

Carol Becker Lynch (1942–2019)

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Faculty Fellow, Institute for Behavioral Genetics, Professor of Environmental and Evolutionary Biology, and Dean of the Graduate School, emerita [Picture courtesy of Casey A. Cass/University of Colorado]

It's with great sadness that we report to you the death of our colleague, Professor Carol Becker Lynch, who died at her home on June 22, 2019, at the age of 76, following a 4-year struggle with ovarian carcinoma. She was comforted by her husband, G. Robert Lynch, and her niece, Jasmin Becker, who were with her.

Carol Lynch had a long association with the Institute for Behavioral Genetics (IBG) and the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder). She came to Colorado from Iowa having received her Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Iowa in 1971. Her research interests were in the area of evolutionary biology, specifically the genetic basis of evolutionary adaptation and brain (hypothalamic) mechanisms underlying adaptive behaviors. She developed a model system to study cold adaptation in mice by selectively breeding lines of mice for differences in nest-building. This selection study was initiated at IBG in 1972 and formed the basis of

her research from 1972–1973, during which time she was an IBG Postdoctoral Fellow under the mentorship of Dr. John DeFries. Following her postdoc, her mice were transported to Wesleyan University, in Middletown, Connecticut, where she took a faculty position from 1973–1992, ultimately being promoted to Professor of Biology. As a faculty member she was awarded a number of research grants, and published extensively on evolutionary and behavioral genetics. In addition, she held a Career Development Award, and was made a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

In addition to her research on the evolutionary implications of cold adaptation in mice, during her time at Wesleyan her reputation as a distinguished behavioral geneticist, as well as a savvy administrator, grew, resulting in Carol being appointed Dean of Sciences at Wesleyan from 1988–1992. She also served as Program Director of Population Biology and Physiological Ecology at the National Science Foundation (NSF) from 1990–1991, and served as President of the Behavior Genetics Association in 1991. In 1992 she returned to CU Boulder as Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, and became an IBG Faculty Fellow. During this time, she also held the rank of Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Carol was promoted to Vice Chancellor for Research in 2001 but stepped down from being Dean and Vice Chancellor in 2004 to pursue work in the area of higher education policy. As part of this work, Carol spent 5 ½ years as a Senior Scholar in the Council of Graduate Schools and helped establish and promote nationally a new degree program, the Professional Science Master's (PSM). This program was supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation through the Council of Graduate Schools. The PSM is a graduate degree designed to allow students to pursue advanced training in science, or mathematics, while developing workplace skills that are highly valued by employers, such as business, ethics, communication, and regulatory skills. During her promotion the PSM program became widely popular with now well over 200 degree programs nationwide.

Carol was an exceptionally intelligent, caring, and kind person with a passion for mentoring graduate students, postdocs, and junior faculty. This led her to serve as a Co-Principal Investigator on two NSF awards, one to increase and support diversity in graduate education, and the other to support women at all levels of academia. Throughout her career, Carol provided an enduring role model for friends and colleagues who knew her but also for others who benefitted from her commitment to the principals of access and

equality in academia. She was an outstanding leader, as well as a good friend within the Behavioral Genetics community and will be greatly missed.

Toni Smolen

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