

A TRIBUTE TO
MOMO KANO PODOLSKY



SOME DEPARTING WORDS OF THANKS
FOR OVER 12 YEARS OF SERVICE

Dear Momo,

This little book is an expression of deep appreciation to you for your outstanding work as Program Administrator for the Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies Program at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy over the past 12 years. It's a message of thanks from me as Program Director, and as well from several of our current and former graduate students with whom I have been in continued contact.

Momo, while you have been excellent in handling all aspects of our program, your leading influence has been most evident in relation to our graduate students. You have enriched their educational experiences in many ways, as they explain here in their own words. You have been a dedicated and knowledgeable student advisor, providing help in navigating the university's many inter-connected academic offerings, and you have been a devoted advocate for student interests and concerns. You designed our website, contributing substantially to developing its content to be most helpful to students. And a most notable contribution has been the creation and development of our Annual Graduate Research Conference, which began in 2008 and this past year marked its 13th installment. The conference was originally your idea, and you designed its organizational model consisting of a student steering committee, student session chairs, faculty discussants, and an eminent keynote speaker. Over the years, you have worked tirelessly with students to guide them in planning the conference program, and you have encouraged student and faculty engagement across disciplines, with participants from across the University of Toronto, and from other universities in Toronto, across Canada and internationally. Our annual conference has been a valuable venue for student professional development, and it has become one of the most popular events in the calendar of the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies program.

As Program Director, I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to collaborate with someone of your extensive academic background and talent for teaching and administration. Given that you are yourself a program alumna, involved since program inception in 1990 as a sociology student on your way to a Ph.D. (with a thesis on cultural patterns among Japanese-Canadian children in Toronto), by now you certainly have more experience with Ethnic and Pluralism Studies at U of T than any other person! What good fortune for us that after your years on the faculty of Kyoto Women's University in Kobe, your return to Toronto led you to reconnect with us. I have always been grateful for your reliably thoughtful advice, your enthusiastic engagement with our students, and of course your sheer hard work. For me, the program would not have been nearly as enjoyable and rewarding without your participation.

In preparing the book, I thank Wendell Adjetey, one of our alumni now on the history faculty at McGill, and Margaret McCone, former Executive Director and now consultant at the Munk School. I hope you enjoy reading these messages, and knowing that you have made a lot of friends through your generosity and hard work.

My very best wishes to you.

Jeff





WENDELL NII LARYEA ADJETEY

POLITICAL SCIENCE (M.A.); HISTORY PH.D., YALE UNIVERSITY; NOW
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND CLASSICAL
STUDIES, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

In the five years that it took to earn my undergraduate and master's degrees at the University of Toronto, Momo, you're the outstanding administrator with whom I remained in contact. Your kindness, professionalism, and wit made reaching out a sheer joy. And because of your tireless work ethic, I had the delightful opportunity to present at the Annual Graduate Research Conference in 2009 and 2017. Even after relocating to the United States for seven years for doctoral and post-doctoral work, I always knew that I had a home at the Munk School, because you and Jeff—my former professor and now friend and colleague—had created a nurturing and welcoming environment. The U of T might not produce another dynamic duo like you two!

What impresses me most about you, Momo, is your unwavering commitment to the themes of the Program: pluralism and ethnic cohesion. Equally important, your constant encouragement of past and present students—regardless of where their studies or careers had taken them—inspired me, shaping my outlook on the meaning of citizenship, mentorship, and belonging in academe.

In many ways, my connection to the Program has transcended the academic; it resembles the familial. When I earned my Ph.D. from Yale University in May 2018, for example, you and Jeff, in addition to my immediate family, were the first to send heartfelt congratulations. Furthermore, you always inspired me to remember Canadian society and one day repatriate and contribute to the academy and civics. I am heartened that you saw something in me that I did not necessarily see in myself. That is Momo. That is friendship. That is citizenship. That is the best of Canadian society.

My family and I wish you and yours all good things, Momo.

Warmly,

WNLA

FATIMA ALTAF MA, POLITICAL SCIENCE



Momo, you made my experience in the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies program wonderful! You gave me the opportunity to help arrange and participate in my first graduate conference. It was a memorable experience that taught me a great deal about organizing academic events and allowed me to listen to amazing speakers I may not have had a chance to otherwise. Thank you Momo for giving students the space to grow and learn from one another. Wishing you the best on your journey ahead!

TERESA M. CAPPIALI

PH.D. STUDENT, POLITICAL SCIENCE, U MONTREAL (VISITOR TO EPS); NOW POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW,
LUND UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF GENDER STUDIES, SWEDEN, WEBSITE: TERESACAPPIALI.ORG



I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to Momo for her support and dedication to her work.

