

John Bartle

Our dear friend and colleague John Bartle passed away unexpectedly at home in Utica, NY on June 10, 2022. John was born in St. Paul, Nebraska, in 1961. During his junior year of high school, he studied abroad in Denmark, a first significant step in his embrace of the study of foreign languages, cultures, and literatures. John received his BA from Rutgers University and his MA and PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures from Indiana University, with Nina Perlina as his mentor.

John's academic career at Hamilton College began in 1989. He rose to the rank of Associate Professor of German and Russian Languages and Literatures and served many years as the Chair of the Department of German and Russian (now GRIA—German-Russian-Italian-Arabic) and of English for Speakers of Other Languages, as well as Director of the Russian Studies Program. Among his service stints on campus, the ones he was most passionate about were work with Ginny Dosch for some twenty years on the Student Fellowships Committee as a Fulbright interviewer and the Levitt Council. John was a well-regarded member of the American Council for Teachers of Russian, the American Association for Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages, and the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages. During his tenure at Hamilton, John became interested in the refugee population in his adopted hometown Utica, NY. He served as the co-director of Hamilton College's Refugee Project and collaborated with colleagues and students on production of two short films: "Genesee Lights" and "The Newcomers," about the city's refugee communities. He energetically volunteered with a number of city projects, including Olmstead City of Greater Utica that is seeking to restore and maintain the city's famous parks, and served on the boards of the Midtown Utica Community Center, the Utica Public Library, the Nassar Ethnic Heritage Studies Center at Utica College, and Dollars for Scholars.

John's research interests focused primarily on the literary traditions of St. Petersburg and in particular the novels of Dostoevskii, concerning whom he published numerous articles. He had been working for many years on a translation of Nikolai Pavlovich Antsiferov's *The Spirit of Petersburg*, a study of the role of the city in Russian intellectual and artistic culture. He served as the book review editor for the *Slavic and East European Journal* for nearly twenty years. In that role, a colleague, Kathleen Parthé, noted that "John was conscientious and kind, respecting both the books' writers and its reviewers, and he always looked to bring the best aspects of both in a polished and timely review. Reviews mean a great deal, especially to young professors, and John did a tremendous amount of good to a lot of people for many years."

The lasting legacy John leaves is the impact he had on generations of Hamilton students. John was a legendary professor. He displayed true passion for Russian literature and film. His courses "Madness, Murder and Mayhem: 19th Century Russian Literature" and "Dreams, Visions and Nightmares: Introduction to Russian Film" were perennial favorites among the students,

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always over-enrolled. John loved teaching and the animated life of his classroom. Former student Ben Ligas and the Levitt Center are planning for memorials at the college and in one of the Olmstead Parks in Utica to commemorate John's years of service to the college and the Utica community.

Earlier this summer the Russian Studies program held an "open mike" memorial gathering on Zoom and in person. Some seventy-five or so former students participated. The tributes flowed with laughter and tears for over an hour. Here let's rely on just a few of the many memories offered by his students:

Although I only had Professor Bartle for one year of Russian at Hamilton, his class was by far one of my favorites and most memorable. He was a character, a force, and had an unmatched charisma that I still carry with me today as I teach my own high school classes. He will always be remembered. (Katya Hottenstein)

Thank you for everything, Professor Bartle—The funny stories about Hamilton College in the 90s. The Russian snacks you bought for our "cultural day." Your baggy and funny T-shirts. Your loud and passionate greetings in Russian. The moments that you laughed. The moments that you pondered. Your thought-provoking questions. Your never-ending passion. (Allen Cao)

Professor Bartle's immense passion for teaching was one of many things that made his class so enjoyable. The excitement with which he delivered every single one of his lectures was so contagious that as a student you lose track of time and can only wish the class was a bit longer. As I reminisce about our conversations outside of the classroom, I remember him as compassionate, kind-hearted, and understanding. He was not just a remarkable Professor but also a remarkable person. (Grisha Hatavets)

Since I had heard so much about John's signature class on Soviet and Russian film over the years, I decided to finally sit in and audit it last spring while on sabbatical... Two things in particular stood out to me as I sat in on his class. First, I remember remarking to John that I was really impressed by the *energy* and *enthusiasm* that he brought to class each day... The two questions that were constantly bouncing around in my head were: 1) how do you do it?, and 2) can you bottle some of that for me to use when I return to teaching? The second thing that impressed me was the way that he would sit off to the side in the classroom, listen to students' presentations about the films, and then dissect their comments in a polite but very probing way. He would characteristically say, "I'd like to push back a little on that," and proceed to offer a forthright critique that got right to the point but did not belittle the students in any way. That is a technique that I hope to incorporate into my teaching in the future. (From our colleague in Government Sharon Rivera)

To know John was to love him—and that energy, enthusiasm, and generosity of spirit. The curiosity for the things and people who interested him were palpable and memorable. His good humor and giving nature were legend.

Let me end with a beautiful tribute offered by our young colleague in German, Franzi Schweiger:

John's superpower was that he was not vain. A rare superpower in academia. He was not preoccupied with himself and that allowed him to truly look outwards. John cut through the noise of appearances in himself and others.

Status and prestige did not concern him. In that sense, he preferred to fly under the radar of academia, which provided him with a different perspective: John was able to see people. John was a keen observer. He had a discerning eye and he paid close attention to those around him. He was present. In the kind of simple way that is so incredibly difficult to master because it requires to let go of oneself. John was present and open. He truly listened without discriminating and he held space for the people around him. Long before diversity statements, these spaces were accessible, diverse, and democratic spaces that always seemed to be motivated by a genuine curiosity for others and joy in honest connection. John could make the people around him feel comfortable. Around John, it did not matter what people looked like, where they came from, or where they were headed. What mattered was who they were.

John is survived by his wife, Alison Doughtie; his daughter, Emma Bartle; and his son, Mason Bartle, and his fiancée, Erica Andriamaherimanana.

Вечная память! Eternal memory!

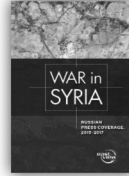
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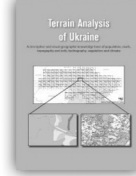
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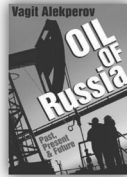
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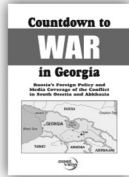
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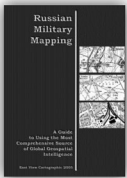
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