



Twila Yates Papay

October 13, 1946 - March 24, 2017

Twila Yates Papay, age 70, passed away peacefully in hospice care on Friday morning, March 24, 2017. Twila was born in Greensburg, PA, on October 13, 1946, and was the daughter of Ralph and Mary Yates. A resident of Altamonte Springs, FL, Twila moved to Windsor Place, an Assisted Living Facility at Orlando Lutheran Towers, after becoming ill in May of 2013 while on European sabbatical.

Twila earned her advanced degrees, masters and doctorate, at Purdue University, and taught English and Writing for 45 years. She began her career as an educator in 1969, when she accepted a position as Teaching Assistant, and later, Graduate Instructor, while still at Purdue. In 1973, Twila joined the faculty of St. Peter's College in Jersey City, New Jersey, and was soon promoted to Assistant Professor. It was at St. Peter's where Twila met her husband-to-be, fellow faculty member and philosophy professor, Joseph Papay. They were married on May 16, 1976. By 1984, Twila was recognized nationally as an "extraordinary educator" when she was profiled in the book *20 Teachers for the creative and collaborative methods by which she taught English as a second language*. And just one year later, in the Fall of 1985, she was named Director of Writing Programs and the Writing Center at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.

While at Rollins, Twila was granted tenure and promoted to full professor. She

taught there for 30 years until her retirement in May of 2014. Her innovative English Department courses and programs included Star Trek's World of Diversity, Visions of Harry Potter, Gender Images in Science Fiction, and Writing Across the Curriculum — which Twila developed in campus-wide collaboration with faculty and students. The methods she instituted at the Writing Center were modeled at other college and university writing centers nationwide, based on presentations given at national conferences by more than 200 of Twila's personally-trained Peer Writing Consultants. Under Twila's guidance, the Rollins Writing Center was the recipient of an Extraordinary Achievement Award from the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, and then received international recognition, over the course of several sabbaticals, when Twila served as visiting professor at writing centers in South Africa and Australia.

Twila also served as faculty advisor to nontraditional teams and clubs that rounded out the college experience with laughter and play. She was the first faculty advisor to both the Rollins Laughing Club, covered by the New York Times in 2012, and the Rollins Quidditch Team, which traveled to New York City just a year after its founding to participate in the 2011 Muggle Quidditch World Cup. Based on the game from the Harry Potter movies, Muggle Quidditch is one of the fastest-growing intramural and club sports in America, and Twila played a big part in bringing it to Rollins.

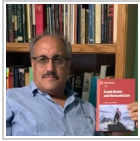
When Twila wasn't writing, teaching, or advising, she was traveling — and writing about it. She was a published travel writer who, together with her husband, Joe, traversed the globe several times over, spent time on six of the seven continents, and only missed out on Antarctica when their tour ship ran into rough waters and had to turn back. It only seems fitting that Twila's last work for Rollins was not on campus, but on the European continent, while on the last sabbatical of her 45-year teaching career.

Twila's educational legacy will continue with the donation of her personal and professional libraries to the Olin Library at Rollins College, and Better World Books, a global nonprofit working to promote literacy in developing countries around the world. Its partners include Books for Africa, committed to putting books in the hands of children who have never held a book before; and Room to Read, which is transforming the lives of millions of children in the developing world by focusing on literacy and working to ensure that girls are given the skills and support they need to complete their secondary education.

Twila is survived by her loving husband of 40 years, Joseph L. Papay; her sister and brother-in-law, Ruth and Donald Cummings, of Paris PA; her nephew and his wife, Bruce and Amy Cummings, of Summerville, SC; and their sons, Xander and Matthew Cummings.

In respect of Twila's last wishes, the family has planned a private memorial service on Sanibel Island and requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Twila's name be made to the Alzheimer's & Dementia Resource Center, 1506 Lake Highland Dr, Orlando, FL 32803. <http://adrccare.org>.

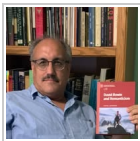
Tribute Wall



“ James Rovira lit a candle in memory of Twila Yates Papay



James Rovira - July 01, 2022 at 12:21 AM



“ I'm very late in coming to this page, but I am a former student of Twila's from Rollins College. I felt like her concern for me went beyond teacher/student, but concern as a friend as well. I am grateful for her influence and will miss her voice. Thank you for everything, Twila.

