BLUFORD ADAMS

Happy Birthday, Linda!

As I reflect on our friendship, I’m filled with gratitude for all that you have given me, our students, and the English Department. You arrived here in Iowa City the same fall Doris and I did, and it’s been such a delight knowing you all these years. Your smile and infectious laughter have brightened many a dreary EPB afternoon for me. I don’t know how many times I’ve been sitting in my office slogging through emails and student papers, feeling pretty low, when I hear that laughter and suddenly, I know all’s well in the world again—Linda’s in her office, and good things are about to start happening—particularly for your students. I’ve always been amazed at how patient, generous, and lively you are with them. I walk by your office catching scraps of what sound like amazing conversations and it makes me wish I was taking your class. As DGS, I took comfort in the thought that your students were in such good hands. I knew each of them would get the full Linda treatment—rigorous and supportive mentorship, thoughtful and detailed feedback, even tutorials. I’m awed at how much you do for them. The proof is in the pudding. Your students consistently turned in some of the most theoretically sophisticated and creative projects in our department—a true testament to your hard work, generosity, and intellectual passion!

Linda, you have given us all so much! I simply can’t thank you enough.

With love and gratitude, bluford.

FAITH AVERY

Dear Linda,

Happy Birthday!

It is a strange feeling to spend my days manipulating words only to have them fail so profoundly to express how you have shaped my way of being in the world. Over the past five years you have taught me so much about myself and the others with whom I walk through life. I am grateful for every time that you have challenged me to evaluate my positionality and my privilege, and for the hours upon hours that you have spent helping me to better understand concepts like love, holiness, and standing beside and behind the other in their suffering. What’s more, you have been my model for what ethics looks like in the world and in daily life. Without your mentorship, of course, I would not be the academic that I am, but I would also not be the person that I am. Your teaching informs every human interaction in which I participate, and I could not sustain my life, and ultimately marriage, with La’Kesha without constant evaluation of what it means to negotiate our shared space and our love. Finally, Linda, you have cared for me through countless hours of emotional labor and by inviting me into the space of your home for food and fellowship. Those gestures made me feel as though I belong and am loved in ways that few things during graduate school ever have. Thank you so much.
I love you and “here I am,”
Faith

And from my wife, La’Kesha:

Linda,

I primarily know you through Faith, but I want to personally thank you for being instrumental in both of our lives. You have been so supportive and helpful to Faith throughout her academic career in more ways than you might understand. Thank you for caring for her. Thank you for teaching her about concepts like race and Americanness that are hard to navigate in relationships. I have watched her grow so much and it has so beautifully shaped our relationship and marriage. Thank you, too, for inviting us to your home when we had nowhere else to be during fall break. That sense of community meant the world to both of us.

Happy Birthday,
La’Kesha

JACOB BENDER

Hello, this is Jacob Bender; I took Linda Bolton’s Native American Readings course Fall of 2013, at the very start of my PhD program. I remember it was easily my favorite class that semester, and the paper I wrote for her was later published in American Indian Quarterly. That same paper was directly cited by the hiring committee during my interview at Middlesex County College, where I recently began my first tenure-track appointment. Hence, like many at Iowa, I feel indebted to her.

I wanted to forward her my gratitude, honor her birthday, and express my sorrow at the news of her diagnosis; my own mother passed away from ovarian cancer in 2004. But if anyone is prepared for this journey, I suspect it’s Linda Bolton: one of the books we read in her class was Joy Harjo’s A Map to the Next World, and I always felt that title was more than mere affectation for her. May her journey be likewise transcendent.

All my regards
Jacob Bender, PhD
FLORENCE BOOS

Dear Linda,

Thank you for your bright and radiant spirit. I send loving thoughts for your birthday, and best wishes for strength in this most difficult of times.

You can be proud that your teachings on ethics and art have blessed the lives of so many over the years, especially your students, but also your fellow department members and those in the community.

I think of your admirable parents, too, and know that their spirits are with you.

