



Mary D. Sheriff, internationally celebrated art historian, beloved teacher, and valued member of the Western Society for French History died too soon on October 19 2016, at the age of 66. As a member of WSFH, she regularly enriched our scholarly conversations with her art historical perspective and knowledge. She specialized in eighteenth-century French art and transformed the field by re-evaluating rococo painting, introducing feminist perspectives, and examining European art in a global context. Her major publications include three monographs from the University of Chicago Press: [*J.-H. Fragonard: Art and Eroticism \(1990\)*](#); [*The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art \(1996\)*](#) and [*Moved by Love: Inspired Artists and Deviant Women in Eighteenth-Century France \(2004\)*](#). Just before her death she completed *Enchanted Islands: Picturing the Allure of Conquest in Eighteenth-Century France*, to be published by the University of Chicago Press. She was still working on another project, *Women in French Art: Rococo to Realism*, for which she and her co-author won the first Mellor Prize from the National Museum of Women in the Arts. She taught at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill since 1983, was a former chair of the Art Department, and was named W.R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor in 2005. She was also a central figure in eighteenth-century scholarship as an editor of the journal *Eighteenth Century Studies* and as a founding member of the Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art (HECAA). Her scholarly achievements were recognized through numerous visiting professorships, invitations to lecture around the globe, awards, and fellowships from, among others, the Guggenheim Foundation and the NEH. She also made a great impact on the field with her teaching. Both undergraduate and graduate students revered her, and she trained many doctoral students, who follow her example of commitment to excellent teaching and scholarship. In addition to her professional work, she was also an avid traveler, bird watcher, and scuba diver. She and her husband, historian Keith Luria (North Carolina State), were devoted to each other and shared these professional and non-professional passions. Mary Sheriff was born on September 19, 1950 in Plainfield, NJ to Robert William Sheriff and June Leaf. She was educated at Bucknell University and the University of Delaware. She is survived by her husband Keith Luria of Chapel Hill, NC and her father Robert Sheriff of Tarpon Springs, FL. Historians, art historians, colleagues and friends across the fields of French studies mourn her loss.

This éloge submitted by:

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