James Rovira - July 01, 2022 at 12:19 AM



“ Dear Twila! She was my table leader the first time I scored the AP English Literature exam, and I learned so much from her. Thereafter, I always looked forward to seeing one another. I visited her & Joe in Altamonte Springs one time when I was in FL. She showed me the canals in Winter Park, if I remember correctly. Twila made the world a better place. xxoo

Vincent A Lankewish - November 15, 2021 at 04:52 PM



Correction: I meant to say, "WE always looked forward to seeing her."

Dr Vincent A Lankewish - May 19 at 07:34 PM

LB

“ I took a writing class from Twila in 1989 at Rollins. I was a new mother going back to college after taking several years off. I was nervous and insecure, but eager and motivated. Twila's writing class became one of the most important classes in my entire college and graduate school career. The guidance I received from her was pragmatic and simple, yet profound and impactful. I've often gone back to read the thoughtful comments Twila wrote on my essays. I emailed her about two years ago and didn't receive a response. A few weeks ago I decided to try again and that's when I found her obituary. I didn't know Twila well, and I'm not sure she would have even remembered a student like me, but she had a big impact on me and I'll never forget her.

With heartfelt sympathy for your loss, Lori Breningmeyer

Lori Breningmeyer - October 24, 2019 at 03:22 PM



“ Wow... in the late 90's I took my first class with Dr. Papay. I read somewhere to always choose good instructors over easy classes. I signed up for class after class. During one of our last courses, she told me she thought I should pursue technical writing.

In the meantime, she taught me how to write better. I remember taking Travel Writing. She'd spend all kinds of time telling me how to "dig deeper" with what I wrote and what she and Joe had learned. I have had multiple professors in my current degree tell me to write, and I know it was what she taught me.

I came here today to thank her. My heart is so broken to see she is gone before I could update her again. Two years ago, I finally entered that technical writing program she suggested twenty years ago. Then I added another degree to it. She planted the seeds. I wish I could share all of this with her.

Besides my own parents, Dr. Papy has the most profound impact any person has had in my life. I am so sorry she is gone, but so grateful for everyone who had her touch them. That touch was profound and amazing. My heart is so sad seeing this.

Rebecca Brockman - May 14, 2017 at 07:05 AM

CL

“ So sorry to hear this. Fly high, Twila.

Thank you for supporting me through Colloquy. I still remember the advice you gave me.

Catheryne Lowe - April 06, 2017 at 02:27 PM

LH

“ As one of the first professors I met when I started my freshman year at Rollins College in September 1993, Dr. Papay helped me develop a better approach in making my writing stand out. As a result of her dedication to her students at the Writing Center, my grasp of English grammar, vocabulary, and usage excelled to new levels. In the real world, I've been commended by many, including graduates of Ivy League schools on how articulate and amazing my communication skills are, If it weren't for Dr. Papay, I wouldn't have received such accolades and never have acquired the passion I have for writing that I've had for over 24 years.

Rest in peace Dr. Papay. You will be truly missed.

Luis Hernandez - April 04, 2017 at 10:53 AM



“ *I was heartbroken to learn the news that Dr. Papay had left this world for more divine travels. She was the first professor to greet me when I returned to college in 2011. That she created a safe space for my re-entry has made all the difference. She allowed for me to find my literary voice and encouraged me to believe in myself...*

I owe her an enormous debt of gratitude.

May she now enjoy travel without care and freedom to grow beyond these physical boundaries... good speed, my friend and may your family and loved ones be comforted by knowing how influential your life was to so many.

*When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in character,
Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love; - then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink. - Keats*

Owaissa Vanderberg - April 04, 2017 at 06:01 AM

EP

“ Dear Joe:

I read with sadness of the passing of Twila and wish to express my deepest sympathy to you and your family. Her extraordinary accomplishments in the field of creative writing continue as a legacy through her students.

You and Twila were always important members of the Saint Peter's University community. I recall when the chair of my Mathematics Department, Prof. Frank Varrichio, used to drive Twila to Saint Peter's. Those were the days when you faithfully captured the Faculty Senate meeting discussions in the minutes you wrote as Senate secretary.

In time, may the void left by Twila's passing be softened by the happy memories you shared. My prayers and thoughts go to you.

