

**Geosciences, Economics,  
others mourn loss of  
Julie Graham  
(1945-2010)**



Julie Graham's sudden passing on Sunday April 4 has left us all deeply saddened and in a state of communal loss. It is nearly impossible to contemplate Julie not being here to continue guiding, mentoring, and teaching her students and sharing her intellectual life and creative spirit with her colleagues and friends. Julie played a paramount role in helping to shape the human geography side of the Geosciences department over the last 26 years; and in radically opening up geographers' and others' thoughts and hopes about economic and social possibility. We assumed we would have her inspiring presence and wise council long into the future. Her influence has been so wide and deep that her ideas and energy will live on and grow even without her, but her presence and her ongoing work will be irreplaceable.

Julie Graham's profound intellectual contribution was to offer hope in a deeply flawed world. This hope inspired students, national and international colleagues, and community organizers around the globe. In her early career she was steeped in structural critiques of capitalist exploitation, but over time she came to feel that this critique could be disempowering. Together with her collaborator Katherine Gibson she developed what they came to call a "post-capitalist politics": a politics in which the many economic systems and relationships that are different from capitalist exploitation are noticed, made visible, supported, and encouraged. Once taught to notice, Julie's students and colleagues began to see possibility and diversity all around them. The role of the academic became not only to critique and analyze, but also to pursue and support possibility. Julie's life and work were about hope, possibility and caring; what made her so influential was that she tied this to sharp theoretical insight.

Ted White, one of Julie Graham's current PhD students, writes: "As students we often talked of being profoundly awakened by Julie. The "politics of possibility" as she referred to it gave us a powerful, often life-changing sense of what we were contributing as thinkers and doers in the world. She let us know that her sense of hope was a vital and rigorous part of her academic breakthroughs. She validated our sense of hope as welcome and necessary to our own life and work."

Though Julie Graham had friends and intellectual followers around the world, the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts was her home. She graduated with a B.A. in English from Smith College in 1968, and after completing her Ph.D. degree at Clark University in 1984, she came back to the valley and into our department as an Assistant Professor in economic geography. From the first, Julie began to help shape the new geography graduate program, and later gave the department international prominence with her contributions to economic geography. Julie became an Associate Professor in 1991, a Full-Professor in 1998, and served as Associate Department Head for Geography between 1999 and 2006. She was very close with her neighborhood community in Shutesbury, and joined weekly dinners with them over many years.

Julie's specialties in economic geography included: rethinking economy and economic dynamics, diverse economies and community economies, alternative economic development practice in the US, Australia, and the Asia Pacific region, and economic subjectivity and politics. Her latest funded project that focused on the alternative economies operating in the Pioneer Valley was entitled: *Rethinking Economy: Envisioning Alternative Regional Futures*. This April she and co-researcher Katherine Gibson were to be honored at the Association of American Geographer's Annual Meeting for their contributions to feminist geography by being invited to present "The Gender, Place and Culture Jan Monk Distinguished Lecture." J.K. Gibson-Graham's *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy* was named a "Classic in Human Geography" by the journal *Progress in Human Geography* and will be featured in essay tributes and an author response in a soon-to-be-forthcoming issue.

Julie Graham's publishing career included, among others, more than fifty publications with co-author Katherine Gibson under the blended pen name J.K. Gibson-Graham. Gibson-Graham published two major books: *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it)* (1996), which challenged the conventional understanding of capitalism as necessarily and naturally dominant, and *A Postcapitalist Politics* (2006) which reports on efforts to perform alternative economies through action research in Massachusetts, Australia, and the Philippines.

Julie Graham was an active member of a number of different academic communities. At UMass, although she was a member of the Geography faculty in the Department of Geosciences, she also served on many committees for students in Economics, Women's Studies, Labor Studies, Education, Political Science, and Anthropology. Julie worked closely for many years with Professors Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff in the UMass Economics department and published with them two volumes of edited essays in Marxian theory; she collaborated on many of their students' dissertation committees developing Marxian economics; and she contributed likewise to the many activities of the Association for Economic and Social Analysis including especially its journal, *Rethinking Marxism*.

Over the course of her career, at various times, Julie held visiting academic positions at NYU, the Australian National University, the University of Oregon, Rutgers University, and Monash University (Australia). She served as director of the Association of American Geographer's Socialist Geography Specialty Group, an editorial board member of *Rethinking Marxism*, and a founding member of the Community Economies Collective.

We all became accustomed to seeing Julie sitting at the table in her office overlooking the UMass pond, guiding and encouraging her students in the strong afternoon sunlight. Julie Graham was a dear friend and colleague, a powerhouse of intellect, an inspiration in her battle with physical adversity, a humanist who cared about the victims of mindless capitalism and market forces, and a kind, funny, upbeat presence wherever she happened to be. Her colleagues, close friends, and students will miss her greatly.

Please see the growing list of messages in memory, celebration, and admiration of Julie Graham at <http://forjuliegraham.wordpress.com/2010/04/04/the-saddest-news/>

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