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In Memoriam: Susan Guion Anderson (1966–2011)

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IN MEMORIAM
SUSAN GUION ANDERSON (1966–2011)

Susan Guion Anderson (née Susan G. Guion) died just shy of her 45th birthday on 24th December 2011 in Springfield, Oregon, from an aggressive and rare form of cancer. Her early death cut short a very productive research career in second language phonetics, and deprived students of an extremely gifted teacher.

Susan was born on 28th December 1966 in San Antonio, Texas. She left Texas to attend the University of California Santa Cruz, and then returned to do graduate work in Linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin, where she was mentored by Björn Lindblom and Andrew Garrett. She married her dual passions for phonetics and historical linguistics in her 1996 dissertation, *Velar Palatalization: Coarticulation, Perception, and Sound Change*, which was ultimately chaired by Nicola Bessell. Susan then headed to Alabama to train with James Flege. A multi-year postdoctoral fellowship launched her best-known line of research in second language acquisition. She joined the Linguistics faculty at the University of Oregon in 1999, was promoted to Associate Professor in 2006, and to full Professor just before her death in December 2011.

Susan worked very broadly. She published seminal empirical papers that investigated segmental and suprasegmental features in speech produced by second language learners of Spanish, Japanese, and Korean. She was also interested in theoretical questions surrounding the acquisition and representation of phonological categories. For instance, she showed plasticity in first language categories as a function of second language learning (Guion 2003). She also explored the effects of phonological neighborhoods and lexical frequency in a series of papers on the acquisition of lexical stress (Guion, Clark, Harada & Wayland 2003, Guion, Harada & Clark 2004, Guion 2005). More recently, she and Eric Pederson were investigating the role of attention in category acquisition. All the while, Susan never let go of her passion for historical linguistics, and continued to investigate questions addressing the phonetic basis for tonogenesis (e.g. Wayland & Guion 2005, Guion, Amith, Doty & Shport 2010).

Susan was a skillful teacher, devoted mentor, and highly supportive collaborator. With regard to her teaching skills, these were truly exceptional. Susan drew on her experiences as a high school French teacher to organize complex material, providing step-by-step, highly accessible, but still challenging introductions to phonetics, second language acquisition, and historical linguistics. Susan mentored five Ph.D. students through to completion. Three of these students were with her the day before she died, one having just arrived from Korea. Susan was also engaged in numerous collaborations with former students as well as with national and international colleagues. With regard to her international collaborations, she was particularly invested in the Korean research community.

Susan was also an important and respected member of the University of Oregon's faculty, and a committed and responsible contributor to building community in our field. Susan built the phonetics program in the Linguistics Department. She also helped to create and maintain a strong sense of shared purpose between field and experimental linguists, and played a central role in uniting faculty with interests in language from across campus. Journal editors and funding agencies relied heavily on her careful and constructive reviews of research, and she served on several committees for professional organizations, including the Acoustical Society of America and the Linguistics Society of America. She has left an unfillable hole at the university, in the field, and, especially, in our hearts.

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