

Janet Morrison died peacefully at her home in Watertown, Massachusetts on December 26, 2023. The cause of death was younger onset Alzheimer's Disease, a scourge that marked her life for more than a decade. She was born May 9, 1952 in Rochester, New York and grew up there and in Arcadia, California near Los Angeles and in Memphis, Tennessee. She attended Beloit College, received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting from Temple University in 1978, and went on to become a professional actor, director, and an accomplished teacher of acting. She returned to Temple in 1985 to teach for three years before moving to Carnegie Mellon University for six years and then finally to Brandeis University where she taught for almost 25 years until Alzheimer's forced her into retirement in 2017.

Janet began acting and directing plays as a little girl (and bossy big sister) and she never really stopped. She played a variety of roles in her on-again/off-again professional acting career, from Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* (Boston Arts Group) and Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Court Theatre at Beloit) early on to Lane in Sarah Ruhl's *The Clean House* (Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre) and Queen Elinor in Shakespeare's *King John* (Actors Shakespeare Project) in more recent years. She was particularly proud of inaugurating the role of Rita in Jane Chambers's landmark lesbian drama *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* for The Glines in New York (1980) and of her work in the ensemble of Mark Lamos and Mary B. Robinson's epic seven-hour production of *The Greeks at Hartford Stage* (1982). She directed numerous productions at Brandeis, many of them by contemporary female playwrights such as Judith Thompson, Naomi Iizuka, Naomi Wallace, and María Irene Fornés. She also directed professional productions of Diana Son's *Stop/Kiss* and Conor McPherson's *Dublin Carol* for Boston's Nora Theatre Company.

Over the years though, she discovered that her true passion and calling was the teaching of acting. She dedicated herself body and soul to her students, many of whom went on to become successful actors in theatre and film or dedicated teachers themselves. She had an uncanny capacity to unlock the imaginations of her students and went to great lengths to tailor her pedagogy to their individual needs and personalities. She listened deeply and with great compassion. She maintained a commitment to perpetual training herself, taking time during many summers to study and practice techniques pioneered by the great Russian theatre artists Konstantin Stanislavsky and Michael Chekhov. By students and peers alike, she was respected as a committed mentor, a supportive colleague, a true collaborator, and a trusted leader in her department.

Janet is survived by her loving partner of 34 years, Scott Cummings; her sister Ellie Morrison; her sister Julie Morrison Smith and brother-in-law Carl Smith and their children Aron and Eli; her brother Roger Morrison, sister-in-law Nancy Herrick, their daughter Naomi, son-in-law Matt, and grandchildren Arrow, Jasper, and Nico. She is predeceased by her father Martin Morrison, a biochemist, and her mother Joyce Pollard Morrison, a journalist. Janet was a beloved member of Scott's extended family in the Boston area and is mourned by his siblings Jeff and Connie, their spouses Liz and Ed, his niece Isabel and nephews Augie, Toby, and Lew.

Plans for a memorial celebration at the Spingold Theater Center at Brandeis University on May 11th at 11:00 a.m.