

This is a transcript of the video “Messages to Gail,” republished in the webtext, “Memorial to Gail,” published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 28.2, available at <https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/28.2/memorium/hawisher/index.html>

Messages to Gail

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

gail, writing, work, computers, field, met, cindy, retirement, years, journal, project, dissertation committee, program, wanted, illinois, taught, graduate student, thought, composition, scholars

SPEAKERS

Sybille Gruber and Nancy Barron, Sybille Gruber, Jonathan Alexander, Patrick Berry, Jeff Grabill, Dickie Selfe, Danielle DeVoss, Michael Day, Judy, Lorena, Heidi McKee, Bill Hart-Davidson, Joe Amato, Derek van Ittersum, Jeff Rice, Liz Rohan, Kathy Yancey, Michelle Sidler, BGSU Folks, James Purdy, Barclay Barrios, Libby Morley, Scott DeWitt, Kate Kiefer, Michael Pemberton, Kris Blair, Amber Buck, Stuart Selber, Kristi Fleckenstein and Kathy Yancey, Hugh Burns, Kristin Arola, Tadao, Daniel Anderson, Kristi Fleckenstein, Derek Mueller, Carrie Lamanna, Janet Eldred, Cheryl Ball, Various

Joe Amato 00:06

When I arrived at Urbana Champaign in 1990, Gail took me over to, I think, was a Student Union. And I think after we had lunch, she brought me in front of a terminal, as I recall, was a Unix based email system. And she sat down and began to compose an email. And I watched her and she said, Watch me do this job. And at one point, she said, Okay, now I'm going to send it, and she hit a button. And I looked at the screen. And as I recall, the email was still on the screen. And that system, on fuzzy recollection, it has been 20 years. And I said, where is it, Gail? And she goes, I sent it. I said to Gail, where is it? And she laughed. And I think I've been dealing with that particular metaphysical quandary now for two decades, where am I? Where is it? Well earned, congratulations for your retirement, Gail. And, honestly, I don't see you as a person who can possibly rest on your many laurels. So keep on keeping on.

Dickie Selfe 01:12

Hello, my name is Dickie Selfe. And I hate doing these talking head videos, but I'll do almost anything for Gail. So I've known Gail since about 1980, when she started working with my wife, and she's always been the most supportive person in my academic world, really. And it's mainly because she's just very interested in your work. And she'll ask you about it and talk about it. And she's very smart. So she pays attention and gives great suggestions. So I love her for that. She's also a builder. She's just, next to Cindy, the those two are just incredible community builders, the best that I know of. And one thing I want to talk about today is how adventurous she is. Because with with Cindy, she'll go out and find conferences for us to attend. So and then she'll invite me and, and her wonderful husband, Tom, who's a ceramics engineer, along with them, and will go off to various places to give talks. Like we just got

back from St. Petersburg in Russia; we've been to Sydney, Australia, Beijing, China, Nottingham, England, and even Cairo, Egypt. So I would be much less of a knowledgeable or international person, if it hadn't been for Gail.

Derek Mueller 02:44

Gail, we have to talk this is no time for retirement. Congratulations, Gail on this, on this occasion. You know, may your retirement prove to be every bit as rewarding as you deserve. And from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your, for your generous manner for your sort of your kindness and and for your really for your leadership for for being someone who you know, has really just just made a profound impact on the field for that I'm tremendously grateful. While I've got you here, Gail, do you happen to know where the the settings are in photobooth for for restoring defaults? I messed around with the special effects and can't seem to get things back to the way they should be.

Hugh Burns 03:51

Hi Gail! It's Hugh Burns. I'd like introduce you to Nubby. He's our mascot is Texas Women's University for the work we do and literacy in our writing center. But he's based on lots of things. And you taught us over the years about writing about computing. So happy retirement from deep in our hearts in Texas. We'll be watching you, Nubby and I and all the women here. Godspeed.

