

Marilyn Robinson Holt, PhD

February 16, 1928 ~ February 24, 2024

Dr. Holt was the kindest, most generous person I encountered during my time at the U and I will always be grateful for the understanding she gave me. Please accept my sincere condolences. She will always be in my thoughts.

- Aaron Morishita

Thank you Marilyn. Your leadership, kindness, and full on support is the only reason I was able to survive my first ten years here at the U. I was way in over my head and you kept me afloat. I learned so much from you. And, your performance in In A Northern Landscape by the late Timothy Mason still resonates in my mind. You were in my corner at every turn. Much love a care in memory. My condolences John. Xan

- Xan Johnson

I was an MFA playwright in 1979 to 1982 when Dr. Holt was Chair. I was a student under Dr. Yolanda Reed before that, a friend of hers. "oh!,"she Said at our first meeting, " Now we are getting yolanda's students! "

- Marc Thomson

Marilyn was an angel. She guided me through my MFA program and pulled strings to give me a third year of my scholarship and teaching assistantship so I could do the art core program and study photography in the art department as my MFA minor course of study so I could be a “well rounded artist.” She chaired my MFA committee and after I graduated I was lucky to get to work with her professionally, lighting her in shows at SLAC (I was the lighting designer for Road to Mecca) and designing lights for her when she directed. Godspeed Marilyn and thanks for all you generously gave me. My condolences to her family. She was greatly loved.

- Megan McCormick

As a young girl I always thought my aunt Marilyn was a beautiful movie star. She won miss Utah and was in so many plays, she just was eloquent. Growing up in the country and on a farm Aunt Marilyn and uncle John and their kids all seemed worldly and special. I always admired them and loved to get together with their family and my family at our grandma and grandpa Holts for Christmas and other occasions. I even loved her voice. She accomplished so much in her long lifetime. And I'm grateful for her life and all she added to this world. I will miss her, and have always loved her, John and their kids (my cousins). Love to this beautiful family and know you are cherished. Love, Maureen

- Maureen Flint Chandler

Uncle John & family, we send our love and sympathy to you and your family at this sad time of losing your dear wife and mother at this time! I have alot of good memories of Aunt Marilyn and you in my childhood. I stayed with you in SLC several times and had so much fun. My first taxi ride was with Aunt Marilyn in Salt Lake City, also, staying with you up on King Street when Ann was a toddler and taking her to the park each day, making Christmas cookies with Marilyn and many other memories with your family celebrating holidays at Grandma and Grandpa Holt's house each year!! I remember my times with you fondly. I love all of you!

- Saundra Flint Child

Dr. Holt, Marilyn, 'a second mom', she guided me through my education, my maturation, and my success as a theatre artist. I was privileged to see her perform, direct, and administrate for a decade of marvelous art in Salt Lake. Her luminous performance in 'In A Northern Landscape ' was truly special for many of us that designed, performed and worked on that production. In my heaven, she is laughing with Kenneth and others who have made that journey before her. Always have a place in my heart. Blessings to John and the family.■-❤■■■

- J. David Blatt

I will remember my mother's keen intellect, grace, wit, and above all, her loving kindness and generosity. She was also a wonderful role model and teacher for me--a visual artist and educator--in the way she combined her own distinguished career as an actor and director with teaching and administration. Indeed, her last words to me (recorded in a recent video message by my sister, Karen), were instructions to come over to see her to get "myself educated". I am thankful I was able to do so!

- David Holt (Toronto, Canada)

Besides having a wonderful friendship with Marilyn, she was a responsible for giving me guidance and opportunities as I developed my career. When John & Marilyn moved to California, she invited me to take over her role in a group consisting of Lennox Larson, and Geri Mariani. We performed abbreviated Broadway shows to many organizations within the state. Of course, I never could fill Marilyn's shoes, but I loved having the opportunity to perform. Many years later, I decided to go for a Masters Degree at U of U. Marilyn was the chairwoman of the theatre department at that time. Upon completion of the degree, Marilyn hired me to be a part of the faculty where I taught in the Actor Training Program with Kenneth Washington. I was fortunate enough to share the stage with Marilyn in A Delicate Balance and Absurd Person Singular. Marilyn stole the show in both productions with two comedic monologues. I am grateful for her influence, and her encouragement and her friendship. She was truly a remarkable actor, director, teacher, leader, and human being. "Flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest", dear Marilyn.

