

RESOLUTION
On The Retirement Of
Associate Professor Eva Claudia Kaiser-Lenoir

Eva Claudia Kaiser-Lenoir was born in San Luis, Argentina, and came to the United States as an undergraduate student, where she received her B.A. in Spanish and Latin American Studies from Moorhead State University in Minnesota. She went on to earn an M.A. from the University of Nebraska, and her Ph.D. in Romance Studies from Cornell in 1976. She taught for three years at Yale as an Assistant Professor of Spanish and Latin American literature before coming to Tufts in the fall of 1979, where she was promoted to Associate Professor in 1983.

During her years in the Department of Romance Languages, she has been at the forefront of introducing and expanding courses and programs that focus on Latin American and Latino literature and culture. Until she came to Tufts, there were very few courses in the curriculum devoted to these areas. She was instrumental in filling that void. She developed a number of courses that now form part of the Latin American literature curriculum, from surveys that introduce students to literature from across Latin America to upper-level classes on popular theater, testimonial literature, poetry, the short story and civilization. As she once said, for a time she was responsible for the literature of an entire continent—and then some.

Claudia's initial scholarly interests derived from her doctoral dissertation which dealt with Latin American popular theater. Her book, *El Grotesco Criollo: estilo teatral de una época*, was published in 1977, followed by a critical anthology of readings on the same topic in 1989. In 1994, she contributed to a collaborative publication focused on Latin American popular theater published by the University of New Mexico Press. More recently, she has been drawn to Cuban literature and culture. It is an area of study that continues to intrigue her, especially since

this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban revolution. She is currently lecturing and participating in panels devoted to Cuban culture and is actively engaged in research that will lead to publication. She plans to continue this research after retirement.

Beyond writing and teaching about Latin American theater, Claudia has also taken an active part in directing, acting, and writing theatrical productions. She first manifested her many talents in this regard as part of a street theater project in Harlem and the East Side of New York City in the summer of 1982 in a project called “Fire ‘Scapes.” She also participated similar capacities in Nicaragua in 1997 as part of the “Arts for a New Nicaragua.” In addition, she helped organize theater workshops in both Boston and Barcelona. Between 1981 and 1984, she co-organized with the late VèVè Clark a series of readings and performances devoted to African and African American literary works called “Lift Every Voice.”

Claudia has been a tireless advocate for expanding Latin American, Latino, and African-American studies at Tufts. She was a co-founder of the Africa and the New World Studies minor, serving as its director from 1987-1991. She was also a co-founder of the Latin American Studies minor and now major, serving as its director between 1996-1998 and as co-director from 2001 to 2007. She has also served as part of the Latino/a Curriculum Transformation project. Beginning in 1994, she has devoted much of her time and energy to organizing symposia, trips, and courses devoted to Cuba. In 1996 she led the first group of Tufts students on a study tour of Cuba and has continued to do so—the State Department willing—ever since.

Claudia has not limited her outreach to Tufts, but has spoken and taught to a wide variety of audiences in the greater Boston area as well as in other cities both here and abroad. These have included a workshop for K-12 teachers at Dorchester Technical High School, a lecture presented to “Boston Cares” at International Place in Boston, and serving as a presenter and

discussant at the Belmont World Films Series, to name but a handful. And, oh yes, she also served as Chair and Deputy Chair in the Department of Romance Languages between 1998-1999.

Those who know Claudia are also aware of her unswerving commitment to human rights both at Tufts and in the larger world. Whether the cause is the custodians at Tufts, the victims of Hurricane Mitch, the indigenous population of Guatemala, or the rights of women in Colombia, Claudia has been fearless in educating members of the Tufts as well as the greater Boston communities about these many groups, who, too often, are over-looked.

But she does have a lighter side as well. Those of us in the Department remember her winning the first and only prize for Best Costume at our Halloween party a number of years ago. Students, faculty, staff, and passers-by are also well-acquainted with her boon companion, Una, unofficial mascot of the Department and scrounger extraordinaire. As a long line of student advisees waited outside Claudia's office door to consult about theses or courses, Una looked for pets and treats in equal measure. We wish both Claudia and Una a happy retirement. On behalf of the Department of Romance Languages, I ask that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the faculty and that a copy of it be presented to Professor Kaiser-Lenoir and to her family.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Teresa Howe

Professor of Spanish