

Tribute

A tribute to Carolyn Bereznak Kenny

12 June 1946 – 15 October 2017

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Photograph 1: Carolyn Kenny receiving the distinction of Faculty Emeritus at the Antioch University's Leadership and Change program convocation in August 2014

Our music therapy community has lost another beloved scholar, author, teacher, mentor, collaborator, researcher, speaker and practitioner. After living with cancer for 15 months, Dr Carolyn Kenny passed away peacefully in Santa Barbara, California, with her loving family around her.

Carolyn was born of a Choctaw mother in Mississippi, USA, and a first-generation Ukrainian father and, in keeping with tradition in her indigenous community, she was adopted into the Haida Nation in 1999 by Dorothy Bell, matriarch of the Masset Haida people in British Columbia,

Canada. Her given Haida name was Nang Jaada Sa-êts, which means Haida Woman with a Mind of the Highest Esteem.

For over 45 years Carolyn contributed significantly to our world music therapy community by teaching in higher education in the US, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Brazil and Japan, being invited to speak at regional, national and international conferences and congresses, authoring and editing a vast number of books, book chapters and journal articles, and by offering professional supervision and mentoring of graduate students from many universities around the world. Carolyn was a theorist, a poet, a philosopher, and an intellectual, interdisciplinary scholar and presenter, who worked and taught in music therapy, indigenous, aboriginal and cultural studies, leadership and change programmes, and in research. Carolyn's passion was teaching qualitative research methods such as phenomenology, ethnography, auto-ethnography, arts-based research in social change, and portraiture. She was involved in conducting research throughout her long and successful career.

Carolyn's strength, courage, and ability to envision new training programs resulted in the co-founding of Capilano University's music therapy bachelor's degree programme in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, British Columbia's Open University's MMT programme in Vancouver (1995-1999), and a special Master of Education degree at Simon Fraser University that combined First Nations Education and Administrative Leadership. Carolyn was a contributor on many scientific committees for World Congresses and association

journals, and she had been editor and reviewer for many journals and published works in music therapy, native education, and indigenous studies. She was the editor of the *Canadian Journal of Music Therapy* from 1999 to 2004 and was co-founder and co-editor-in-chief with Brynjulf Stige of *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* from 2000 to 2013.

Carolyn was a prolific writer and contributor to music therapy's publications. Among her groundbreaking books were: *The Mythic Artery* (1982), *The Field of Play: A Theoretical Study of Music Therapy Process* (1989), *Listening, Playing, Creating: Essays on the Power of Sound* (1995), *Contemporary Voices in Music Therapy: Communication, Culture and Community* (co-edited with Stige in 2002), *Music and Life in the Field of Play: An Anthology* (2006), and *The 1982 Symposium on Music in the Life of Man: The Beginnings of Music Therapy Theory* (co-edited with Michele Forinash in 2015). Carolyn was still writing, teaching, and involved in research up until a few weeks before her death.

Carolyn was my inspiration, my mentor, my colleague, and my friend. She was my committee chair for both my Master's of Music Therapy degree through British Columbia's Open University in 1999 and my PhD through Antioch University in 2014. I remember her counsel for my research was to find my "burning question" (Kenny 2016: 80). Her curiosity about how and why the world was as it was inspired her in her writing and in her research.

Carolyn was gracious, wise, generous, compassionate and humble. She valued beauty, aesthetics, being human and being real. She could be fierce when she was protecting those she loved and felt a responsibility for. She was fearless when she believed in something and often stood up to organisations, power people, and hierarchy throughout her life, daring to tread into unfamiliar territory to create something new. She walked lightly on the earth and lived in sacred beauty, inextricably tied to the land, the creatures of the earth and the music of the spheres. Her deep connection with song and nature is a constant throughout her writing.

"As Haida, we believe that the intricate patterns of song and art weave the relationships between the people, the land, and the creatures on the land into a fabric of resilience and strength. We are intimately bound to ecology and place. Our singing reinforces this sacred relationship." (Kenny 2016: no pagination)

Tributes poured in from all over the world upon her passing; acknowledging the depth and breadth of her professional and personal influence, her mentorship, and her friendship (see Henley 2017; Hesser 2017; Stige, McFerran & Hadley 2017; Summers 2017). Carolyn deeply touched thousands of people throughout her life through her writing, her teaching, and her in-person beauty. We are richer for knowing her and we owe her much gratitude for all she has done for music therapy. Her loss is deeply felt.

"The music therapist is one of the keepers of the gate, one of the technicians of the sacred, one who sees the vision and hears the song of the one and the many, the one who dances on the edge of time, one who can guard the threshold of being, one who waits for sound..." (Kenny 2006: 80)

Honouring Carolyn's clinical legacy, Capilano University has established a scholarship in her memory that is given to a student who demonstrates compassion to others, appreciation of cultural identity, and self-awareness in their clinical setting (<https://www.capilanou.ca/programs-courses/music-therapy/Scholarships,-Bursaries-and-Awards/>).

Carolyn also established the first music therapy position at the Santa Barbara hospice in California in 2008 and fundraised her last weeks of life to maintain this position (<http://www.vnhcsb.org/carolynkenny/>).

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