

January 14, 2021

Dear Review Committee,

RE: Dr. Charity Marsh

I first met Dr. Marsh in 2010 when I was seeking out committee members for my Master's program in Women's & Gender Studies. Dr. Marsh had been recommended to me as a strong match for my interests, and while I was unsure at first how this professor in a completely different faculty could meet my needs for my particular program, I did meet with her. I quickly learned that her ability to push beyond the boundaries of one particular discipline did make her an ideal partner in my studies. Dr. Marsh's broad range of interests and expertise meant that she had a lot to offer to my studies, but more importantly the genuine interest she showed in my work meant that she became a trusted ally in my pursuits.

There are few courses in my academic career that stand out to me, and those that do are ones that combined strong leadership in a classroom with engaging content. The class I took with Dr. Marsh was a hybrid undergraduate-graduate class, and initially I felt unsure – I didn't believe I was capable of writing an entire paper on the opening credits to a TV show, nor did I want to present that analysis as a lecture to the undergraduates in the class who likely knew more about Media Studies than I did – but those types of challenges created the pivotal opening to what could have otherwise been a rather boxed-in graduate program. I grew as a student in that class – it was challenging, engaging, and eye opening for me as I learned to stretch the expectations I had for myself and what I could accomplish in unfamiliar territory.

In writing my thesis, I took a leave from my full-time job. Dr. Marsh had a position open for a graduate research assistant, and while I supported her in some of her work, not only did I learn valuable skills but I also saw just how very much Dr. Marsh had on the go in her academic life. In her IMP lab I met people from a variety of backgrounds, and what I could plainly see was that Dr. Marsh was essentially ushering a diverse community of students through their studies, clearly engaged and involved with each of their programs. I was inspired by Dr. Marsh – seeing her in the classroom, then as a research assistant exposed to some of the work she was undertaking – to do my own best work, and to push beyond my own boundaries and definition of personal success.

As you'll well know, a Master's program is achieved at a quicker pace than what my timeline allowed – it would be a full six years of part-time studies including two maternity leaves before I defended my thesis. In that time, Dr. Marsh's enthusiasm and encouragement for my program never waned – she never greeted me with any less than a cheery 'Hey, Liz!' and always made time to meet when needed. My thesis was nominated for the Governor General's Gold Medal for academic excellence and I firmly believe that this accomplishment was made possible by the committed mentorship of Dr. Marsh and others on my committee.

Today, I am working as an Insights Specialist, doing research that I love with Farm Credit Canada. When I think about the trajectory of my career, I can say with certainty that working with Dr. Marsh I learned to look at the world outside of a narrow lens of what I thought my interests were, and that this has had a

ripple effect on my life. I have become more fluid in my work, able to successfully tackle projects that seem outside of my wheelhouse, making me a more rounded, agile and valuable researcher.

I wouldn't hesitate to say that Dr. Marsh was among my greatest champions in the completion of my studies – and I say that not only for the reasons I outline above, but because it was Dr. Marsh who forwarded to me a call for submissions for an upcoming anthology. Publication wasn't on my radar at all, yet Dr. Marsh made it seem like a natural step forward – I pursued it, succeeded, and it opened a door to new publication possibilities. It was also Dr. Marsh who, hardly moments after my thesis defense, encouraged me to consider pursuing a doctorate degree. Dr. Marsh's vision, while planted in the present, never stops pushing roots into the future for both her own academic work and for that of her students. For me, that remains truly inspiring.

Sincerely,

Liz Bailey

306-550-1267

elizjbailey@me.com