I met Momo during my visiting position at the “Ethnic and Pluralism Studies” Program in 2013-2015. At the time, I was an international Ph.D. student at the Université de Montréal and moved to Toronto to gain new knowledge and experience in migration and ethnic studies. I had heard about and studied the Canadian multiculturalism before, but I wanted to learn more about the work done at the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies” Program. This was one of my best decisions, as this experience represented a turning point in my personal life and academic career. During my stay, I was exposed to many different ideas and felt always welcomed and supported. I left the center with great motivation to contribute to improving society and to offer viable solutions to increasing intolerance in my home country [Italy].

Needless to say, during my time at UofT, Momo's presence made a great difference. Her help and kindness were crucial and shaped my positive experience in multiple ways. I have rarely met in my life someone so professional and open-minded. During my stay, I was reassured that I could rely on her and receive support when needed. Among other things, she encouraged me to participate in two of the annual Graduate conferences organized in the center. The Conferences were particularly important at that stage of my career. They allowed me to share my empirical research in a safe space and to gain more confidence in my work. Most importantly, I felt connected to a great community of young scholars dedicated to excellence in research and committed to building more tolerant societies. These experiences, moreover, allowed me to create extensive networks and solid friendships. I think that Momo's magic touch contributed to creating the conditions for this to happen. Therefore, I would like to thank her profusely for making my stay in Toronto one of the most memorable experiences in my life.

LYNDA CHUBAK

P.H.D. STUDENT, ANTHROPOLOGY, ACTIVE IN CONFERENCE COMMITTEE 2019-20

I had the pleasure of working with Momo Kano Podolsky as one of the graduate student representatives at the 12th and 13th Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Graduate Research Conferences. Though these were billed as student run conferences, we knew we were blessed to have Momo's calm hand shadowing the tiller. Her support, encouragement, and organizational skills created an environment in which graduate students could thrive. Working with Momo and being a part of this initiative that she created was a wonderful experience. She will be missed.



Thank you, Momo. I wish you all the best as you begin your new adventures.



RALUCA-JOANNA COTARLEA

MASTERS, CERES

I'm sad to hear of Momo's departure from the EPS program ... Being in the EPS graduate specialization was easily a highlight of my MA degree and the topics covered were the most useful outside academia.

Momo, thank you for your time and dedication to EPS and to UofT! You were a friendly face at Munk for many of us and I appreciated your insights and the lengths you went to to ensure we got the best grad experience - nobody else ever got us wine and cheese! I really enjoyed presenting at the EPS Graduate Conference and it's a fond memory of grad school for me. I wish you and your family all the best!



Y U - C H E N C H E N

MA CERES STUDENT, 2020

The Ethnic and Pluralism program and graduate conference meant a lot to me and my career in academia. Thinking back, Ethnic and Pluralism Studies was the reason why I decided to apply to University of Toronto—as a newcomer in Canada, I was particularly attracted by the diversity of the program. Thus, upon enrolling at UofT, Momo was the first member of the administrative staff I made contact with. I distinctly remember how her enthusiasm helped reduce the anxiety I felt as a non-native English speaker. During my time in the program, I had the opportunity to work with Momo on the student conference committee. She always encouraged me to be confident and take on increased responsibilities – even the challenge of being a conference chair. I remember that for my first committee, she shared a lot of tips on how to communicate effectively in academia; and these suggestions ended up being an immense help throughout my time at UofT. Now, as I walk my future academic path, I wish her all the best in her own new chapter. Thank you, Momo, for your considerable efforts to create a comfortable and inspiring learning environment, one where I truly learned a lot.



SHANNON CLARKE

JOURNALIST INTERN, RYERSON; SUBSEQUENTLY MA STUDENT, LSE,
NOW PH.D. STUDENT, POLICY STUDIES, QUEENS UNIVERSITY

I got to know Momo as an intern at the Global Migration Research Institute in 2016. I showed up to the Munk School a little anxious, and met Momo at her office for our first meeting. I was expecting an interview. Instead, we got straight to work talking with Professor Reitz about our first project, with Dr. Sherene Razack. I worked on several pieces for the magazine over two years, and for each one, I looked forward to meeting with Momo: talking about the interview to come and debriefing afterward. More than that, I was always grateful for her humour and encouragement because I was nervous about interviewing these scholars, at campus with which I wasn't very familiar. She voiced her complete confidence in my abilities and working with her on these articles, and was a calm and reassuring presence at the interviews.

When I was preparing to leave for graduate school, Momo was generous with her advice and support, and kept in touch as I finished my programme. Eventually, she invited me to submit a paper for the graduate conference. The Annual Graduate Research Conference was probably the true close of my graduate studies which ended somewhat anticlimactically in London without a defense process or opportunity to discuss my research with anyone. It was my first experience presenting in a setting like this, surrounded by other young scholars. I can't speak highly enough of Momo's vision for this conference and I'm grateful for the opportunity I had to participate. Most importantly, I'm grateful for Momo's investment in her students and their work. She extended that care and mentorship to me, as her intern, which for a recent graduate is not a small thing.

