no one in sight. We started back up that moonlit road and I said I was sure someone would shoot us in the back. We got back to the car and drove away without ever having seen anyone. Then I had a horrible idea. We were near the reputed headquarters of the Mafia! They probably owned the whole thing and people were so frightened they didn't need a guard!

Finally there were those fun seasons when I restored pottery for you at the museum in Cagliari, Sardinia. My workroom was on top of an eleven storey tower, a huge room formerly used as a prison. The ladies room was down on the ground floor across the courtyard in the museum. You didn't climb our tower very often, but you had given me a difficult piece to do. The five or six other restorers heard you give me the order, and they all brought chairs over and watched me for three days. During all this you arrived, and upon seeing this scene you said, "Oh—un spettacalo!"

That's how I feel about our friendship: Un spettacalo!"



Professor Balmuth at the National Archaeological Museum; Phoenician Inscriptions.

From Brian E. McConnell

"I didn't have long to know Miriam Balmuth, just a year as a colleague, but in that time, and in the time since--at meetings and other chance encounters--I did develop a sense for the true depth of her professional insight, and for the richness of her personal character.

Miriam was a real archaeologist. She worked in the field, and she understood archaeology to be the nexus of disciplines--scientific and humanistic that it really is. She was creative and quirky in many ways. She was capable of putting an image of the Augustus Primaporta on a screen and playing a recording of jazz music (a colleague who did not understand insisted that the projector be turned off). Her idea was, that the Primaporta Augustus, like jazz music, was a combination and recombination of melodic line, harmonic structure, and rhythm. How many scholars are able to see the world in this way?

Miriam was a pillar of her institution—and she cared deeply about Tufts University, although she would tell you openly about her struggles with it. She was the kind of character who breathes life into an institution and who comes to mind when one thinks of the institution, a fact that too often the institution itself fails to recognize fully. She was a person who stood by those whom she supported--principle and loyalty counted for something in

her book. The thing that struck me most, however, was the way she was able to capture the attention of her students and to have an impact upon them.

When I first thought about what to write, it occurred to me that a stream of adjectives or phrases could best describe the person that Miriam truly was. Unencumbered by the structures of grammar and syntax it, would flow in many directions all at once, and with all the currents and eddies that find their way in a complex world. But no one can sum that up alone--it takes everyone--and so I'll close just by saying that she was a profound soul, and she spoke her mind."

From Sheila J. McNally, Professor of Art History, University of Minnesota

"A couple of years ago I had the great good fortune to be Miriam's guest for several days in Santa Fe, to get another taste of her always generous hospitality spiced by her dry wit. I treasure my introduction there to apple martinis and daily oyster feasts.

Whenever I think of Miriam, a smile begins. First I remember that wonderfully ready wit, then the boundless energy and delight in both research and teaching, and her sense of style. Finally, I am thankful for her enthusiasm in sharing both creature comforts and intellectual stimulation. I am sure she never realized how much she gave just by example. My many stays at her house sent me away comforted when I needed comfort and always invigorated. It's such a joy to have these memories."

From J. H. Phillips, Associate Professor of Classics, Tufts University

"Throughout her long and productive career in classical archaeology Miriam pursued her many research interests with incredible energy and devotion; she was respected mentor and role model for countless generations of students at Tufts. Her legacy is defined not only by the many contributions of her research and scholarship, but also by the impact of her pedagogy, an enduring testimony to her determination, fortitude, and commitment to excellence."

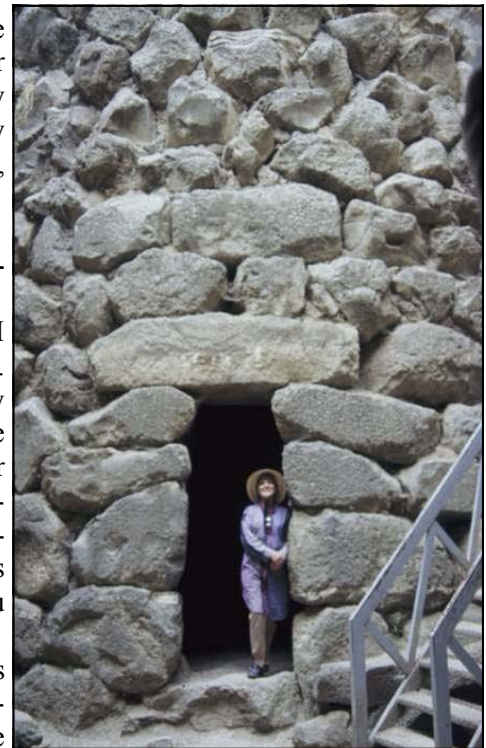
From David Proctor, Department Administrator, Dept. of Classics/Archaeology Program, Tufts University