Barclay Barrios 04:18

You know, I could talk about the influence scale here or shows work has had on my own work, the role it played in my dissertation, several of my publications or the fact that I teach probably at least one of her articles every year, one of my graduate seminars, but I think the memory that's gonna stick with me the most is at the Watson Conference must have been 2002 or 2004. It is the end of the conference at the dance, and I don't even know how this happened. But somehow it came out that I know how to swing dance. Gail knew how to swing dance. And next thing I know I am swinging with Gail Hawisher. It was like Dancing with the Stars. One of my favorite memories of any conference and was very special moment for me. Made me feel like I was really entering a community of scholars, and it was a fun community. So Gail, I hope you have a wonderful retirement. And thank you for all the work you've done and for all the impact you've had on people like me, and thanks for the dance. If you're ever ready to cut a rug, I'm down in Florida, look me up.

Jeff Rice 05:18

Thank you, Gail, for influencing how I think about technology and writing. And I especially thank you for being a major influence early on in my career when in about 2002, those are the two you accepted "Writing About Cool," an early piece I wrote for Computers and Composition. And obviously that was the beginning of a type train of thinking that eventually led to some other publications and a book of mine. And I know that that would not have happened without your influence, and ability to reach out to a graduate student then trying to work out some ideas. I'm glad to know you. And I wish you all the best.

Liz Rohan 06:12

Well, first of all, Gail, who was here was my dissertation director when I was a graduate student at University of Illinois, in 1998, to 2002, and I don't think I was her star pupil, but I think that she took a bemused and compassionate interest in my scholarly endeavor. But in general, Gail was an excellent

role model for me. And I credit her for teaching me what it means to be a feminist teacher scholar. And I had an opportunity to think about this a little bit more, because last February, I was in Champaign, to give a talk, and it was freezing cold, and not a very pleasant day for a walk. But nevertheless, I went for a walk, and I was walking around Champaign, and it was extremely nostalgic. And I was actually thinking that my four years in Champaign were some of the best in my life, which seems a little dorky, since I was in graduate school. But I really think that what made it great is the way that Gail nurtured us, but she also allowed us to be creative. And if anyone who knows me, I'm kind of an ambivalent scholar, and the idea of not having fun while I write, or not experiment when and when I write was starting to turn me off or turn me off in the abstract with academe. So Gail taught me that I didn't need to compromise myself as a teacher or a scholar, I could be myself, and it was the best place for me. So I think that academe will be all the poor when she leaves, but I hope that she can be happy to know that she taught us well, and will carry the torch. So good luck, Gail. And I hope to still see around and I hope that you don't leave the field entirely. And you can continue on on the projects that you're passionate about.

Janet Eldred 08:03

Gail Hawisher is an inventor. I first met Gail, I think, when we were at University of Illinois, and I was a graduate student, and Gail was a graduate student, but she was a much more advanced graduate student. I was at the beginning of my graduate student career, and she was finishing her PhD. And apparently, University of Illinois got all these IBM computers and nobody knew what to do with them. Well, that didn't stop Gail, she very quickly figured out something to do with them. And I was very grateful. She asked me to be involved in the pilot. We were already teaching a Summer Bridge. So we were able to take and use those computers with that group of students. And that was really exciting because usually what happens in a pilot is all the quote, gifted, or honors students have the first shot at something new. And at the University of Illinois, it happened in a quite different way. And we have Gail to thank for that.

Stuart Selber 09:04

Hi, Gail. Stuart Selber here. I just wanted to take a minute to congratulate you on your retirement. And the thank you for everything you've done for me. And for the field. Really, I mean, where would we be without you. So enjoy your retirement, which I'm sure will involve Computers in Writing and the four C's and a lot more scholarship. But thanks again for everything. And congratulations.

Jonathan Alexander 09:35

Hi Gail, it's Jonathan Alexander here, wishing you the very best on your retirement. It's been a real privilege to know and to work with you over the past several years. I certainly remember the first time we sat down together. Many years ago. I think it was at the Computers and Writing conference when it was in Normal, Illinois. And I wanted to talk with you and Cindy about my book project digital youth. You were very encouraging that I distinctly remember you asked skiing. Had you migrated to this field, somehow you knew that I had made the transition from being a literary theorist to compositionist, but were nonetheless welcoming. And I appreciate that, again, take care, a real pleasure to have worked with you, and I hope you stay in touch.