Momo, I want to wish you all the best on this new chapter! I'm happy to have met and worked with you.

HANNAH COHEN

MASTERS STUDENT, GLOBAL AFFAIRS

During my time as a graduate student at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, I was excited to also participate in the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies program. In order to do this, Momo's assistance was essential! She helped me figure out the requirements for the program, and was always very responsive and approachable.

When you're a student in such a big university, having someone to go to with questions is absolutely invaluable, and especially someone as kind and helpful as Momo! I also really enjoyed the wonderful Annual Graduate Research Conference, and I learned so much from the diverse and thoughtful presentations.

Thank you, Momo, for all of your help and support!

AAMREEN E FATEMAH EBRAHIM

MASTERS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Momo, you have gone above and beyond in helping me and other students within the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies specialization. Last summer when I emailed you about my interest in the program, you went out of your way to answer my questions and make my transition to the University of Toronto as smooth as possible. Since then, whenever I emailed, pestering you with questions, I knew you'd always find an answer and come up with a plan of action that was best for me. Even when it came to helping out with the Annual Graduate Research Conference, you made everything so simple and easy! Thank you for putting us as students first, for always supporting us, and for being reliable, selfless, compassionate, and someone we could always count on! I appreciate you!

LUCY EL-SHERIF

PH.D. CANDIDATE, OISE, CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING



Dear Momo,

I heard you are retiring! The program will not be the same without you!

You have always been such a supportive, calming presence at the EPS program, the stylish and the smooth operator that keeps the program moving without ever drawing attention to herself. In every interaction I have had with you, you have always been extremely welcoming and competent.

Your contributions to the program and our graduate student life will live on for years to come in the memories and relationships you created the right setting for.

I am very happy for you to be moving on this next chapter of your life, and hope you are blessed with health, luck, and joy!!

Warmly,

Lucy

ADIBA HASAN

MA STUDENT, GLOBAL AFFAIRS, 2020



Dear Momo,

I did not have the time to connect with you as much as I would have hoped but the few times that we did whether via email or in-person, you have been so compassionate and just immensely kind and flexible. While as a MA student at UofT, the struggle was real and somehow even through emails, you were always so patient and understanding that without even thinking I would be motivated to do things. Thank you for being such a wonderful soul and allowing students to just be and without questioning being so sensitive to our needs. Keeping you in my positive thoughts and best of luck with everything!

With so much gratitude,

Adiba

DAVID HOWARTH

CENTER FOR EUROPEAN, RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES (M.A.)

Dear Momo: I want to thank you for the care and dedication that you have shown me as a student in the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Graduate Specialisation. You have been a tremendous resource throughout my graduate studies, and I will be eternally grateful for the support you have provided me. I recall meeting you for the first time last summer in your office, where you provided useful advice about navigating studies and co-curricular engagements. Even if this conversation did not seem like much, you eased my stress and anxiety around beginning graduate studies immensely. However, your care and support did not stop there. I remember you reaching out to me early in my first term to encourage me to become involved in the EPS conference's student-led steering committee. I thank you for thinking about me because my participation in the steering committee has enriched my graduate experience in ways beyond what I could imagine and has led to developing robust inter-departmental friendships that have helped me significantly through my graduate studies. I am incredibly thankful for the safe spaces that you fostered through the planning activities, especially when you took the time to be mindful about my food allergies. I know that I have some unique food limitations, but, unlike many, you were mindful of these and did your best to accommodate me. This small gesture went a long way in making me feel included in a space that can often feel exclusionary. Finally, I want to thank you for developing the annual EPS conference because my participation as a presenter and panel chair allowed me to build confidence in my abilities and feel pride in my scholarly work, which I believe has contributed greatly to my success as a graduate student at the University of Toronto. When I heard from Jeff that you would be leaving EPS, I felt saddened, but thankful that I had the opportunity to have spent the time that I had with you during my graduate studies. Although you will be greatly missed, your contributions to and involvement in Ethnic and Pluralism Studies will be remembered fondly. I wish you the very best on what is next for you and I hope that we may stay in contact.

M A R I E - P I E R J O L Y

SOCIOLOGY PH.D. STUDENT, NOW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
AND ANTHROPOLOGY, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY



Dear Momo,

A few words to express my gratitude to you. Thank you for all you've done for the R.F. Harney Program in Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies throughout the years. Without a doubt the program will be worse off without you! I participated in the EPS Graduate Specialization, and the 7th and 9th EPS Graduate Conference, a successful event as always. The amount of effort you put into organizing these events and the care for students did not go unnoticed. You've been incredibly helpful and supportive and there are only good things to say about your time and involvement in the program.