"Though a Classics major during my undergrad years at Tufts, I was never fortunate enough to have Professor Balmuth as an instructor. The semester I opted to take her Introduction to Classical Archaeology course, much to my dismay and that of my fellow classmates, we learned that she had received a Fulbright and was spending the semester pursuing research in Sardinia. Though I never had her for class, I certainly knew who she was. Her reputation was one that combined toughness with a sense of connection. If you took a Balmuth course, so it was said, you knew you were going to work, but, you also knew that you were going to learn a lot and enjoy the journey.

My first face-to-face meeting with Miriam came seven years later when, on my second day on the job as Administrator for the Classics Department, she popped into the office to introduce herself. By the end of that visit she had enlisted me to help her proof an article she was writing on volcanoes. From that point on I was in daily contact with Miriam about a variety of issues. Working for her and with her made me realize how true her reputation was, she expected a lot, but things were never dull and I always felt that she appreciated my efforts. Her off-the-cuff comments and wry observations always managed to brighten my day and were all the more enjoyable because many times she would utter truths that no one else would dare to.

During my first year in Classics, I was endeavoring to finish my MA thesis for the History Department. I asked Miriam if she could suggest a good introductory work on Byzantine coinage. She responded not with merely one suggestion, but with a sizeable bibliography of works on the topic.

My strongest memory of her, however, came a couple of years after that first meeting. I was at her home in Winchester one evening helping her proof the drafts of articles for her Hacksilver book. We worked from late afternoon well into the night, just the two of us in her study, occasionally exchanging a few words about whether



Professor Balmuth at Su Nuraxi, Barumini



**Professor Balmuth with Tufts
Chancellor Jean Mayer**

there should be a semicolon here or a comma there. Every couple of hours Norman would bring up a snack for us, cookies at one point, clementines the next. This was just another example of what I had come to realize was his unequivocal support of her. Whatever she needed, whether it was good advice, moral support or a clementine, Norman was there for her.

As I sat in her study that night, I felt not like a staff person or graduate student helping out a faculty member, but more like a colleague. It was a feeling I have never forgotten and will always appreciate.

Speaking with her former students and colleagues these last months has only confirmed my own view of Miriam Balmuth. She was the epitome of a Tufts faculty member. An outstanding scholar and a dedicated teacher whose legacy is not only the vast array of books and articles she published, not only her groundbreaking work in Sardinia and her revolutionary approach to hacksilber analysis, but most importantly the students whose lives she touched and whose futures she helped shape.”

From Christine Thompson (GS’ 98) Ph.D. Candidate, UCLA

“When I first met Miriam I knew right away that she was the sort of professor who created opportunities for students to do original research. This is exactly what she did for me. I became interested in working on early coinage and before I knew much of anything about the topic, she had me flying off to Israel to look at recently discovered hoards of silver. It was only months later that I found out that she had written her dissertation on the same material

that I had hoped to study. At the time I had no idea that I would be her last student and that she had been hoping for several years to find someone to collaborate with her on the research she started during the 1960s involving early coinage. We turned out to be a good team; we traveled around Europe and the Mediterranean several times looking at all sorts of related materials in museum basements and in various laboratories. She passed on to me her interest in materials science, which I would not have developed without her instigation, and she encouraged me to give my first papers at international conferences by agreeing to give them with me. She did everything a good professor is supposed to do, and much more.

As a person she was loyal, generous and, as many have already mentioned, feisty. I suppose the traits I admired most in her were her unwillingness to make presumptions about people and ideas, and her determination to live life as she saw fit, resisting in both cases the encouragement of others to do the opposite. I will remember Miriam fondly, as a wonderful professor and as one of my best friends.”

