

Resolution for the Retirement of
Olga Baloueff

Adopted by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Tufts University
May 17, 2006

Her colleagues in the Department of Occupational Therapy join with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to record our admiration for Associate Professor Olga Baloueff on this, the occasion of her retirement. The Tufts University community has benefited from over 35 years of her contributions – a remarkable span encompassing a deep commitment to the development of students through academic and advising functions, and to the profession of occupational therapy through her scholarship in pediatrics, early intervention, and geriatric practice areas.

It is no accident that Olga embodies a respect for others and truly celebrates diversity. She was born in Russia, raised in Congo, South Africa, and studied physical therapy in Louvain, Belgium, before receiving her B.S. at the occupational therapy program at the University of Florida in Gainesville in 1966. These experiences undoubtedly contributed to her worldview of acceptance and grace, while helping to render her multilingual in English, French and Russian.

By the late 1960's Olga had relocated yet again, this time to the Boston area. While completing her Master of Science degree at Boston University she began as an instructor here at Tufts in 1970. She has remained an integral part of the department of occupational therapy ever since, while simultaneously progressing through her own life trajectory – marriage, bearing and raising two sons, persevering in her own studies, receiving her Sc.D. from Boston University in 1996. She was a woman ahead of her time, juggling academics, career and motherhood before there were many role models to emulate.

A proud and devoted mother, Olga occasionally shared her developmental wonders with her students, enriching pediatric course content with practical exposure. A similar devotion permeated all her dealings with Tufts' students. She was always thorough and well prepared in her teaching, ever modeling these important professional traits for her students. When mentoring a junior faculty member Olga once commented, "teaching is a lot like parenting, if all your students like you – you probably aren't doing it right. Like good parents, good teachers have to say 'no' and set limits, which sometimes make you unpopular." Olga's teaching style to present clear expectations and challenges in a nurturing classroom climate, garnered both the respect and appreciation of her many students.

Her deep commitment to students is also reflected in her university wide committee work. While she has served on myriad committees, two of the most notable are the summer school and the medical recommendations committees. Her commitment of time and energy to help students actualize their goals was unrelenting. She would spend hours meeting with students, over multiple sessions, to insure that her

recommendations would be both sincere and accurately reflective of the aptitudes of each individual student. Her student centered activities within the university caught the attention of the Graduate Student Council when they recognized her for *Outstanding Contribution to Graduate Studies* in April 2005.

As her career at Tufts gracefully evolved over the years so too did the content of her coursework. With her expertise in pediatrics and early intervention well established, she took on the challenge of developing the geriatric and aging curricula for our department. Ever committed to the welfare of others and propelled by the similarities of caregiving demands raised by these two ends of the developmental continuum, these efforts presented an opportunity for Olga to further challenge herself. Never satisfied with mediocrity, Olga developed an interdisciplinary course on aging and was active with the Ross Aging Initiative. Her mentorship impacted a whole generation of students and her input reverberated through a host of master's theses in both areas of pediatrics and gerontology.

Olga's commitment to care and integrity transcended the confines of the university. She provided advocacy and consultation to a plethora of early intervention programs on both a local and international level. She was active on the board of the Shriver Developmental Center in Waltham, consulted with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on various policy initiatives, and was active in both the Massachusetts and the American Occupational Therapy Associations. She was instrumental in numerous outreach initiatives to provide medical assistance to children in both the Ukraine and in South Africa.

While she is leaving her day – to – day role on campus, don't be surprised if you continue to see or feel her presence. In addition to pursuing many long awaited projects here and abroad, Olga has recently taught two courses in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. With all her family responsibilities and her many interests, we have no doubt that Olga will be as busy as ever pursuing her passions for life. While we will miss the opportunity for daily contacts, we look forward to continued interactions with our much admired colleague.

Be it hereby resolved that this resolution be spread on the minutes of the faculty of Arts and Sciences.