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In Memoriam: Mary Fromholz Haight, 1936–2022

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The INFORMS community has suffered a loss of someone who never gave a presentation, won an award, or held an office at INFORMS. Mary Fromholz Haight, long-standing managing editor for *Interfaces* (now *Informs Journal for Applied Analytics, IJAA*), died peacefully on November 5, 2022, in State College, Pennsylvania, and the loss struck a chord among those who knew her. Mary was the managing editor for *Interfaces* for more than 20 years and played a foundational role in shaping the journal's style and standards. For that, we owe her a great debt.

In 1982, the second editor-in-chief (EIC) of *Interfaces*, Gary Lilien, submitted plans to ORSA and TIMS (which later joined to become INFORMS) to upgrade the quality and accessibility of the journal. His plans included hiring a half-time managing editor to help authors clarify their writing and make their work intelligible to readers outside the field. Lilien hired Mary for that position.

Mary designed a new cover and layout for the journal and wrote its style manual. As managing editor, she scrutinized every word of every paper the journal published. Mary was rigorous in her standards and became famous for her meticulous editing and extensive handwritten comments, which offered information, humor, and occasional linguistic indignation. She also edited *Production and Operations Management (POM)* during its first 10 years; her contributions were critical to *POM*'s academic success.

She helped establish the architecture and foundation of *Interfaces*. Without this sound foundation, the journal would not be as strong as it is today.

I never had a chance to work with Mary except as an author who received stern and explicit "suggestions" from her in my drafts approved for publication. Those who knew her better—Gary Lilien, Steve Graves, Fred Murphy, Kalyan Singhal, Jeff Camm, and ManMohan S. Sodhi—share their thoughts on Mary here. I invite each

of you to enjoy their accounts of Mary's many contributions to the journal and her dogged pursuit of writing perfection.

—Michael F. Gorman, EIC *Interfaces/IJAA*, 2017–2022.

Reflections from a Few of Those Who Worked with Mary at *Interfaces*

After she had been with *Interfaces* for more than a decade, I commented to Mary that, by now, she must really know a lot about OR/MS. She said "Not at all. I have worked hard NOT to understand OR/MS and its peculiar jargon, so I can make papers in *Interfaces* understandable to those outside the field." Anyone (including me) who was subjected to Mary's dense editorial notes, challenging me to remove jargon, clarify meaning, and write simple sentences in the active voice, can attest to her passion and determination. And the resulting articles were invariably clearer and more engaging.

Most, but not all, authors responded positively to Mary's editing. *Interfaces* was fortunate to receive an insightful contribution from the late Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon, which Mary edited in her usual thorough (some might say ruthless) fashion. She brought the edited manuscript to me, asking if we should return such a heavily edited and annotated document to a Nobel laureate. I told her to go ahead. Simon responded with a gracious personal letter, thanking her profusely for helping to clarify his article. A few authors were not so gracious, but Mary always stuck to her guns, and *Interfaces* was far better because of her dedication to gracious writing, clarity, and concision.

—Gary Lilien, EIC *Interfaces*, 1982–1986.

I followed Gary as editor-in-chief, and Mary came with the journal. He could not have made a better choice for managing editor. She was determined to improve everyone's writing, including mine, even

though I was her nominal boss. My early pieces came back in a sea of red ink, all of her edits on target. I started playing the mind game of guessing how she would edit my sentences and making the changes before sending my editorials to her. Gradually, the amount of red declined but never disappeared. She made me a better writer; I effectively had my own personal writing tutor. For that, I have been eternally grateful. Although it has been 30 years since I was the EIC, I think of her whenever I have to communicate with a broader audience.

My wish is that she took an infinite supply of red pens with her and is helping a whole new group of authors communicate with their audiences.

—Fred Murphy, *EIC Interfaces*, 1988–1993.

I served as editor for the Edelman special issue of *Interfaces* from 1989 to 2007. Each year I worked closely with Mary to help the authors convey the substance and impact of their work and to do so succinctly and with clarity. Over this period, we handled and published more than 120 papers.

As others will attest, Mary was truly an exceptional editor. One author commented to Mary, “It was my first experience to be revised by a professional editor like you, and I found it very exciting.” Indeed, seeing how Mary could improve a manuscript was always an educational experience and even “exciting” for me at times.

Mary was a wonderful person with wide-ranging experiences and interests. I always looked forward to seeing her each year at the Edelman competition to share personal updates. My family also went to Chatham for part of August, which provided another opportunity to enjoy her company. Mary would insist that I hand-deliver manuscripts for her to work on, to do her part to keep the special issue on schedule. She also would invite us to go sailing with her in the ocean; the prospect terrified me, so I always found an excuse to decline. Mary eventually got the hint.

