In Memoriam: Mary Jean Harrold (1947-2013)

Bashar Nuseibeh

BARELY five months after the death of our colleague David Notkin, the software engineering community has lost another of its leaders: Professor Mary Jean Harrold. Her death, though shocking and sad, leaves a rich legacy of outstanding research contributions and good memories that I am sure will remain with us, our colleagues, and our students for many years to come. I am grateful to Mary Lou Soffa, May Jean's former PhD advisor, for her touching and heartfelt tribute below.

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Bashar Nuseibeh
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Mary Jean Harrold died on Thursday, 19 September 2013, after a short battle with cancer. She is known all over the world as a preeminent scholar in software engineering. But she is also known as a teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend. Mary Jean was an exceptional person and lived an exceptional life. There were so many wonderful facets to her life, both professionally and personally.

At the time of Mary Jean's death, she was a Professor of Computer Science at Georgia Tech. There she founded the Aristotle Research Group, which focuses on the analysis and testing of large, evolving software, fault localization and failure identification using statistical analysis and visualization, and monitoring deployed software to improve quality. Through her outstanding research contributions and leadership in these areas, and especially her pioneering work in regression testing and fault localization, she greatly impacted industry, research, and women in computing. She is one of the most highly published and cited researchers in software engineering. For her scholarly achievements, she received many awards, including being ranked in a 2007 *Communications of the ACM* article as the top software engineering researcher in the world. She was both an IEEE and ACM Fellow.

Mary Jean was a long-time, passionate advocate for women and minorities in computing. Formally, she was part of three national projects that have impacted women in technology: NSF Advance Grant at George Tech, CRA-W, and NCWIT. Informally, she was a role model and mentor to many women in computing, both students and faculty. She used every opportunity she had to encourage and promote women and minorities in computing.

Mary Jean was a dedicated and inspirational mentor to her graduate students. Her real love in being a faculty member was her students. She often said that each of them was different, and she tailored her mentoring to ensure that each student reached their maximum potential. She had a genuine interest in the personal and professional development of her students. She was a teacher, friend, and "professional mom" to them.

Mary Jean was a valued colleague to many in the software engineering field. Her interactions were valued by those she actually worked with and others she came into contact with through collaborations and discussions. She loved spending time with researchers discussing ideas, being a sounding board, and both giving and receiving feedback.

Mary Jean was a friend. With her warm smile and energetic personality, she made friends easily. Importantly, she really cared about the people around her. Those who interacted with Mary Jean were touched by her kindness, enthusiasm, energy, and love for life, and they remember her fondly. She was a magnificent role model who many have emulated.

Mary Jean was a loving wife to her truly supportive husband, Fuzz, a caring sister to her five siblings, a proud mother to her two sons, Mark and Tom, a wonderful mother-in-law to Linda, and an absolutely adoring grandmother to Tommy and Matt. She loved going to the playground with her grandsons and playing with them.

Most of all, Mary Jean was an amazing human being with unbounded energy and love. Through her research achievements, students, and friends, her star will always shine brightly. How privileged we are to have shared her life! There will be a void in our lives now, but we will always have wonderful and warm memories of her.

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Mary Lou Sofa

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