Thinking of you each day with love,

Florence

TORIE BURNS

Dear Dr. Bolton,

I’m writing to say thank you. Thank you for pushing me to improve my writing and my own scholarly research, for not shying away from telling your truths unapologetically and pouring your spirit into your passions. People are thinking of you day in and day out and missing your presence in EPB. Thank you for teaching the undergraduate course that allowed my relationship with yoga to flourish, for teaching the graduate course that awakened some of my research curiosities, and for pushing everyone around you to be the most thoughtful, best possible versions of themselves.

I’m sending my thoughts and some positive energy your way.

Sincerely,

Torie Burns

DAN CRONIN

Hi, Linda,

I’m writing to wish you a happy birthday and to thank you for the advice and lessons you gave me in class two years ago. It was my first semester here as a student and as a teacher, and your example kept me going. You modeled how to run a rigorous, exciting, and kind discussion, you pushed me to write into the subjects I’d been too insecure to tackle, and you were the first person at Ulowa to consider my work seriously. You gave me the tools and confidence to stay grounded in the strange world of graduate school, and—again—I just want to thank you for everything.
My very best,
Dan Cronin

CHERYL GRAHAM

Dear Linda,
I used to wonder what made me talk to you that night in line for sushi. And why I later reached out to a stranger over email. I never contemplated it for long, though, and just assumed it was meant to be. The way the Universe sometimes gets it right and puts a certain person in your path.
I do know that we laughed that night, and that I cried the next time we got together, and that every time thereafter it was one or the other, and often both. From the beginning you gave me a safe space to be vulnerable, and I have rarely felt so free to be myself with someone so quickly. Though I could barely understand and intellectualize the ethics you talked about, you modeled them for me every day, meeting me and everyone around you with integrity, truth, and an open hand.
I’m forever grateful for all those nights at your dinner table, talking about the mundane to the sublime and everything in between. I recently came across this poem. It’s not the Most Profound Poem of All Time, but I just liked it and wanted to share. I especially love the part about the trees — it made me think of you.

All my love,
Cheryl

Epistemology
by Catherine Barnett

Mostly I’d like to feel a little less, know a little more.
Knots are on the top of my list of what I want to know.
Who was it who taught me to burn the end of the cord
to keep it from fraying?
Not the man who called my life a debacle,
a word whose sound I love.
In a debacle things are unleashed.
Roots of words are like knots I think when I read the dictionary.
I read other books, sure. Recently I learned how trees communicate,
the way they send sugar through their roots to the trees that are ailing.
They don’t use words, but they can be said to love.
They might lean in one direction to leave a little extra light for another tree.
And I admire the way they grow right through fences, nothing stops them, it's called inosculation: to unite by openings, to connect or join so as to become or make continuous, from osculare,
to provide with a mouth, from osculum, little mouth.
Sometimes when I’m alone I go outside with my big little mouth
and speak to the trees as if I were a birch among birches.

MARY LOU EMERY

Dearest Linda,
I am lighting a birthday candle in your honor and wishing you a day of beauty, surrounded by love. You are a gift in yourself to so many people! I am truly grateful for opportunities over many years to work with you and, in the years just before my move, to practice yoga with you. Your steady, graceful presence, your wisdom, and wonderful laughter are an inspiration.

Thank you! and Happy Birthday.

With love,
Mary Lou

JOY HARJO

Dear Stephen,

I have been thinking about Linda. It has been a few years since we were in touch, since the time she graciously brought me back to Iowa City and we had precious time together. Tonight I received an email about her and the diagnosis with pancreatic cancer.

Damn.

And tomorrow is her birthday.

I am happy she has you in her life.

Please tell Linda that we remain in touch via spirit. We always have—I had been missing her and thinking about contacting her, and then Jen Shook sent me a message. What a journey this life is. It is all life, and it continues, it does, it will—there are so many doorways. I appreciate the manner in which she has always honored my poetry and writing and helped take care of it. I miss our long talks about what matters in this world and how it matters. What she knows is that there are many worlds. The writers, thinkers and artists go between for understanding.

Let me know if I can help in any way.

Much much love,

Joy (Harjo)
my dear linda,

I miss you. I realize I have missed for a while now.

Thank you for teaching me—creating a wonderful reciprocal relationship of wisdom sharing.