- Anne Cullimore Decker

Lovely talented lady. I will never forget her kindness. So glad to have known her.

- Marsha Miller Mugaas

I worked for Dr. Holt as part of my work study. I was also in The Actor Training Program. Dr. Holt, Marilyn was incredibly nice to work for and the best boss I ever had. She was a lovely person and so generous with her time. My favorite memory of her was that she literally whistled while she worked. While she was going about her business and no one was talking to her under her breath she had a tune she was whistling. It was lovely. She will be missed. Rest in peace, dear sweet lady.

- Mary Garcia Sprague

Dr. Marilyn Holt went above and beyond to nurture us at the University of Utah. (I was in the Class of 1985.) I have many memories of Marilyn's intellect, skill, grace, and talent. She managed to be dazzling as well as humble, gentle and strong. She touched my heart as she did so many others. I felt seen, understood, and championed by Marilyn. We saw one another last around 2014, when we shared a lovely lunch in SLC with a small group of kindred spirits. I am grateful for our communications after that - through letters, cards, and sharing books. Marilyn introduced me to writer Alice Munro, sending me a collection of her short stories. I thought Alice Munro was brilliant, gifted, generous, subtle, disciplined, and discerning - much like Dr. Marilyn Holt. Sending love and gratitude to her nearest and dearest. ♥■

- Susan Welby

Miss Utah! What a beauty you are and will always remain. Thank you for deeply touching so many of us. We will never forget you. A 1979 graduate of The Theatre Department, I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Holt while she was the department Chair. Marilyn was beautiful inside and out. She led with such compassion and understanding. Words cannot express my true admiration for her. May you RIP beautiful Marilyn. Thank you dearly for your kindness. ■

- Gale DiFlavio-Ross

As a 1980 graduate of the U of U Theatre Department, I had the honor of being guided and supported by Marilyn. She was a warm and gracious lady who helped me immensely in those years, for which I remain grateful. It was wonderful to reunite with her in 2013. Deep condolences to her family. RIP dear and beautiful lady.

- Tracy (Burke) Hiscock

Marilyn was instrumental in admitting me to the doctoral program in theater history at the University of Utah, where she served on my committee along with William Siska, Edward Lueders, and chair David E. Jones. I am forever grateful for her guidance, scholarship, and encouragement. She helped make my studies at the U an exceptional experience. Marilyn was a remarkable leader, teacher, actor and director (having played in her poignant and joyous production of The Playboy of the Western World). Above of all, she was a deeply empathetic and caring human being.

- Jack Sharrar, PhD (84)

My sincere condolences to the entire Holt and Robinson families for such a monumental loss. Rose had a radiance and love unlike any other. The heartfelt eulogy she gave at her father’s, Gene, memorial service years ago still resonates today. There is one less bright and radiant star over Utah.

- John Lewis

Dear Marilyn and family--Annie especially: I am so sorry that I just found this notice of your passing of last February along with your husband John's today--also a wonderful soul like yourself. Marilyn, you were always such a beautiful person through and through and I although you retired and left campus years ago, I have never forgotten your friendship, advice, and personal support while I taught and was tenured to the Department of Theatre. From the day I was hired in 1978 and even well past the time that you were the Chair of Theatre, you were always an inspiration not just to me, but to all the faculty, staff, and students in the department. You were always someone that could be trusted and relied on to share your wisdom and impart your vital, yet personal brand of mentoring during my aspiring career teaching filmmaking. Thank you Marilyn for always being there when you needed the most--not just for me, but for everyone in the department. You will never be forgotten and forever loved and missed.

- Brian Patrick, Professor