

References

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Kendrachaychik Ñuqanchikwan Tukuypuni (Our Dear Kendra, with Us Always)

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I met Kendra when she first arrived at the University of New Mexico (UNM). She was enjoying the *alfajores* I brought to the departmental potluck. I told her these were Peruvian-style cookies made with *manjar blanco*. She knew the cookies well, being a foodie, but had not heard of *manjar blanco*. I explained that in Peru we refer to *dulce de leche* as *manjar blanco*, to which she replied in perfect French, "like *blancmange*!" A discussion about her fascination with other aspects of Peruvian cuisine, love of languages, and experiences traveling abroad ensued. I felt instantly at home. Following that brief but insightful moment, building a connection with Kendra became one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

Kendra was devoted to being more than a professor to her students. I, along with three of my colleagues, took a directed readings seminar with Kendra in preparation for our Comparative Politics comprehensive exam. Although her son Enzo had just been born and she had a lot on her plate, she took on that extra class to help us. I was particularly nervous, as English is not my first language. Kendra believed in us—more than we believed in ourselves, at times—and met with us weekly, challenging us at every step and helping our confidence. Our discussions were full of diagrams and pop culture references (from which I learned a lot about the US). After we were notified that we passed the exam, I recall her saying we "made collective action work."

During that time with Kendra, I also discovered my passion for methods. That summer, she encouraged me to attend IQMR, where I learned critical tools that helped consolidate my dissertation proposal and created lasting friendships which have accompanied me through many hardships. Taking a qualitative research methods seminar with her was one of the most memorable moments of my time at UNM. Kendra's unique and refreshing way

of teaching qualitative methods and her ability to lead a constructive discussion was remarkable. She advised us on how to balance life and the pursuit of an academic career as she was simultaneously navigating her own work-life balance while undergoing cancer treatment. She would talk about causality while drawing a truth table or Venn diagram using the clinical trial data she relied on to make decisions about her health. Kendra was insightful, transparent, exemplary, and resilient. By sharing with us the enormous challenges she was experiencing, she was preparing us for life. In 2016, my friend Anna Calasanti and I, inspired by Kendra, embarked on a mission to create a space at UNM to talk about how to best prepare to conduct fieldwork under complicated circumstances. Kendra—with her characteristic encouragement, creativity, and enthusiasm—helped us develop this interdisciplinary conference on fieldwork practices, the first of its kind at UNM. Kendra believed in us; she not only participated in multiple roles, she also pushed us to keep going at every stage.

Her teachings and constant guidance prepared me for my dissertation fieldwork, working with Quechua communities affected by the Peruvian civil conflict. The two times I returned from the field, I came to her overwhelmed with stories, details, and questions that I felt were not addressed by my dissertation. On her ever-present yellow legal pad, she created multiple diagrams that helped structure my thoughts. So simple, but so symbolic of her. She enjoyed looking at my photos depicting Quechua customs, colorful Andean landscapes and clothing, and empowering moments I witnessed. She said it reminded her of her fieldwork in Turkey and speaking Turkish. We enjoyed discussing similarities between these two languages. She believed in my ability to complete a mixed-methods dissertation on post-conflict justice and always supported me, especially when coping

with secondary trauma from this research—a topic she knew we needed to improve on in academia.

Kendra and I enjoyed the food scene in Albuquerque. She introduced me to authentic ramen, which I had not tried before. She was convinced that needed to be fixed, so we enjoyed one at a restaurant near UNM every once in a while, when the weather was “cold and perfect for a ramen,” as she used to say. Whether she was enjoying the *pan con chicharrón* or *tres leches* cake from the Peruvian bakery or the *arepas* or *cubano* sandwich from the Guava Tree Café, I was happy to share a moment with her at some of her favorite places in town. Many of these meals were full of chats about academia, but also about family and health. Even during difficult times, she had the mental capacity and strength to advise me on how to work with my insurance company and organize my medical records when I was undergoing my own health issues—she wanted to make my experience easier. For her, it was always about being more than a mentor. She cared, listened, and empathized with us. She knew I loved dogs and she was happy to let me watch Butters in my office when she had her at UNM.

Kendra and I talked a lot about revitalizing the way we think of multifinality, where “a single cause leads to different outcomes.” Reflecting on this now, I feel the connection many of us built with her was one of multifinality. Although the bonds we have with her are not sufficient to understand where we are standing in life now, they are necessary. For all whose lives she has influenced and will continue to do so—as a scholar and as an amazing human—she will always be that “superset.”

The last day Anna and I visited her, I relived all the moments we shared throughout these years. We brought cards and letters written by many colleagues Kendra had mentored during her time at UNM. She told us she made an awesome *manjar blanco* ice cream from scratch. She remembered the time we gave her a *tres leches* cake for her birthday from the Peruvian bakery. We shared IQMR memories, a brief chat about methods, and updates on our dissertations. Somehow, we found ourselves discussing what superpower we would choose if we were able, and she said: “to speak all languages in the world.” She was surrounded by loved ones, with her kittens by her side, while watching *The Golden Girls*. This is Kendra. Whether we talked about academia, food, languages, culture, health, family, or more, I always felt included and cared for. She told me and Anna, “I am sure you will make me proud.” She believed in us. She believed in living fully and above all, being present. She inspired me in ways I never anticipated and will continue to do so. “*Kendrachaychik Ñuqanchikwan Tukuy-puni*” I told her in the last card I gave her, filled with Quechua words, along with pictures from the Andes. Kendra came into our lives to stay with us. Always.