From Dennis Trout, Associate Professor of Classics, University of Missouri-Columbia

(Assistant and Associate Professor of Classics, Tufts University, 1989-2000)

“In August 2003, Carlynn, Cora, Jacob and I spent a week with Miriam at her wonderful house in Santa Fe. It was a remarkable experience in so many ways. At last we understood why Miriam and Norman had always been so happy to be heading off there. I had just seen Miriam six months earlier at the APA in New Orleans, our first significant reunion since Carlynn and I had decamped for Columbia, Missouri. Much had changed for Miriam as well as us since the spring of 2000. New Orleans was a nice place to meet up, but Santa Fe was Miriam’s home now. There, despite her illness, Miriam was still so much herself, witty, feisty, and full of vigor. During the five days we spent with her, though we talked a lot about past times, we lived thoroughly in the present. Thanks to Miriam our eyes and hearts were opened to the world of the Ansazi, O’Keefe, and Arroyos. And though Miriam kept a busy schedule we would see her through the day and share dinner every evening. Soon enough we were planning our next visit.

I was fortunate to get a first (real) job at Tufts and spend eleven years in the midst of warm and caring colleagues. I was equally fortunate in the example of professional decorum they set. And from the outset Miriam was a mainstay of the department. I must admit she scared me a bit at first. She used to carry her keys on a band around her wrist and her imminent arrival was always announced by a jangling sound that seemed to demand preparation and attention. Moreover, I quickly picked up on her reputation for both high standards and unusual requests. I remember well being quite pleased when she approved of my proper pronunciation of the name Publícola and chagrined when she corrected my pronunciation of a particular Phoenician town. But her students

adored her and her international colleagues respected her. I knew instinctively that Miriam was a teacher and a scholar to watch and listen to. And I did.

Our relationship grew rich in time. Miriam's sense of humor softened her image. I learned more about her fascinating life, her late turn to the academic world, Norman's devotion. Norman was, for us, the other side of Miriam. When Carlynn and I had parties at our house, it was not unusual for Norman to come in place of Miriam if she was out of town (or maybe didn't want to face our dog, Rex, whom she preferred to call Fang). Norman was kind and funny and so naturally a part of these circles that I missed him when he didn't attend. And of course, all of us can tell stories about their gracious hospitality. Even as the 90s wore on and Miriam moved closer to full retirement, she was teaching less but no less a part of the department's life. Advising, researching, writing, and organizing conferences continued to keep her busy and engaged (as did trying to secure office space that might in some way reflect the grandeur of her custom- designed double office of the old days).

In the end, for many of her colleagues, I suppose, Miriam's legacy resides most palpably in the ranks of students she trained, the goodwill she garnered around the world for her beloved Sardinian archaeology, and the works she published. All of this we are exceedingly glad to have with us, but we will miss her none the less for that, miss her personality, her force of character. These are the special features that those of who worked with her may even carry on in ways we don't fully recognize.

From Elizabeth Lyding Will, Professor Emeritus of Classics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

"Miriam Balmuth's profound interest in the literary and archaeological evidence we possess about antiquity was combined in her case with rare energy, high intelligence, a generous eagerness to share her knowledge with both colleagues and students, and an engaging sense of humor. My own work, on Roman shipping amphoras and Roman trade, profited enormously from my friendship with her and from her efforts to introduce me to the island of Sardinia, which I would otherwise probably never have visited. She personally guided me around the entire island. We visited almost all the major sites and antiquities collections, from Cagliari and Sassari and La Maddalena, to smaller sites like Nuoro, Nora, Tharros, Sant' Antioco, and her own important excavation at Ortu Comidu. The homogeneous picture that these excavations and amphora collections provided gave me the opportunity to draw reliable conclusions about Sardinia's economy during the Roman period. Ultimately it also led me to use shipping amphoras, the chief finds on Roman sites both on land and under water, as major sources of information about trade in the entire Roman world, from the third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. My analysis of the Sardinian material thus led in the end to my efforts to form a comprehensive picture of the Roman economy from the west coast of Africa to the east coast of India.

Miriam had the unusual ability to see antiquity as still alive all around us, or at the very least as a mirror through which we can also analyze the present. She was always at pains to see the big picture and, with her characteristic good humor, to aid others in achieving the same awareness. In my own case, her interest and her assistance were of the greatest importance in helping me to an understanding of the significance of my research."

From the *Boston Globe*, by Gloria Negri, Globe Staff

(This article was published July 15, 2004, it appears here with minor corrections.)

Miriam Balmuth; renowned archeologist taught at Tufts

When Dr. Miriam (Scharf) Balmuth joined Tufts University's Department of Classics in 1964 as an assistant professor, she was a pioneer in a field normally closed to women. Dr. Balmuth, 79, who taught at Tufts for four decades and was one of the early women to achieve eminence in her field, died of cancer June 30 at her home in Santa Fe, her residence since 2001.