*Most sincerely,
Eileen Poiani*

Eileen Poiani - April 03, 2017 at 09:44 PM

KP

“ So sorry to hear the sad news of Twila's passing. Twila was the person who introduced me to writing centers, taught me to "dig deeper" in writing, and always had time to share a meal or a cup of coffee together when we ran into each other at conferences. Because of her belief in me, I presented at my first academic conference when I was an undergraduate student. I loved receiving her lengthy Christmas letter updates every year since I graduated from college, and I was heartbroken when my glass feather pen that was her gift to each "consultant of yore" upon our graduation from Rollins was broken during one of my many moves. Much sadness at that time and again now, but I will strive to remember her love of life, strength in the face of adversity, and deep emotions for others. Sincere condolences to Joe and the rest of the family.

*Karen Peirce
Rollins College '93
Consultant of Yore*

Karen Peirce - April 03, 2017 at 08:50 PM

TA

“ Dear Family of Twila,
I worked at the Rollins Writing Center under Twila, 1988 -1990. Her office and her heart were always open. She was a calm inspirer, and her voice is one that I have taken with me into my adult life. I am so grateful to have known her.
Anne Hall

taberanne@gmail.com - April 03, 2017 at 08:42 PM



“ *dear joe and family,
my deepest condolences.*

twila was my favorite. she was tough, fair, loving, and a gifted teacher. she knew what each one of her students was capable of, no matter how fervently they lived in denial of it. i have never been pushed harder to strive for and create excellence as i was in her classes. i will miss her as she flies on from this world on lacy dragonfly wings.

may we all smile as we remember the life of this extraordinary woman.

*goodbye twila, until we meet again.
james meniates, class of '03*

James George - April 03, 2017 at 05:42 PM

SS

“ Dear Joe and family -

I want to send you my deepest condolences and warm memories -- celebration, even! -- of the profound impact Twila had on my life, and the lives of so many others. In a society that lives too selfishly, too shallowly, and too digitally, Twila lived generously, deeply, and through the written word and in relationships with others. She was a shining light and her light still shines through the impact she has had on so many of us.

I also have a VIVID memory of you, Joe, role playing Walt Whitman for my Winter Park middle school students as part of my student teaching program, and want to thank you for your friendship and kindness over the years as well.

Somewhere, humpback whales are singing their ethereal, long-distance songs and I am sure, wherever she may be, Twila is smiling and listening.

*Steve Smith, Seattle WA
Rollins Class of 91
Writing Center Consultant*

Steve Smith - April 03, 2017 at 01:37 PM

MM

“ Mary McDyer lit a candle in memory of Twila
Yates Papay



Mary McDyer - April 03, 2017 at 01:05 PM

TP

“ One of my fondest memories was her end of semester tree decorating and dinner party. This was the last time I saw her before she left on Sabbatical - I remember her being so excited! That semester, and her class, was one of the most important events in my life, and I'll forever be grateful. Rest well, Twila.



Tommi P. - April 03, 2017 at 01:00 PM

DK

“ Professor Twila Papay and her husband, Joe, celebrating her retirement from Rollins, May 11, 2014



Dennis Kebbel - April 03, 2017 at 12:29 PM

NM

“ Joe and family,
I was so sadden to learn of Twila's passing. I have thought of her so often and for some reason many times the past couple of weeks. She took a chance on me when she took me on part time and then full time when the Writing Center opened in the Mills Bldg. You both were so good to me and I have so many wonderful memories during our almost 12 years together. She was loved by many, fantastic teacher and just a lot of fun to be with. Now definitely when I see the moon I will think of Twila, and maybe even howl at the moon. Blessings to you all.

Nancy

Nancy Marshall - April 02, 2017 at 05:23 PM

DK

“ Joe and Twila celebrating her birthday, October 13, 2015.



Dennis Kebbel - April 02, 2017 at 01:30 PM

DK

“ Christmas 2013~Twila celebrating her favorite time of year with Joe & Sheri Kebbel



Dennis Kebbel - April 02, 2017 at 12:57 PM

DK

“ Twila, Joe and Dennis Kebbel celebrating Twila's birthday, October 13, 2013. Twila asked for roasted duck...she got roasted duck.