I wish you all the best,
Marie-Pier Joly

E M I L Y L A X E R

SOCIOLOGY PH.D. STUDENT, NOW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, YORK UNIVERSITY,
GLENDON CAMPUS



The departure of Momo Kano Podolsky from the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Program at U of T marks the end of an era. Momo's contributions to the life of this program, and to the journeys of the many graduate students who have passed through it, over the past 12 years are innumerable. As a PhD student and participant in the program from 2009 to 2015, I benefited personally from Momo's stewardship and support. The many graduate student conferences which Momo took the lead in organizing provided a space in which I and others learned the ropes of academic public speaking and networking. Momo has also supported me since graduation, facilitating my ongoing ties to the program through posts about my work on the website. The Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Program would not be what it is without Momo. Thank you for all your hard work, and I wish you the very best in your future endeavours!

JONATHAN KAUEHOWEN

PH.D. STUDENT, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Dear Momo,

I want to thank you for all the work you've done to facilitate events like the Annual Graduate Research Conference. In my first year of the Master's program, you made it possible for me to do my first conference presentation of my academic career. I was quite nervous to do it, but the way you organized the panel made it a far less stressful experience than I was anticipating, and it ended up being a really rewarding exercise. Thank you so much for providing graduate students with these sorts of opportunities, they are valuable developmentally, and it was evident by how smoothly they went that you had put a lot of work into ensuring that it was a positive experience for us. Congratulations on your retirement! I hope that you look back on the work that you did with pride and the knowledge that you made life easier for us students.

All my kindest wishes,
Jonathan Kauenhoven

EUNICE KAYS

MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY, 2019

Dear Momo:

First and foremost, congratulations on your outstanding career journey! You have been an incredible exemplary of many of the lessons I learned throughout the “Ethnic and Pluralism Studies” Graduate Specialization.

Quite honestly, much of the growth I’ve experienced through the Specialization is because you were so helpful, knowledgeable and respectful. I thank God for your life and thank you for your leadership as the Program Administrator for 12 years. Whenever I had questions about the types of courses to take at UofT and York, you checked in with Jeffrey and explained the details to me with much patience and clarity.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to Chair the Policy and Integration Session at the 12th Annual Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Graduate Research Conference last February. The experience of chairing the conference has contributed to increasing my leadership capacity and capabilities. One of them being: leading the planning of the Toronto Black Policy Conference and interviewing on Metro Morning with Matt Galloway in November last year.

For this, I appreciate you very much. Thank you for everything!

God bless you and all the best,
Eunice Yeboah (Kays)



MARKO KLJAJIC

MGA STUDENT, U OF T.; NOW PH.D. STUDENT IN POLITICAL SCIENCE,
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON

Dear Momo,

Thank you for your contribution to the program and the university. Thank for your kindness and dedication. Thank you for believing in me and my vision of ethnic peace in my native country of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

You have meant so much to the program and to students of the program such as myself. My fondest memory was what you said to me after my presentation at the Ethnic and Pluralism Graduate Research Conference. When I had asked you whether you thought my research on rescue and rescuers in mass conflict was worth studying, you told me that it was not just worthy but needed to show ourselves that ethnic peace is something achievable and not just a fantasy.

I will soon start on my doctoral dissertation on rescuers in the Bosnian War at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Your words remain with me today. I wish you all the best in the future.



NAOMI LIGHTMAN

PH.D. OISE, NOW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY
OF CALGARY

Thanks Momo – for making my experience as a PhD student more meaningful and less lonely! You were always a funny, kind, and driven voice at UofT and I enjoyed working on the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Graduate Research Conference with you for several years. You actively fostered community among the interdisciplinary students working on the conference and you were a supportive force for so many of us during our graduate years. Wishing you all the best in the years to come!

PAUL PRITCHARD

SOCIOLOGY PH.D. STUDENTS



Dear Momo,

Thank you for all your dedicated work with the Ethnic and Pluralism studies program. I will always remember the 2017 Harney Graduate Research Conference – my first presentation at an academic conference. I remember feeling extremely nervous. I quickly learned however that there was nothing to be nervous about. That is because the annual conference was more than just a conference— it was a supportive community. This is what brings us back year after year. You played a huge role in creating this community that has meant so much to us young emerging scholars. You leave a big hole in your wake.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.



YUKI TANAKA

PH.D. STUDENT, SOCIOLOGY, U TORONTO

Thank you, Momo, for your work with the Ethnic and Pluralism Studies program. I was on the student steering committee for the EPS Conference in 2015 and very much appreciated your guidance as we, mostly MA and junior PhD students, made program selections from the submitted papers. During these meetings I also enjoyed hearing about your very international upbringing and your experiences coming back to Japan after living abroad, which I can certainly relate to. All the best in your next journey!





WITH LOTS OF LOVE,
YOUR FOREVER FRIENDS AT MUNK.



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