Michael Pemberton 10:18

Gail and I were both hired at the University of Illinois in 1990. And we worked together and collaborated together for the better part of nine years that I was there. She was a wonderful mentor and a great colleague. But one of the things that I think that people perhaps don't know about Gail's contribution to my early professional career, is the role that she played in getting you started working with a journal, *Across the Disciplines*. I remember that it was back in 1993, that Gail came into my office and said, she'd been contacted by a woman by the name of Sharon Key Rose [sp?], who was one of the directors of the Writing Program at the University of Michigan. Sharon wanted to start a brand new journal devoted to writing across the curriculum. And Gail, of course, was very heavily invested with the journal *Computers and Composition* and couldn't be involved perhaps as much as she would have wanted to under other circumstances. But she came into my office. And since she and I had been working on a writing across the curriculum program at Illinois, she said that she thought I should contact Sharon, and that the two of us should work together collaboratively to get this journal started. And as many of you know, this was something that we did successfully initially, as a print journal, the first issue came out in 1994. And it's continued as an online journal all the way up until the present time. And if it hadn't been for Gail coming into my office that day, and actively mentoring me and telling me that I should get involved, I never would have gotten involved in starting this journal and continuing as its editor. So I want to thank you, Gail, for that, as well as for many other things, the times that you volunteered articles that you'd been asked to write and suggested that the two of us work collaboratively. I thought that was a very generous offer. And for all the many professional aspects of support that you've given me and personal ways that you've supported me over the years, and especially for your friendship, Gail, thank you for that and have a happy retirement.

Michelle Sidler 12:18

Hi, Gail, and greetings from Michelle Sidler in Auburn, Alabama. First, much thanks for creating such a welcoming community, that you've been a big leader and a part of *Computers and Writing* community has been my professional home for over 10 years. And I couldn't ask for more supportive and more colleagues and friends. I especially want to thank you for the mentorship and kindness you've given me in my own research. You and Cindy were role models and facilitators, especially when I came to you with a crazy scheme to create a *Computers and Writing* anthology--that that helpfulness and that kindness made that project happen. I want to wish you good luck in your retirement and I hope you enjoy it. Take care.

Carrie Lamanna 12:58

I first met Gail in the Ph. D. Program at the University of Illinois because I read and admire Gail's work and I wanted the opportunity to learn from one of the leading scholars in the field. However, it wasn't until I asked her to direct my dissertation project that I realized that I wasn't just gaining a fabulous teacher, but also dedicated and in really caring mentor. One moment in particular stands out in my memory and sums up I think, what gales meant to so many graduate students over the course of her career. Let's just say mine was not the easiest dissertation to direct. I suffered from great reading anxiety. And I second guessed my project, several points throughout the process and needed a lot of reassurance. During one of our many meetings, I was probably at a really low point. I was in the middle of job applications. And I was worried about what I was doing to my family, whether it was the right thing to drag my husband across the country for a job whether or not it was a good thing for me to be moving so far away from my parents who were going to need me more and more as I got older. I was

really focused on these things. And Gail was able to refocus my energies back on my project. And she assured me that I needed to focus on the fact that I had something important to offer the field and I shouldn't lose sight of that. And at the end of the meeting, as I stood and gathered my things to leave, she stepped forward and she hugged me the way that a concerned family member would. And, Gail, you might not remember that moment, but I will always remember that moment. You always treated those of us in the Writing Studies program like family, you supported us when we needed it, you never doubted our abilities to succeed. And you weren't afraid to give us a kick in the ass when we needed it either. Your scholarship and your caring has opened the door for so many women to enter the field of Computers and Composition. And the spirit of the fields has been increased a hundredfold by your great work, and we are very lucky.

Kate Kiefer 15:42

I met Gail during one of those serendipitous moments that happen at foresees, I was in line for lunch alone, unusual. Got to the front line, the hostess said, I can seat you more quickly if you're willing to have lunch with the people who are in line behind you. So I turned around, asked, and met you. I can't remember who you were with, you'll probably remember. But in any case, we had a wonderful lunch. And at the end of that lunch, I knew not only that, I'd love to work from the early issues of computers and competition, but also that you would be a force in the field. When Cindy asked me, I think it was about a year later, if you would be a good choice to replace me as editor or co-editor of Computers and Comp. And I was delighted. I thought it was a great plan. And you have really proved that to be true. Your work has been absolutely influential in terms of expanding the readership of the journal, giving us international presence, bringing in really great new people to the field, especially with the invited editors for special issues. It's been truly remarkable. And I felt wonderful about leaving the journal in such good hands.

