Welcome and opening remarks

Lillian Doherty

It’s my privilege as Chair of the Classics Department to welcome you to this celebration of my colleague Judith Hallett and of the Festschrift that has been published in her honor, *Roman Literature, Gender, and Reception: Domina Illustris*.

Most of you probably know what a Festschrift is, but in case it’s a new concept for some in the audience, I should explain that it’s a German term for a celebratory volume (*Fest* as in festive or festival, and *schrift* meaning writing). A Festschrift is assembled as a tribute to a distinguished scholar, often but not always by his or her former students. It’s a time-honored tradition in academia, but you should be aware that by no means all scholars are the recipients of such volumes. This one is a tribute to Judy’s outstanding career and exceptional accomplishments. She is the *domina illustris*, the illustrious or distinguished woman, of the volume’s title.

Since the editors of the volume and some of its contributors are with us today and will be speaking to you, I will focus not on its contents or on Judy’s own impressive body of published work, but on her indispensible contributions to the University of Maryland and its Classics Department. For ten years she served as chair of Classics; she has been our Graduate Director now for five. There’s no better way to epitomize Judy’s presence than with the title of the intellectual biography that opens the Festschrift: “Judith Peller Hallett: An Introduction to a Force of Nature.” That is Judy to a T. In the first place, her energy level never seems to flag. She’s usually at least ten paces ahead of the rest of us, metaphorically if not literally (last week she was in Rio de Janeiro, and next month she will be traveling to Slovenia!). She is always generating new ideas and implementing them: for conferences, workshops, courses, and panels like this one.
As important as the sheer number of her ideas is their pioneering character: she has always been at the forefront of feminist and interdisciplinary scholarship in our field, and has forged connections with colleagues and students across the campus, in English, History, Women’s Studies, and the School of Languages, to name just a few. She has won many grants in support of interdisciplinary conferences, most recently in 2011 when in collaboration with Jane Donawerth of English and Caroline Eades of the School of Languages she won an ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation and a Presidential Initiative grant from the Classical Association of the Atlantic States to put on an international conference on the intersections between gender, the classics, and their reception. Just within the past two years Judy has also organized conferences on Latin pedagogy and on African-American scholars and the classics.

Judy Hallett has been and is an enthusiastic hands-on mentor to her students and colleagues. Scarcely a year goes by when she does not organize a panel of papers by students in one of her classes for submission to a professional meeting. When the panel is accepted, she coaches the students on their delivery and rehearses them so that their presentation is truly professional. As long ago as 1993-94—twenty years ago—she was recognized as a Distinguished Scholar-Teacher, an honor awarded annually to only five members of the University of Maryland faculty.

Beyond the department, Judy has served the University of Maryland, College Park in countless ways. To name just a few of the most important, she has served on numerous doctoral committees in other departments and has twice served as President of the College Park chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, including this year, its 50th anniversary year.
As most of you here present can attest, Judy is an unparalleled “networker,”
keeping in touch with hundreds if not thousands of colleagues and former students,
introducing them to each other and keeping them informed of professional
opportunities, including job opportunities. She reaches out to far-flung former
students and continues to mentor them, as in the case of her upcoming trip to
Slovenia where she has involved a former student in editing the papers for the
conference at which she will be speaking.

I could go on and on, but I hope I’ve made it clear that Judy is not only an
internationally renowned scholar but a dedicated teacher and a highly valued
colleague. We are delighted to co-sponsor today’s festivities with the Department
of English and the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies, in recognition of
her prowess as a networker and leader whose work crosses disciplinary boundaries
in so many directions.

Now I would like to introduce Michele McTamney of the Clarice Smith
Performing Arts Center, who will read a citation from the Maryland General
Assembly.