

OBITUARY / NÉCROLOGIE

Teresa Rosemary Healy: Feminist, Labour Scholar, Activist, Musician

Colleen O'Manique, Trent University



Teresa Healy.

Photo courtesy of Tom Juravitch.

TERESA ROSEMARY HEALY died peacefully on 21 December 2022 at her home in Brattleboro, Vermont. Teresa was a brilliant feminist, labour scholar, and activist, a musician, and a person of deep empathy and radical hope. Since 2017, she had been a dedicated member of the *Labour/Le Travail* editorial board.

Of Irish descent, Teresa was a young child when she immigrated from England with her parents and siblings to the small farming town of Tottenham,

in Simcoe County, Ontario. She left home in her early twenties to attend York University, where she earned her Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees, both in political science. Her PhD dissertation, completed at Carleton University in 1999, became the foundation of her acclaimed book *Gendered Struggles against Globalization in Mexico* (Ashgate, 2008; Routledge, 2020), which traces shifts in class and gender hierarchies in successive industrial models of development in 20th-century Mexico in the context of North American integration. A carefully documented analysis of complex and shifting class and gender dynamics shaped by the protracted economic crisis that began in the early 1970s, the book explores the feminization of male labour in the Mexican auto industry. Teresa's contribution was to provide a unique analysis of shifting masculinities at a time when the political economy of trade and continental integration was gender blind.

Teresa's life moved between writing and research, teaching, organizing and coalition building, making music, and sustaining and nurturing community. She worked in the labour movement, from 2000 to 2005 as research officer for the Canadian Union of Public Employees. From 2005 to 2013, she held the position of senior researcher in the Department of Social and Economic Policy of the Canadian Labour Congress, where she designed and directed the worker-led "Communities in Crisis" research project. Teams of workers studied the impacts of economic restructuring and austerity in seven communities across Canada. The project documented the experiences of working-class families as men moved from pulp and paper to oil sands industries, while Indigenous and diverse women experienced the pains of restructuring and economic dislocation.

As she worked in the labour movement, Teresa continued to research, publish, and speak publicly on a wide range of issues: structural violence and occupational health, labour militancy, austerity, pay equity, child care, climate justice, and so on. She held academic positions as visiting scholar and adjunct professor in many universities in Canada and the United States. As a research associate at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives between 2009 and 2017, she spearheaded two edited collections on Canadian politics: *The Harper Record* and (with Stuart Trew) *The Harper Record: 2008–2015*. Both volumes critically probe the Conservative government's fiscal and monetary policies, laws and regulations, and initiatives.

Teresa engaged diverse communities through intercultural and experiential learning, combined with community-based research and music. She was a well-known singer-songwriter and performer, steeped in the Irish tradition, and her album *She Pushed from Behind: Emily Murphy in Story and Song* (released in 2004) was a collaborative project with Ruth Stewart Verger. Their recording depicts the struggle of one of the Famous Five who fought to ensure women would be seen as persons under Canadian law. The lyrics and narratives draw from archival documents, telling a story of class divisions and fissures in the early 20th-century women's movement. A subsequent album, *Tangled*

in Our Dreams (2006) – a collaboration with her husband, Tom Juravich – is a compilation of folk songs about grief, hope, and solidarity. “A Song for Peace” became an anthem for activist networks spanning the globe. Teresa also wrote and designed a beautiful book of poetry, *Spiralling: A Year in Verse*.

After Teresa’s diagnosis, she took leave from her position as associate professor of Community and Economic Development at Algoma University. While undergoing treatment, she produced and hosted a weekly local radio show, *We Are All in This Together*, that aired 50 episodes. She travelled back and forth from her home in Brattleboro to Simcoe County to undertake archival research, wanting to make sense of the community that she grew up in. She was close to completing her book *Bounded Solidarity: The Many Faces of Conservatism in Simcoe County*. In her words,

It is my contention that we must be able to look squarely at conservatism as it has been practiced over time. I am very curious about its ability to appeal to working-class people despite its ability to silence the marginal, the unwanted, the Indigenous dispossessed, the newcomer, the worker, and women. If we are going to survive as a species that can cohabit with each other and the planet, if we are going to overcome capitalism and its many inequalities, if we are going to repudiate racist, colonial social structures, then we need to understand the anti-democratic power of conservatism. We need to understand it because we need to abandon the inequalities it props up, and demand something else. We need a new understanding of home.

Teresa also created a volume of meditations and poems inspired by her relationship with liberation theology. They explore the economic devastation, political consequences, and losses of the COVID-19 pandemic: economic and gender exploitation, structural racism, and white supremacy.

Teresa pushed boundaries, lived her politics, and nurtured community.

She is survived by her husband, Tom Juravich, her mother, Kay Healy, sister Anne Healy and brother Christopher Healy, and countless relatives and friends throughout the world.