Libby Morley 17:02

[University of Illinois Writing Project administrators and participants] This has been such a wonderful Institute. And, of course, we've had wonderful teachers. But I like to think that we're getting better and better at this every year.

17:26

I remember on the interview night or afternoon, I was so nervous. But once we sat around the table and introduced ourselves, Gail spoke up right away about sports. Well, as you can see, I'm a big sports nut. And so I knew I'd be right at home. Even though I was Elementary, I would be at home in this class. And I should have felt it and I felt like we've become a family. So thank you Gail.

Libby Morley 17:56

Not only am I a writer, but I'm a mom.

Various 17:59

I'm a writer too! Oh, I can't. Not only am I writer, I'm a student too!

Various 18:09

I first met Gail when I came to the Writing Project. And I was late, and I hate parked in the wrong parking garage. It was pouring down rain. And I came in soaking wet and the only chair was right next to Gail. And when I sat down, she said, Oh, we have water over there. And I said, Well, I think I've had enough. One of my memories of Gail is attending the first my first Computers and Writing conference. And as I walked around, people would be like, there's Gail,! There's Gail! I kind of thought oh yeah, I know her. felt really good to know her. And I'm really glad that I've had had the chance to meet an amazing woman.

Various 19:15

I remember two things about Gail. One is that we had to take very serious were instructions about snacks. Snacks were very important. And she made it clear to everybody that she really liked that.

Various 19:31

I really appreciate about you, Gail is that not only do you possess a tremendous amount of knowledge about the subject of writing, but you are so able to bring all of us in and make sure all of us are a part of it and it's really warm and welcoming and that has been really a positive thing for me being a non writer and not part of something like this before. Thank you very much, Gail, you

Judy 20:01

You know that I was always interested in the writing project and how enthusiastic I was to come in. I'm glad that there was a short time period between when I found out I was in the writing project and I actually met you because if you've learned anything about me the last three years is that if I learned a name wrong, I say it wrong time. So you would still be Gail How-isher. You're not the only one though. I did say Deca-TOUR for a very long time until my father explained to me that it was Decatur. He said, For Pete's sake, Judy, it's Decatur. I also wanted to thank you for being English major, because I love talking to English majors. And you're a great one to talk to. I also really love your parenthetical [garbled]. Missing you already.

Libby Morley 20:49

Honestly, we couldn't have done any of this without Gail. This is something that Gail has wanted to do for a long time. And we were finally able to put it all together and pull it off. And I think if there's anything that that, you know, we're a little bit concerned about is just keeping things going over the years within the university, making it work for all these wonderful teachers.

Various 21:23

I'm a writer. Hi, my name is Patti and I'm a writer and I'm a Spanish teacher and friend [garbled]. Gail, I can't believe my luck in getting you as a mentor this year for the writing program your spirit and your spunk truly adds to the program. You have been a fabulous Iron Chef to study under and me as a Sous have been lucky that you have less left some lasting memories with me. thank you.

Various 21:50

What I remember and admire about Gail is how supportive she's been to everyone in the project, especially after all my technical difficulties in my presentation. She found the time to stop by and said I did a great job. It helped me feel a little bit better about my work.

Various 22:09

Thank you so much for being on my dissertation committee. Looking forward to your nice words. And I guess I will see you around next year. And hopefully you can come back after that.

22:22

Gail is just the most wonderful person. I have never heard her say anything that wasn't nice. She's very positive when she gives you a recommendation. Anyone who can organize this fantastic program is obviously a wonderful person just for doing that. But I I just felt so welcomed in the writing lab. I've gotten to know her and hope I continue even after she retired, so don't be a stranger.

Various 22:54

My favorite Gail moment of Institute actually happened on the first day, when we did the visual representation of writing processes. And two of the four people that came to the front, you saw images and technology in their presentation. I thought this is gonna be a good group for Gail's last group.

