



Dr Gail T. Smith-Keizer

July 2, 1938 - July 16, 2023

Dr. Gail T. Smith Keizer was born in Orange, N.J., in 1938; during her youth, she lived with her parents, Edward and Loreta Smith, and her sister Sylvia.

Gail received her B.A. from Montclair State University and an M.A. from Columbia University in Latin and Greek. She earned her Ph.D. from New York University in Classics. Her doctoral thesis was entitled "The Importance of Miracle to the Religious Faith of Plutarch of Chaeronea."

Gail was a professor of Classics at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. She served as acting chair of the Classics Department in the spring of 2010, and from 1995-2013 served as acting assistant provost at the CUNY Graduate Center. She was part of the teaching staff for the nationally renowned Summer Latin Institute, which immersed students in studying ancient Latin and Greek. Gail endeavored to demonstrate the intersectionality between people of color and the classics through papers such as "The Ethiopians and Greek Epic: Memnon at Troy and "Phillis Wheatley and the Classical Tradition," both sponsored by the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean. CUNY Graduate Center, New York.

Gail's contribution to learning and student/faculty opportunity programs includes grants from many institutions, such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, and the U.S. Department of

Education. Gail was a National Science Foundation Advisory Committee member for the National AGEP Program in the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences. She was the program coordinator for the NSF/Bridges to the Doctorate Program under the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Program. Bridges to the Doctorate increases the number of members from underrepresented student groups in science master's programs who enter doctoral programs and gain a doctorate in preparation for a career in biomedical research. Gail was appointed founding director of the Irene Diamond Fund, "CUNY Pipeline Program for Careers in College Teaching and Research," a CUNY-wide undergraduate program designed to increase the number of members from underrepresented groups who pursue doctoral studies in preparation for a career in the academy. From 1995 to 2007 she served as director for the Office of Educational Opportunity and Diversity Programs (OEODP) at the Graduate Center, receiving more than \$11 million in external institutional grants to support initiatives to broaden the participation of doctoral underrepresented minorities in STEM and SBES fields. Gail's proposal for minority recruitment and retention won the Graduate Center's CGS/Peterson's Award, a version of which constituted the paper, "A Structural Methodology: Minority Recruitment and Retention at the Doctoral Level." CGS Communicator XXIX.3, March, with Pamela Trotman Reid.

Gail was a member of the American Philological Association. She was appointed to the board of editors for *The Classical Outlook* in 1974 and served as acting editor in 1977. In 1993, she published a commentary on Plautus' *Captivi* as part of the Bryn Mawr Latin Commentaries series.

Gail loved Brooklyn College and its students. She participated in many collegewide committees, such as the Planning Committee, the 2015 CUNY Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Conference, sponsored by CUNY, the Graduate School Steering Committee, and the Subcommittee on Outcomes Assessment for the Middle States Periodic Review.

In her spare time, Gail enjoyed watching westerns and murder mysteries, especially her beloved Poirot. Similarly, she loved courtroom programs, particularly Judge Judy. Gail was a participant in the TV gameshow, the Match Game. She enjoyed music, dancing, the card game, Pinoche, the theater, and fine dining. Gail was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Surviving Gail is her niece and nephew, Dr. Juana Smith Reina of Mahopac, New York, and Randolph Edward Reina of Plainfield, New Jersey; great nieces and nephews: Melissa Reina Morrison, Trenton, New Jersey; Michael Troy Morrison and his partner Mellanee Welty of Gainesville, Florida; Randolph Edward Reina Jr., and his partner Alicja Panienkowska of Piscataway, New Jersey, and Asia Reina Cook, her spouse Hamilton Cook and their son Jordan Cook of Rancocas, Westampton Township, New Jersey

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday at 10:00 am at the Perinchief Chapels, 438 High St., Mount Holly. Relatives and Friends may attend her viewing on Saturday from 9:00am – 10am at the Funeral Home. Burial will follow in Lakeview Memorial Park in Cinnaminson.