You are a gem, a light, a force. Radical and resilient. Your laugh and smile are in my heart.

Happy birthday.

I am forever grateful that our paths crossed and will always cherish the strength and grace you shared with us all.

I hope I can come chant, breathe, be with you soon

Fannie

FANNIE HUNGERFORD

NANCY HAUSERMAN

November 26, 2018

For Linda B on the occasion of her birthday!

Happy Birthday my very dear friend. I must say I doubt this is the way any of us expected to celebrate and certainly NOT the way ANY of us would prefer to celebrate. Nonetheless, celebrate you I do and I will.

I so remember our first real meeting, i.e. when we had a meaningful conversation and we laughed together. Seated next to you that day at Wendy and Dee’s marriage celebration I was so nervous. You were, after all, LINDA BOLTON. I had heard so much about you – how smart and funny you were and so beloved by the fabulous couple – Wendy and Dee. What would I possibly say to you? Would you think I was funny? (don’t answer that) Smart or just a poser at a party teeming with brilliance. But we talked and we laughed and I loved you immediately. And, as they say, the rest is history.

Well, our closeness came later...especially with the onset of our amazing dinners - you and me and Diana Harris and Zooey, and only VERY occasionally a visiting guest. So so much love and laughter and talking of everything – Uniqlo, love, Uniqlo, politics, Uniqlo, books and movies and good food and Uniqlo. And the night brave Steve came over to meet “your girls”...to be vetted as it were...okay not really but checked out anyway. Did we ever have a “bad” meal? I couldn’t
say...because the love and laughter and friendship was always the basic ingredient and that was ALWAYS good, always.

Thank you for the privilege of your friendship, for your love and your trust. Thank you for letting me sit in your class – the awestruck senior joining the awestruck undergraduates. Learning, admiring, seeing old things anew and new things in intellectual delight. New writers, new ideas, new ways of teaching....you gave it all.

Happy birthday to you Ms B, the fabulous Ms B. I will hold you in my heart always...always. Hauserperson aka Prof H aka Nancy who loves you

JULIE KEDZIE

Happy Birthday!!! Thank you so much for your grace and compassion as a teacher. Even though I only had one class with you, the lessons you taught us continue to resonate in my mind and heart and I hope they will in my writing too! I hope I do you credit in my work because you helped to shape how I see the world.

LOVE & RESPECT,
Julie

MEGAN LEFF

Dear Linda,

I understand that Iowa City had a large snowstorm yesterday, and so I hope the view from your window is gorgeous. There is nothing like the beauty of freshly-fallen snow in Iowa – especially if you don’t have to drive in it!

I realize that you have known my parents for years and had developed a special bond with them, and I consider myself extremely fortunate for being able to get to know you ever since I invited you to visit our Dublin Center in spring of 2017. My mom had raved about your work in the classroom and connection to the students, and I knew I couldn’t go wrong by asking you to serve as a visiting lecturer for us in Dublin. I had no idea that your impact would be so profound, though. I recently was in touch with Steven McMahon and gave him an update on your health. I wanted to share part of his message with you:

“Having the opportunity to get to know Linda a little during her visit and through our correspondence, I count meeting her as one of the great pleasures of my working life. Watching her teach was a privilege, and left me feeling both enthused and intimidated by the faith she had in her subject, and by the integrity of her classroom. I know that our students greatly valued their time with Linda, short as it was, and that our Iowa group this year held her in the highest esteem.”
Several times in the lead up to and during her visit, I found myself at a dead loss when trying to match her generosity of spirit. Her e-mails - especially those sent in the morning when she was at her best - were like a tonic.

Leona and I brought Linda and Jill to Kavanagh’s Pub in Glasnevin for tapas and a few glasses of stout, and they lit the place up with their laughter, and I was hoping that we might make it back to Kavanagh’s if Linda returned to Dublin with the Iowa summer program.

Many thanks again for taking the time to write, Megan. My heart sank when I read your message, but I regretted the indulgence soon after - Linda would not approve at all.”