Amber Buck 23:11

Jen was telling the story tonight about how you were in some classroom, and Gail said to her Oh, yeah, you used to sit right here. And she and Stephanie were talking about just how many little things that she remembered of them from that class. And I think that, you know, Gail is a big part of why was summer institutes work so well is that she remembers so many little things about people, and she always asks about [garbled]. And she just makes it fun.

23:38

There were too many Gail moments to narrow them down to one or two. But I remember also we had our first book group discussion with the whole group. And someone turned the book over and said, Oh, look, Gail was cited here. And Gail just said, Oh, stop. You're making me feel silly.

Various 23:55

Gail, my strongest recollection and best recollection of the whole experience that I've had here has to do with you, and how warm you were the first day, how inviting you were, I felt somewhat like a foreigner as a science teacher. And the fact that you were so warm, so inviting. And the fact that you remembered I was from Green Bay really, really sticks out in my mind.

24:01

One of the best memories I have during this institute is meeting you in the bathroom every day, more than once a day. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. I thought I thought that was really interesting how we always met in the bathroom at the same time almost every single day a few times a day. So I know you and I had some good laughs about that show. That's one of the best.

Various 24:47

Gail, my favorite moment with you besides having you as a teacher in my undergrad at U of I actually came not during the institute but right before the institute when I was interviewing and I didn't think I was a writer, I still not sure if I'm a writer, but you remembered me from your class. And even though

you had all these other students, it meant a lot, and I was very excited going to the Institute, and then of course, all throughout the institute, you were wonderful as well.

25:15

One of the earliest memories I have of Gail and some during the interview process, she went around, and she had everyone introduce themselves and talk about where they were from. And it just so happens that Hester and I are sitting next to each other. And she lives in New York connection, like, oh, there's someone who actually pays attention to what someone is saying and validates your feelings by recognizing where you're from. So that was one of the things that, you know, made me think, well, here's this person who is really, really cool and really validates your experiences.

25:51

Gail, thank you so much for being part of the Summer Institute. It has been a wonderful experience. And I've enjoyed being able to do it. I remember, not being sure if summer institute was something that I really wanted to do. And then I went to the interview, and was sitting there and not only did you remember my name, but you also remember what class I took with you and where I sat. I knew that I wanted to be a part of a program where someone took so much time and care to kind of know her students. So thanks again. And congratulations on your retirement.

Patrick Berry 26:28

We always say that writing is social, but this is to show me just how social writing can really be. And Gail, it's been a pleasure being on a TweetDeck with you.

BGSU Folks 26:36

When you're out and about and having all of your adventures when you run into some Colombians make sure to Twitter so that I can come find you.

Sybille Gruber and Nancy Barron 26:45

Did we bring Gail to the crater? I don't think we did. We went to the Grand Canyon and to Sedona. I think you'd like it here. I think so too. It's actually days like this one. I remember that I owe it all to Gail. She convinced me not to do literature in American literature, African American literature, where I would never have gotten a job anywhere. And now I'm here in this beautiful place. Wasn't it Gail? Who got you to see that Americans weren't just one big blob. That is actually so true. She made sure that I would understand U.S. diversity. You often come up during table conversations. And when I asked Sybille to give me one word that describes Gail:

Sybille Gruber 27:24

[wind rushing] Mighty!

Tadao 27:27

So who's that lady you're talking about?

Sybille Gruber 27:30

She is about like this, but she's mighty. She was my dissertation advisor.

Tadao 27:35

When did you meet her?

Sybille Gruber 27:37

Well I met her when I worked in the computer lab she left me work there.

Tadao 27:43

You know what computers are? She sounds like an awesome person.

Lorena 27:55

Is she a Navajo?

Sybille Gruber 27:59

[Voiceover] Navajos always think that the mighty are Navajo.

Sybille Gruber 27:59

She probably is in her heart.

Tadao 28:01

I hope someday I can meet

Lorena 28:03

Short and mighty. [random video of a dog turning its head toward the camera]

Sybille Gruber and Nancy Barron 28:08

Congratulations, Gail and thanks for everything. There's hoping that your future paths lead you back to Flagstaff. See you soon! [Cartoon Voiceover: Help me, help me Mighty Mouse!] [Video of mountain scenery out a car window. Music by Black Lodge Players plays with heavy drumbeat: Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Mighty Mouse!]

