

# UC SANTA BARBARA

## Office of the Chancellor

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November 16, 2018

**Dear Members of our Campus Community,**

I am saddened to share with you that Professor Emerita Ursula Mahlendorf of our Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies passed away on October 31.

Professor Mahlendorf joined our faculty in 1960 after receiving her Ph.D. from Brown University in 1958. In 1965, she became the first woman to receive tenure at UC Santa Barbara. From 1970 to 1972, she served as Associate Director of our Education Abroad Program. In 1977, she was promoted to full professor.

A longtime pioneer and champion of gender equity and campus diversity, Professor Mahlendorf was, from 1985 to 1994, instrumental in the establishment and development of our Women's Studies Program (today the Department of Feminist Studies). In the February 1987 proposal to establish the program, she pledged, together with Professors Sarah Fenstermaker (Sociology), Patricia Cline Cohen (History), and Barbara Voorhies (Anthropology) the program's commitment to "the principle of incorporating racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in both research and teaching on the experience of women," formulating already then the intersectional and global perspectives that would form the program's uniqueness and place it in the vanguard of Women's Studies as a field. A year later, in 1988, with Professor Mahlendorf's administrative expertise as Associate Dean of the Humanities and thanks to the mobilization of hundreds of faculty colleagues, the Women's Studies Program became a reality.

Professor Mahlendorf was a member of the program's original governing executive committee and served on its faculty until her retirement in 1993. In the early 1990s, she developed and co-taught along with Professor Sarah Fenstermaker the original two-quarter Women's Studies upper division sequence in epistemology and methods ("The Nature of Inquiry") required of all Women's Studies majors. Professor Mahlendorf's scholarly range, reaching across disciplinary boundaries to include not only the humanities, but also social science and philosophy, made that course a memorable one for the program's first majors, and earned our Women's Studies program a reputation for intellectual excellence and rigor. Professor Mahlendorf also played a pioneer role in establishing psychoanalytic research on campus, and within the UC system, she was one of the founders (together with Professors Nancy

Chodorow of UC Berkeley and Peter Loewenberg of UCLA) of the prestigious and still thriving UC Psychoanalytic Consortium. She also organized a long-term writing group, "New Directions in Psychoanalysis."

In addition, at UC Santa Barbara, Professor Mahlendorf was one of the strongest advocates for the establishment of our Interdisciplinary Humanities Center. In 1993, she was one of the founders of our Senior Women's Council, a campus organization (unique in the UC system) that to this day serves to encourage representation of women in campus senate and administrative leadership and to increase collaboration and communication among women faculty.

In our Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, Professor Mahlendorf served for several years as Department Chair and taught generations of undergraduate and graduate students, specializing in psychoanalytic research, trauma, grief, and the pathology of mourning, as well as the history and legacy of Nazism. She was the author of many publications, including, in 1992, the volume she coedited with psychoanalyst Arthur Lerner, *Life Guidance through Literature*, to which she contributed two chapters and the introduction.

Professor Mahlendorf continued to be actively engaged in research, writing, and lecturing after her retirement. She was named Distinguished Professor in 2001 at the Department of German, UC Irvine, and in 2010 held our campus's Dickson Emeriti Professorship. In 2004, a *Festschrift* was published in her honor, *Surviving Childhood (Die Kindheit überleben)*, ed. by Lawrence Rickels and Thomas Kniesche). Her most recent book is the critically acclaimed auto-biographical *The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), published in German in 2014.

Professor Mahlendorf is dearly missed by our UC Santa Barbara family, and by her family, friends, and colleagues around the world. Our Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies is planning a memorial event to take place in the winter quarter. Our campus flag will be lowered in her honor on December 5.

Sincerely,

Henry T. Yang  
Chancellor