I know from our earlier e-mails that your time in Dublin had a profound impact on you as well, and I am so pleased to have helped make this connection. I will always have a thought for you when I’m visiting Dublin, or Iowa City for that matter, and I will make it my goal to ensure that my mom continues to develop her yoga practice. I have you to thank for that since I alone could have never convinced her to go!

I will be thinking of you on your birthday and in the weeks to come, and feeling so grateful that I had a chance to get to know you professionally and personally.

All my best,

Megan Leff
Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Assessment
Program Dean (Arles, Dublin, Milan, Nantes, Nice, Rome)

TERESA MANGUM

Dear Linda,

On this glorious, snow-covered morning I’m sending lots of birthday love across the neighborhood to you. Corey send his good wishes, too. I’m holding you in my thoughts and wishing you a British Bake Off kind of gentle, companionable, yummy day. Hoping to see you soon! Hugs, Teresa

KATHY MAXEY

Cara Linda,

Many days I rushed to yoga class from work, my mind racing and my body tired. I would plop down on the mat and think “OK—stop thinking, it’s time to chill out!” Sometimes it worked, most of the time it did not. Then I would hear beautiful laughter that joyfully erupted from the entryway and flowed into the classroom. Linda had arrived! From that moment, I felt my spirits lighten, and a smile came to my face. Heartland Yoga vibrates with the loving, joyful spirit of our dear Linda.
I have to be honest; I really miss our hugs. My dear friend, Rico (also a yogi!) always said “we should give and receive twelve hugs a day!” I always looked forward to my Linda hug before and/or after a yoga class! I am saddened I have not seen you since the summer and my heart aches for you and Steven and your family and dear friends. You are that rare soul that manages to give hope and support to others in the midst of your own struggles. Others have said it, and I repeat it—you are an inspiration. I miss having you next to me . . . that space will always be “Linda’s corner.” I loved to watch your elegant neck and beautiful posture and the grace with which you moved.

It is so hard to say goodbye, but I know you will be surrounded with love and peace and healing. I know your spirit will still be with me. Every time I practice yoga I can hear your laugh and through the tears it will inspire me to “be like Linda,” making yoga a part of my entire being—healing for the body, mind, and soul.

Linda, thank you for being a friend, for your support and your generosity. You are truly a gift and one that I will carry in my heart forever.

With love and gratitude.
Namaste,
Kathy

LYNNE NUGENT

Happy Birthday Linda,

To a bright light in EPB—a colleague who has always known my name, though we don’t work together directly, and takes time to say hello when we meet, and stops to exchange a few friendly words. Who genuinely seems to see and know me, and care. It may seem simple, but it makes such a difference! Your warmth and kindness are a shining example for us all!

with love,
Lynne Nugent

ALEXANDER PINES

Your class my first year at Iowa was the source of so much joy and wonder amidst the isolation I felt in moving here. It was such a tremendous gift to dedicate three hours a week to Baldwin and Tretheway and Coates, such a pleasure to escape the performance and combat of the other MFA classrooms. As I have grown as an instructor, there is not a day when I don’t return to your light, your patient grace, and your kindness from our makeshift seminar room in EPB. You helped create a kind of home for me, Aracely, and Adina, and reminded me that this thing I
came here to do, to make art and teach, to think about my own relationship to the landscape, is something worth living for. I am so grateful for your openness and embrace of vulnerability, how you make room and give permission for the vulnerability of others. With love, and joy, and solidarity,
Alexander Pines

LAURA RIGAL

From Laura

Happy Birthday, Linda!! It is Sunday and I have been thinking about you all day as the snow comes down. I have also been praying that school will be cancelled tomorrow (no such luck). You’ve been on my mind continually since Steve sent us a message with news of last week – the details of hospice, juxtaposed with Thanksgiving photos of you in the kitchen with your unforgettable, unbelievable smile. I hope Dee and Wendy will beat the snow: I was so happy to learn they are returning for your Birthday. I’m going to tell Caitlin to pick some Joy Harjo poems for you.

I love you.