Mary was special in so many ways, and I’ll miss her deeply.

—Steve Graves, *EIC Interfaces* special Edelman Prize issue, 1989–2007.

I worked with Mary through two terms as EIC of *Interfaces*, and I can summarize my experience by stating that Mary was both a delight and a terror to work with.

The delight was interacting with an exemplar of a professional who had unrelenting high standards. Her red pen was famous for transforming submitted manuscripts into contributions that were more understandable, readable, and direct.

The terror aspect was waiting for her feedback on my occasional editorial columns. I knew from experience that my column would be much improved by her editing and that my ego would be bruised

in the process. She made *every* manuscript that she touched a better piece of writing.

While there are many definitions of “the life well lived,” Mary’s life is included in all of them, and all her EICs are better for having had her as a part of *Interfaces*.

—Terry Harrison, *EIC Interfaces*, 1999–2004.

By the time I became EIC, Mary was a legend. She served the first two years of my time as EIC. I often heard from authors after they had received Mary’s edits. They usually said something like, “I thought I was a good writer until I received Mary’s edits.” Quite simply, she set the standard for writing for *Interfaces* and had a huge impact on its success. I recall as an author receiving my first paper edited by Mary (back in the days when we sent hard copies back and forth). There was more red than black on that manuscript, and it was a vastly improved paper. Mary was so important to the success of *Interfaces* and taught many of us how to write technical material for a more general audience. I am very grateful for her influence and will miss her.

—Jeff Camm, *EIC Interfaces*, 2005–2010.

In 1986, Gary Lilien, then EIC of *Interfaces*, introduced me to the journal’s managing editor, Mary Haight, because I was editing a special issue on automatic manufacturing. When Mary returned the eight papers she had edited for the issue, including one of which I was a coauthor, I was astonished. She had taken her red pen to *every sentence*, noting errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax and suggesting changes in words and phrasing that would more precisely convey the authors’ thoughts. In her cover letters, Mary wrote, “If I have changed your intended meaning, it shows that your meaning was not clear to begin with.” Most authors were initially appalled at the sight of their returned manuscripts. We were accomplished writers who had never received such detailed corrections—even from our middle school English teachers.

As the authors adopted Mary’s suggestions, they discovered that she had translated manuscripts written in dense, inaccessible academese into precise and delightful English, which practitioners and almost any other reader could understand and enjoy. Such was Mary’s magic.

After that special issue, I was hooked. Mary continued to edit my own writing for 35 years and became my dear friend. When I founded the journal *Production and Operations Management* in 1992, I recruited her to edit its papers. She served for 10 years and, no surprise, worked her magic there as well. An additional tribute to Mary will be published in a forthcoming issue of *POM*.

—Kalyan Singhal, *EIC Interfaces* special issue on automated manufacturing, 1987; founder and EIC, *Production and Operations Management*, 1992–present.

Mary copyedited several of my *Interfaces* papers, starting with one in 1995, which was my first experience with copyediting. All I remember is that that paper and others that followed suddenly improved. It was as if I had magically written exactly what I had meant to write. Many years later, while doing e-commerce consulting, I asked Mary for help on a book chapter on e-business in the chemicals sector. She agreed, providing I send a hard copy to her remote address. I did, and she mailed me back a marked-up copy with many red pen markings. After Mary's editing, the chapter was accepted without any required changes. True, I never met Mary in person, but I, like many others, benefited from her work immensely and will retain an indelible image of her quiet competence. And her red pen.

—ManMohan S. Sodhi, EIC Edelman Prize Special Issue of *Interfaces*, 2007–2012.

In closing, I am sure we can agree that Mary's contribution to *Interfaces* is immeasurable. She is part of our

history, and we have lost a person who had a tremendous impact on the journal.

Beyond her professional contributions, her successor as managing editor, Kelly Kophazi, has described her as a great mentor and a "tour de force," whose love of gardening was immense and whose tomato sauce recipe was delicious.

Thank you, Mary, for your enduring contribution as a founding member of the *Interfaces/IJAA* family. We will miss you and will never forget you.

—Michael F. Gorman, EIC *Interfaces/IJAA*, 2017–2022.

To view Mary's full obituary, follow this link: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/centredaily/name/mary-haight-obituary?id=37162561>.

Memorial donations may be sent to the American Association of University Women, The Art Alliance of Central Pennsylvania, The Chatham Conservation Foundation, and The State College Food Bank.