Kristin Arola 29:00

So I first met Gail, when I was a young graduate student at Michigan Tech. I was helping with the Summer Institute CIWIC, and I knew she was coming. At that point, having read just one year's worth of graduate school scholarship, most people I read that I really respected were rock stars to me, until I met them, at which point they became sadly human. Gail, whose work I greatly admired was a rock star, and I was about to meet her. I'll still remember the first time I saw her. She was walking down the hallway of the Walker Building at Michigan Tech, and she had the best posture and she had the best clothes, and I quickly hid in a classroom to avoid introducing myself to her because I was that shy and because I respected her that much. Later that day, still having successfully avoided introducing myself, I was giving a workshop on HTML and you'll never guess who came. Gail Hawisher came to my session, and she stayed the whole time. And afterwards, she came up to me, said I did a great job, and introduced herself. Since that time, Gail Hawisher has remained a rock star to me, but an accessible and encouraging one. When I see her at conferences, and this meant a lot when I was a graduate

student, she always remembered my name. She always gives me a hug, and she always has incredibly encouraging words that kind of make me feel like I can keep going at this gig. So while I'm going to deeply miss Gail's active presence in our field, and while I, to this day, miss Gail making us break out of CIWIC sessions in order to do yoga (she's quite good at it, by the way), Gail, I'm certain will remain a rockstar in our field. Thank you so much, Gail.

Kristi Fleckenstein and Kathy Yancey 31:02

Hi. Hi. So this is Kristi Fleckenstein. And this is Kathy Yancey. And we're here, of course, to talk about Gail.

Kathy Yancey 31:10

So Gail Hawisher, that is. How did you know Gail?

Kristi Fleckenstein 31:14

I met Gail in the summer of 1988 when I took my first class with her and my first class in technology. And both were eye opening experiences

Kathy Yancey 31:26

... from which you've never recovered.

Kristi Fleckenstein 31:27

... from which I've never recovered. In true fan girl fashion, when I met Gail, I decided this is exactly what I wanted to be when I grew up. It's just funny because I'm older than Gail. [Laughing] But she gave me a mark to strive for. And while my reach might have exceeded my grasp, she always encouraged me; she was on my dissertation committee. I cannot begin to count the number of ways in which she has supported my career. And how did you meet Gail?

Kathy Yancey 31:32

I, this is very funny because we didn't know each other than you went on. And I knew Gail just after you did, and I was finished, but I was a staffer at Purdue. And Gail had joined us and she wasn't there for one year, actually. But she was so gracious to me. And not everybody always was given the status that I did or did not have. And she just was very kind and very helpful. And then. And then a couple of years later, she and Cindy were both very kind and helpful because they were editing Computers and Composition. And Brian Hewitt and I were founding assessing, writing, and we were all publishing with Ablex, and there are many stories there, none of which we can tell right now. [Laughing] And then since then, you know she, oh, gosh, she Cindy asked me to edit Computers and Composition. And it's just been, you know, it's always sometimes its planned when I get to see Gail. And sometimes it's spontaneous fun. It's always wonderful. And what we wanted to say together is that we're delighted to help celebrate Gail's career. We're sorry to see that she's leaving teaching, we imagined that her students are especially sorry, but we're delighted that she's not leaving the field. And so we look forward to seeing her.

Heidi McKee 33:16

Congratulations on your retirement Gail, although retirement is the wrong word. Because knowing you, you'll be just as busy as ever, with your leadership and your scholarship and writing studies and in the field of computers and writing. Thank you for all of your incredible work for what you've done to establish the Computers and Writing community, to provide foundational and cutting edge scholarship that has helped all of us grow and learn in the field. Just grabbing from my shelves works like this. And this and this. [holds books up] And also through your editing of the New Directions and the New Dimension series. I'm glad that now it'll continue online with Computers and Composition Digital Press. But this is an amazing number of people that you touched and will continue to touch with all the work that you've done. And thank you for the years of editing Computers and Composition. This journal is, I think, the lifeblood of our field. And really editing is the wrong word because you've are also such a mentor, welcoming and supporting new scholars and new voices in the field. And also pushing experienced scholars to keep learning and growing to try new things. So for everything that you've done, and everything that you do and are going to continue to do, thank you.