Laura

ANNIE SAND

They told me—well, a friend of yours from Heartland Yoga told me—that they moved you into hospice this week. I’d been meaning to write for a while but had been struggling to find words. I guess what I most wanted you to know is that of almost a hundred college courses I’ve taken in my life, your class that you taught in the Nonfiction Program is in the top five of classes that changed me, how I think and how I approach the world. I still find myself debating with the memory of that class: things that I’ve said, things my classmates said, things our texts said, things you said. It is a part of my present two years later, a place I still turn in my head when I want to figure something out. You created that space and you helped us create that space. I’ve never met someone who has the ability to so clearly show me I need to change or re-evaluate my ideas, while making me feel so seen and valued at the same time. It truly is a superpower, one I now strive to cultivate in my own teaching. You have made such an incredible impact, and there is so much love seeing you on this, your next journey.

I don’t know if you believe in such things, but I hope to encounter you again out there in the universe, wherever that is, in whatever form or space or memory. Good luck, Linda. And peaceful travels.

Much Love,
Annie Sand
JEN SHOOK

Dear Linda,

This card has to do double duty, to say thanks again for all your amazing support in my job odyssey, but also to say HAPPY BIRTHDAY! Well, triple duty, because it also carries warm wishes for your treatment and recovery!

Use these cards for take-out, to share with your caretakers and visitors, or save them for when you’re ready to go out! The turmeric is from Diaspora Co., direct-trade organic sustainable heirloom seeds, run by an Indian-American woman who credits her college lit. prof. with teaching her about postcolonialism. (Recipes at diasporaco.com.)

Being in Oklahoma is strange, but good. OSU has a Sovereign Nations Center and a big student powwow. And Tulsa has some terrific artists. I missed Joy Harjo playing the sax, but I saw a live-scored screening of Lynn Riggs’ silent film, a film, and a full production of one of Mary Kathryn Nagle’s plays. It is very nice getting to spend time with my sister and niece.

I have been thinking of you lots. Grateful for the Caring Bridge updates. Wish I were close enough to help.

So, sending love and curcumin,

Jen

BEN STANIFORTH

Dear Linda,

I am writing for so many reasons—too many, certainly, to ever enumerate here; too many to fit onto this single card. Most urgently, I am writing to wish you a happy birthday. I remember how pleased I was when I first heard that your birthday was on the 26th. Mine is the 30th. I always knew that we had something in common.

But of course, we have so much more in common than this. You are a kindred spirit, Linda, in all those countless ways that we feel in our hearts but don’t know how to speak out loud. It is as if the words don’t yet exist. I believe that we live in the same world; that we fear and love the same things; that we understand each other best before speaking and not after. I came to trust you in the first week of our first class together, and in the many years since, that trust has remained—unconditional, resolute, absolute. You are my teacher, Linda, but much more so,
you are my dear friend. For this, and for all the things I know but don’t know how to say: thank you. Again and again, thank you.

Indeed, I owe you a debt that I can never repay. You pulled me to my feet, Linda; when necessary, you pulled me along. You have done more for me than you could ever know; more, certainly, than I could every possibly hope to convey. Your kindness exceeds my ability to express it. And your patience, and your courage, and your good heart. What I know, what I cherish most, these are the things I learned from you.

Here we are, Linda. Together, somewhere up the mountain, working our way up, to the summit, as if to the very sun itself. If you reach out, you can feel my hand.

--Ben

ELOISA VALENZUELA-MENDOZA

Dearest Momma Linda,
I am so grateful for you. I still have moments when I am stunned at my good fortune to have been invited to study, talk, and learn at your kitchen table. All those mornings and evenings, all those epic conversations! I treasure each moment. And I can say, with complete honesty, that I am a better person for knowing you. I am a better person, and so very lucky, to have you in my life. I miss you. Always. And those words are too small, too inadequate to convey the force of my feelings, but they are all I have. I miss you, and I will see you soon.
As always, “I carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart).”
Happy Birthday, Momma Linda
All my love,
Tu hija
ellie

JERRY WETLAUFER AND MARGARET KINSMAN

Happy Birthday! You are an irreplaceable member of our Iowa City family. We love you and always will. May your days be filled with comfort, peace, and love. And you may count on it—I’ll still be working on Levinas.

All our love,
Jerry & Margaret