

Dr. Helen M. Lang passed away December 17, 2017, from the effects of cardiac arrest. Her family was by her side at Ruby Memorial Hospital at West Virginia University (WVU). She was a valued member of the WVU Geology faculty for 32 years, from 1984-2016, retiring as Emeritus Associate Professor.

Helen Marie Lang was born December 2, 1946, in Denver, where she grew up. She earned her B.A. in chemistry from Willamette University in Oregon in 1969. After working as a chemist in a biomedical lab at the University of Washington (UW), she earned her B.S. in geology at UW in 1977. She then earned her Ph.D. in geology from the University of Oregon in 1983. Helen's research area was metamorphic petrology, particularly rocks formed under ultrahigh-pressure conditions deep in the earth's crust and upper mantle, in North America and Greenland. She was a recognized international expert in her field, with her work supported by the National Science Foundation. She presented her research regularly at scientific meetings in both the U.S. and internationally, and published numerous research papers in the top journals in her field. Her papers were models of thorough data collection and rigorous analysis. She was elected a Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America in 2007, and was an active member of the Geological Society of America, serving as the WVU campus representative during her career.

Helen taught the "bedrock" geology courses in Mineralogy and Petrology to all WVU geology majors from 1984-2016, plus eight other different upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses during her career. As a graduate advisor and committee chair, she guided her students to graduate degrees and successful careers, and served on many other thesis and dissertation committees. She was an academic advisor to geology majors throughout her career, giving freely of her time to students. She was twice named "Outstanding Geology Professor" at WVU in 1991 and 1995 by Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the student national honorary society in the Earth Sciences.

Helen was known for the extensive service that she provided to WVU. She was Associate Chair for the Geology Program from 2007-2013, running the program efficiently. She was also a member or Chair of the Geology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee her entire career. She willingly provided service in the Department and University in many ways too numerous to list.

Helen was the first woman to hold a tenure-track faculty position in the Department of Geology and Geography at WVU. As such, she was a pioneer, helping to pave the way for the women who later joined the G&G faculty. She also served as a role model for women students at both the undergraduate and graduate level. She was active in the Association for Women in Science and the Association for Women Geoscientists. At WVU, she often helped in organizing "Take our Daughters to Work Day," and served on the Council for Women's Concerns.

Outside of academics, she was an active member of the West Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club for many years and had a strong interest in environmental issues that she shared with many close Morgantown friends who will greatly miss her.

Helen is survived by her sister Marty (Howard) Corren of Denver, her nephew Daniel (Jennifer) Corren of Los Angeles, and her niece Talia Corren of New York City. There will be a celebration of her life in early 2018 at the Department of Geology and Geography at WVU.