Scott DeWitt 34:44

Hi, everybody. Scott DeWitt here at Ohio State University. You know, I was on my way to work today. It's kind of gloomy, and I found myself drifting back to the 80s 1987, actually. I don't have any great video from 1987 or any photographs. I did wear a really cool and 80s inspired tie today, as I was thinking about 1987. Actually I wore some of my 80s inspired kicks. I rather like this pair; I think they're kind of fun. But there's a reason why I was thinking about 1987. That was the year that I met Gail Hawisher. This is my opportunity to say thank you to Gail Hawisher Take a look at what I found today. This is a packet of readings for topics in English, English 495, taught by Dr. Gail Hawisher. And the date on the inside cover is summer 1987. This is the first graduate seminar I took in computers and composition. I was a newbie I was a first year graduate student. In fact, I only finished a semester of coursework, and took Gail's class. Gail really turned me on to teaching with computers and research about computers and composition. Here's some of my favorite things about this packet as I was flipping through them today. Look at this, a brief introduction to WordStar. A menu is an onscreen list of commands. This tells you a little bit where I was starting in 1987. I had never used a word processor before. Gail's class was amazing. And I had asked Gail to direct my thesis, and she left us. But she went on to great things. Her Introduction to computers and composition, let a lot of us go on to great things. So this is an appreciation to you, Gail, thank you for all of your hard work. Thank you for caring, and inspiring us, we're going to miss you. But I am going to expect that we will still be hearing from you and seeing you at conferences. And I wish you the best of luck in your retirement.

Daniel Anderson 36:56

So I want to say thanks to Gail one of the things that I really remember and recall is somewhere in the midpoint of, of my path and looking at the piece that Gail wrote with Charlie Moran about using email to transform teaching. And it was really a revelation for me because it showed me new ways of approaching what I do. I was kind of at a midpoint trying to figure out just how hard to push at these cold chiseled edges with technology. And the showed me a different way that translated into a lot of the of the work that I've pursued and a lot of what's happened in my classroom. So it was really important and obviously very grateful.

Bill Hart-Davidson 37:35

Well, like a lot of people, I would guess, you know, I have to thank Gail for really what I do now. So we're sitting here in the WIDE research center, the Writing in Digital Environments Research Center, where we study the intersection of computers and writing. And in the American academy, at least, that wouldn't be possible without the work of Gail Hawisher and her colleague and collaborators, and yourself like many people, Gail, I probably met Gail first through her work. So I knew who she was and, and was, you know, using that outstanding scholarship to argue for why I felt I could study this thing that I now make a living studying. And so it was just a pleasant surprise, I think, when I finally had a chance to meet Gail face to face and realize that she was a generous, giving, really fantastic person, she's always been that way. You'll you'll hear hundreds of people say the same thing, I suspect in this little tribute that everybody's doing. And so that's the, the thing that we ought to perhaps do most directly is to say thank you Gail, for giving us all a chance to to study in a field that you helped to create, and for giving the world all of the fantastic people who you've been a mentor to and, and a teacher to all these years.

Danielle DeVoss 39:18

Our story begins here, the place Rapid City, South Dakota, the setting, the South Dakota School of Mines, the year 1998. In 1998, I went to my first Computers and Writing conference. I was in my Ph. D program at Michigan Tech for just over a semester. I entered the program really interested in ways in which gender shapes the development and adoption of computer technologies. At that Computers and Writing, I had my first chance to see and meet some of the scholars whose work had so influenced me including Dene Grigar, Michael Day, Becky Rickly, Nick Carbone. And, of course, one of my longtime heroes. That would be you, Gail Hawisher. I had read your work. And it was absolutely foundational to me during my master's program. It was so delighted and excited to hear you talk. At the conference you presented on the work you were doing on women's identity building and representations on the web, which was frankly, still frontieresque in 1997-98. At one point in your talk, during the discussion component, you threw your arms up and said something along the lines of and these women putting naked pictures of themselves online, what are they doing, and synapses firing in my brain. I thought, What are they doing?! About three years later, you're on my dissertation committee, reviewing a document that essentially began that very moment in 1998. I could tell about 100 more stories, about the moments and ways you supported me as a human, a thinker, a teacher, and more through your writing your work, your support, and your kind words.