One of the first women to be hired in the department -- and, five years later, one of the first to receive tenure -- Dr. Balmuth opened the field to new generations of women as she rose through the academic ranks, took part in numerous digs, and became internationally known.

In the 1970s, Dr. Balmuth's status as a world-renowned



Receiving the Fetstchrift in her honor: (l to r) Marianne Witherby, Elizabeth Lyding Will, Tamsey Andrews, Pres. John DiBiaggio, Miriam S. Balmuth, Provost Sol Gittleman, Ed Merrin, Chancellor Jean Mayer, and Robert Tykot.

archeologist was solidified when she directed the first American archeological excavation on the island of Sardinia. "She opened up that field of archaeology to the world. Hers was the first major scholarly dig to take place in Sardinia and it put Sardinian archaeology on the map." said David J. Proctor, Classics Department Administrator at Tufts.

"During her years at Tufts, Dr. Balmuth was considered the driving force behind the creation of a formal, interdisciplinary archeology program, Proctor said.

"Miriam pushed down the door. She was a terrific woman, small, feisty, and pugnacious and an early academic feminist," Tufts professor Sol Gittleman, a friend since Dr. Balmuth arrived at Tufts as a teaching assistant in 1962, said yesterday. "She was too short to be in your face, but she was in your face all the time about women in higher education. In the 1950s and 1960s, all higher education, certainly the classics, was a male club," Gittleman continued. "Miriam came in just when the change was coming. She made a lot of noise. She was a great scholar and a great teacher and did everything she was supposed to do. She expected to be treated as a colleague in a day when the department head could tell a woman applicant, 'Thank you for your letter, but we're not hiring women.' "

Heather Lechtman, professor of archeology and materials engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, recalled Dr. Balmuth as "one of a small group of women colleagues, mostly archeologists, in the Boston area who fought hard at our individual institutions for recognition as women and as scholars, who crossed the frontier between the natural and the social sciences."

Dr. Balmuth inspired many young women to follow in her footsteps. One of them, Judith Hallett, professor at the University of Maryland, said Dr. Balmuth "played a big role in my decision to pursue a PhD in classics and sustained me in my efforts to combine research, teaching, and family."

Dr. Balmuth did all of that, her son Jeremy of New York City said, with a sense of humor and spirit. "Mom never would retire, she was still a Research Professor at Tufts."

Dr. Balmuth directed or participated in digs in Sardinia in 1975, 1976, 1978, 1985, and 1988. Her interest in the materials basic to coinage -- copper, bronze, and silver -- coincided with a vacation to Sardinia in 1970 with her late husband, Norman. There, she observed a huge trove of unexcavated sites and an abundance of natural resources, her son said.

"Her primary area of interest was the origins of coinage in the Near East and Mediterranean region -- Phoenicia, Palestine, Greece, and the Roman lands," he continued. "She almost single-handedly established Sardinia as one of the most important areas for research into classical patterns of seagoing trading, materials, and coinage in Near Eastern and Mediterranean antiquity."

Another of Dr. Balmuth's interests was volcanoes and the landscape and materials they produce, as well as the classical writings they inspired.

Dr. Balmuth was born in New Brunswick, N.J., to Sigmund and Rose Scharf. She earned her bachelor's degree in classics at Cornell University in 1946, her master's in classical language at Ohio State University in 1950, and her doctorate in classical archeology in 1964 at Harvard, at a time, Proctor said, "when female PhDs in classical archeology were not the norm." Dr. Balmuth remained connected with Tufts after retirement and was promoted to research professor in 1998.

Though she rooted for the Boston Red Sox, she remained a big fan of Roger Clemens, and was still following his career, her son said. "She admired his fierce determination and she said he looked like the Delphi charioteer."

Besides her son, Dr. Balmuth leaves another son, Paul of Austin, Texas; a brother, Meyer Scharf of Ocean Pines, Md.; and three step-grandchildren.



Professor Balmuth offers a toast to her colleagues



**The Balmuth family has established an endowed fund in honor of
Professor Miriam S. Balmuth.**

Donations may be sent to:
The Miriam S. Balmuth Endowed Fund
c/o Jeff Winey, Tufts University Office of Development
200 Boston Avenue, Suite 2600
Medford, MA 02155

Checks should be made payable to "Trustees of Tufts University"
with the ***Miriam S. Balmuth Endowed Fund*** noted.