Dennis Kebbel - April 02, 2017 at 12:22 PM

CK

“ Twila was a brilliant professor, an inspiring educator and collaborator, and a delightful person. I think Twila may have also been one of the most persuasive individuals I have ever met, because she had a way of leading you to question a subject for yourself to draw out your own meanings, and then celebrating your brilliance in drawing a conclusion... when it had been her own brilliant design to lay the breadcrumbs for you all along. She really was like a Dumbledoor that way (something she would never admit, for her modesty would not allow it). Twila loved traveling and engaging with and writing about cultures of the world (human, animal, and plant--appreciating any form of life) even into her later years when it was physically difficult for her to do so. She gave me the courage to travel, and the courage to write. As faculty advisor, she also gave me the courage and ability to laugh in a circle of strangers for 15 minutes straight... every week... for four years (even if she herself did not get to attend every Laughing Club meeting). Twila's humor and quiet power in confronting adversity gave me strength and taught me not to take myself so seriously. And her loving and committed relationship with her husband, Joe, showed me that soulmates do exist. Lumos, Twila.



Christian Kebbel - April 02, 2017 at 09:49 AM

CK

“ Twila and Joe with the Rollins Quidditch Team, on set of the Daily Buzz to meet stars of the Harry Potter films and play a Quidditch scrimmage.



Christian Kebbel - April 02, 2017 at 09:00 AM

ST

“ Twila was such a good friend to me, and was the best teacher I ever had - I'm a teacher now because of her. I have so many memories of her and Joe, staying at their house in FL, celebrating her birth-month (she insisted she deserved one), her playfulness (didn't she have a persona based on Die Fledermaus?), visiting her favorite glass-blower in Ogunquit, ME (I think), and so many more. I'll miss her.

Steve - April 01, 2017 at 02:18 PM

 Beth Young

“ Beth Young lit a candle in memory of Twila Yates Papay



Beth Young - April 01, 2017 at 01:54 PM

Beth
Young

“ Twila was a wonderful teacher and mentor. When I was an undergraduate, Twila hired me to work in the Rollins Writing Center. She persuaded me to go to graduate school, she hired me in my first job after graduate school, and she alerted me to the ad for my current job at UCF. I would not be where I am were it not for her.

My children were her (honorary) grandchildren, and they loved sleepovers with Nonna Twila and Nonno Joe. Their townhouse was such fun for the kids to explore, with its two staircases and lots of books and intriguing toys and travel souvenirs and one whole room devoted to Joe's model trains.

We miss her a lot, and we'll never forget her.



Beth Young - April 01, 2017 at 01:52 PM

HG

“ Hilary Jackson Gambale lit a candle in memory of Twila Yates Papay



Hilary Jackson Gambale - March 30, 2017 at 01:10 PM

HG

“ Joe and Twila’s family, I am so sorry to hear of Twila’s passing. I loved her like a mother the four years I studied at Rollins. Twila showed me support and kindness and provided me much needed confidence not only in my writing but my contribution as a young woman growing up in the late 80s, early 90s.

I remember after college, Joe, you and Twila visited Washington, DC where I lived and still live today. I stopped by to see you both at your hotel and Twila, as always, provided uplifting advice which I so needed at that time in my life. Our lives drifted apart since. That was the last time I saw you both but I thought of Twila often, wondering what she was doing, what uplifting advice was she giving some other young soul and what was her latest manuscript. I miss her deeply. Please know that my thoughts and wishes are with you. Twila was a wonderfully caring and sincere mentor who I will never forget.



Hilary Jackson Gambale - March 30, 2017 at 01:09 PM



Jonathan
Chisdes

“ 1 file added to the album Twila



Jonathan Chisdes - March 29, 2017 at 02:46 PM



This is a great picture, Jonathan.

Beth Young - April 01, 2017 at 01:54 PM



Yes it is! I remember that desk well.

Steve - April 01, 2017 at 02:25 PM



Thank you. I took that photo in 1989 (I think). I had it framed and it has hung in every house and apartment in which I have lived for the last 27 years.

Jonathan Chisdes - April 02, 2017 at 01:50 AM



“ It is with great sadness that I have learned of the passing of Dr. Twila Yates Papay. She was the greatest teacher I ever had and influenced my life profoundly in ways beyond measure. A great light has been put out, but she passed on so much goodness to so many people. I am but one of countless students that owe so much to her. My deepest sympathies to Joe and the rest of her family.

Jonathan Chisdes

Jonathan Chisdes - March 29, 2017 at 02:45 PM



“ Jonathan Chisdes lit a candle in memory of Twila Yates Papay



Jonathan Chisdes - March 29, 2017 at 02:40 PM