Jeff Grabill 41:10

Congratulations on your retirement. Gail, I can't believe you're retiring, retiring way too young. But be that as it may, congratulations. So just a quick note, from my perspective, one of the things that I tell graduates into Michigan State about you, in particular, and Cindy as well, is that you consistently took a chance on publishing my work at a time in which the audience response to that work was was mixed at best. So what I tell graduate students is simply this that, that you were one of the people who consistently took a chance on me early in my career. And for that, I will never forget the chance that you took. And I will always be grateful for the chance that you took. And so a lot of the early publication work that I did, and in fact, through the present day, I really, really give you a lot of credit for taking the time to read my work carefully, to understand where it was going, and to publish it. So I owe you a lot. And I will try and repay what I owe you to colleagues and students over the next few years before I retire way too early. Congratulations, Gail.

James Purdy 42:13

And I think Gail is very responsible for that. A whole field that is very much built around this collegiality, and this this foundational notion of support, and that rather than see it as a proving ground, or a gatekeeping kind of space, it's a space of mentoring and development and nurturing and welcoming people into the discipline, there was never a moment, [garbled] for writing studies or at Computers and Writing when I ever felt like I wasn't welcomed, that I wasn't being taken seriously, even though, you know, certainly early in the program, I was not really sure about what does it mean to be part of this discipline? And what is the the kind of work that I can do, and then I can accomplish within this? But I always felt that. And I think that's so, Gail is so responsible for that. And that carries into the work of the journal, that carries into her leadership for the program. So it certainly provides a model. I think that it's easy to take for granted.

Michael Day 43:27

Hi Gail! I'll never forget the warm welcome you gave me at my first Computers and Writing conference in 1991, in Biloxi. You and Charlie Moran invited me out to dinner. And you were asking me about what I was interested in, what I was doing, and you introduced me to the Computers and Writing community. And that was lovely. And you were a great model for the kind of mentor I tried to be now both as a Writing Program Director here at Northern Illinois University and as a veteran of many CCCC, Computers and Writing, and WPA conferences. I wish you the best in retirement and I know that I'll see you very soon. So take care and happy retirement.

Derek van Ittersum 44:17

I think the thing that is so, that so that the Gail does so well is sort of shapes and encourages how you know what's what's good and what's useful about your own work. So when she when she introduces you to somebody, she'll say something about your work. And then that always taught me sort of what was interesting about my own work, and then she would just give you little comments all the time. That's like maybe you should look at this and maybe you should do that. And when I was first starting out, I didn't always take those comments as instructions but more as suggestions, and then I didn't always follow through with them. But then later as I did start to follow through with them, I found that they were always useful. So then I have started to tell people to just essentially do everything that Gail says, it will always work out good. And it's always the, it's always the right the right thing.

Cheryl Ball 45:11

And with Gail, there's not much time to figure that out. And she's doing it the way that she and Cindy have always worked together, as I see it. Gail has has always been the calm one. [Laughing] Or Cindy has been the more exuberant one. I think everybody would agree with me on that statement. And so in Gail's way, she's stepping out of her role. Not as, she's not stepping out of the role of leading the field, but she's stepping out of that sort of everyday academia role, quietly and calmly and without fuss. And that's exactly the way that she would want it. And yet, kicking and screaming, I suppose we have to let her do it.

BGSU Folks 46:05

Hi, Gail, from your friends at the Bowling Green State University doctoral program. We're here today to tell you how much we appreciate you and how much you've influenced not only us, but the many students we've had in common. The signs we hold up now or the number of students we've taught: 1133, 204, 525, 222, 120, 201, 113, 210, 80...

Kris Blair 46:39

Hundreds, no 1000s!

BGSU Folks 46:41

179. Congratulations, Gail. We love you. We love you. Thank you!!