Previous Events

Viewing

JUL **29**. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

Perinchief Chapels
438 High St.
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
(609) 267-0399

Tribute Wall

RA

“ I did not know Gail well, but as her CUNY Classics colleague I was tremendously impressed with all the work she did to support and encourage students from groups underrepresented in academia, long before such efforts were common. She also served as acting editor of *The Classical Outlook* back in the 1970s for which I am grateful. I very much enjoyed seeing her on Zoom fairly recently when she presented on the work of Phillis Wheatley. She will be missed. My condolences to family, friends, and colleagues.

RONNIE ANCONA - August 25, 2023 at 02:07 PM

AK

“ As a student of the Classics at Hunter College in the mid-90's, I learned about Gail Smith because she was one of the very few classicists of color that I knew of. That period was just the beginning of my own understanding of what the presence of someone like Gail Smith meant in the broader context of the discipline. I would not meet Gail face to face until she and I found ourselves in the same hotel area during the classical studies annual conference (still APA then). I believe it was 2012 in Philadelphia. She started a conversation with me precisely because we were both people of color sitting in the lobby. We talked about various things. I shared that I had been a Mellon Mays Fellow at Hunter College (she had been the founding director of the fellowship at Brooklyn College). But more meaningful to me was her openness, directness, the fact that she acknowledged my presence without any hesitation, momentarily softening the alienation that one could feel in such spaces. She smiled easily, and encouraged me on my path in the field. We exchanged emails and went our ways. The next time we saw each other was on Zoom when I attended her wonderful presentation on Phillis Wheatley. I am grateful for having met her however fleetingly. May her good spirit rest in peace. (Andrea Kouklanakis, Associate Professor of Classics Hunter College, CUNY).

Andrea Kouklanakis - August 11, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Dr Gail T. Smith-Keizer.



July 27, 2023 at 04:15 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr Gail T. Smith-Keizer.

July 27, 2023 at 04:15 PM

PR

“ I first met Gail T. Smith when I applied for the Mellon Minority (now Mays) Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) at Brooklyn College, in 1989. Professor Smith was the inaugural director of the program. I did not encounter her as a Black professor, or woman and Black professor, nor would I have known at the time, at all of 17 years old, how important it would be to have a living representation or embodiment of what could be. Rather, Professor Smith was a classicist who would also teach my required introduction to classical studies. I remember her erudite and matter-of-fact way of teaching, as if she were saying, “There is nothing to see here; this is just what I do.” In time, I would come to realize how special and rare it was that she chose the classics as her professional field, or that she was my teacher. There was, in fact, much to see, note and savor. It is inconceivable to me that almost thirty-five years have passed since those first encounters. In the time that has passed, Professor Smith became a mentor, and model professor and administrator. She spoke at Purdue University at my invitation when I was a professor there. She was working on Zora Neale Hurston and the classics and presented on that topic. She has been a friend and theater companion – or maybe it was just a fellow fandom of Denzel Washington, whom we saw as Brutus in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar during the 2004/5 season and as Hickey in Eugene O’Neill’s Iceman Cometh in 2018. Gail was easy company: always bright and insightful, thinking and planning, noting, and savoring. As I reflect on how Professor Smith has impacted my life, I can only hope to have even a fraction of the impact on my students that she has had on me. I will miss her, but I will carry her with me.

"Paul," aka

Patrice Rankine, Professor of Classics, University of Chicago

Patrice Rankine - July 26, 2023 at 04:00 PM

AT

“ Anthony Gini and Catherine Torigian purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr Gail T. Smith-Keizer.



Anthony Gini and Catherine Torigian - July 25, 2023 at 08:35 PM

AT

“ Anthony Gini and Catherine Torigian planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Dr Gail T. Smith-Keizer.

Anthony Gini and Catherine Torigian - July 25, 2023 at 08:35 PM