

Vicki Bier: For the next part of the program, as we move towards wrapping up today's forum of activities, I'd like to introduce Susan Millar, who is a senior scientist at the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research. She had her original training as a cultural anthropologist. And Denice was, I think, very instrumental in getting Susan established in her new career.

Susan Millar: I'll talk about that, yeah. What I'm going to do, you'll notice on the agenda the first little, the next line says to celebrate Denice. On your tables is a little card, and pens, and you might recall that Amy Wendt, at the beginning of our symposium yesterday evening, said that we were going to make you work. And what we'd like you to do is to take this card with this picture of Denice, it has the date – oh, take two cards, sorry, two cards – ask you to write something you will take away from this time that we've been remembering Denice and thinking about how to go forward from there. And if you can, please also include a little information about when you'll do it. When they do this at PKal conferences, the "when" is within the week. We said that's a little too hard, but do think about also the time period that you plan to undertake this prompt to yourself, what you will do in memory of Denice and to celebrate Denice's memory. When you're done, in about five or ten minutes, maybe five, we'll come around and collect a copy so that we can have these as input on our session. And I hope you'll also take the card and bear in mind, and help us all celebrate Denice's memory. Thanks.

[*TAPE BREAK*]

Susan Millar: On the agenda it indicates that the organizing committee, Vicki Bier, Amy Wendt, Lydia Zepeda, and I would have some additional comment, closing remarks. Well it turns out that Lydia and Amy and Vicki all felt as if they already had an opportunity to say what they wanted to say, so that leaves me. So you'll hear one more remembrance, one more story.

So during the remembrances last night, Ann Stevens told us of sitting on a beach with Denice watching seagulls, who she identified as various people in her life here at UW. Last night, and earlier just a few minutes ago, you heard from one of the Millar-gulls – that was mathematician and the dean. I'm the Millar-gull who's the cultural anthropologist and the education researcher. Incidentally, I had a gull watching experience with Denice also. It was in the late 1990s, when she was already at Seattle, sitting on a dock near Pike Place market in downtown Seattle, talking to Denice while she was having some rice. I wanted to shade my eyes and – this is why I didn't talk a lot because I'm having a little trouble.

So here's how I met Denice. In late 1993 I was an education researcher at Penn State trying to figure out how to get back to UW-Madison. We were in a, I guess you'd call it, a commuter marriage, but Penn State isn't, like, around the corner. And that fall, back in Madison, the Terry Millar-gull overheard Denice and Leon Shohet seagull discussing whether to apply for a big grant that required a

major engineering education component. Terry mentioned that his wife knew quite a little bit about STEM education reform and evaluation, and that she might be willing to help. Well Denice and Leon decided to apply for the grant. Denice went to Zurich for sabbatical, and I met Denice when she emailed me about helping with this grant. Working entirely by email and phone across a seven hour time zone difference, we feverishly put together what became the Manufacturing Engineering Education for the Future proposal in which she would be the project director, Leon was the PI, and I would be the evaluator. I laughed out loud at the wacky and wonderful ways she put things in her email messages. I'm sure I'm not the only one who's done that, except that I was doing it at two a.m. in the morning – that's the way seven hour time differences work. I felt gratified by how rapidly and fully she understood and made use of what I told her about engineering education efforts – why they worked and why they hadn't. And I was amazed by her savvy and efficient approach to proposal writing.

Denice gets things done. Meeting Denice in the spring of 1994 I was really taken by her droll intensity and no-nonsense get-it-done manner. It was then that she and I hatched the idea of the LEAD Center, which is the Learning through Evaluation, Adaptation, and Dissemination. It would provide Denice a way for her to communicate to academic colleagues her belief that evaluation is very important in moving engineering education forward – this would be the analysis piece that Terry talked about before that you have to have. And it would give me a path to a position at UW-Madison. Then she helped me figure out how to make this happen. She told me I needed to pitch it to the Chancellor, but that wasn't enough. Then she helped me design and produce the Center planning document. I remember sitting, drawing circles and figuring it out. Then she accompanied me to my meeting with the Chancellor to make sure that he understood that this plan had serious faculty backing, but it was Denice who was there beside me the whole way. And it worked. I got the offer to come to Madison and start the LEAD Center. Others helped me as well, but as so many others have said, Denice made a huge difference – she believed in me, she modeled how to get it done, and she gave me her time and her insight.

So I have one broader reflection to share. I believe that one reason Denice was so quick to connect with me is because she resonated with the outsider eye that characterizes anthropology. Denice characteristically captured the core of this anthropological stance in a phrase she used when giving advice to young faculty who wanted to make changes in their departments: "Lie in the weeds like an anthropologist and observe. Before long you'll spot what it is that people listen to, and you'll spot who it is they roll their eyes at." In critical ways, as you all know, Denice was an outsider. Here's the list. She was a young woman in a research university engineering college dominated by OWGs – that would be Old White Guys; or VOWGs – Very Old White Guys. She was at the time a single and childless woman who didn't like to cook, but who loved families and children. And she would pitch in, come out to our homes, and pitch in for dinner with our families and friends many nights, as outside our families, but

inside. She was a college dean and then a president in her late 30s and then into her 40s in universities dominated by OWGs, and by people who cared much less than she about how and what students learn, and about social justice. And she was a lesbian in a hetero-dominated society. In addition, I believe that perhaps the most ubiquitous way in which Denice experienced life as an outsider, was that she was a person who by nature lay in the weeds and observed. And because she was quicker and more courageous than those around her, she more insightfully understood and questioned the social networks, the organizational structures, the policies, the practices, the assumptions that she observed. She got the lay of the land. She assessed it against her vision of what was right, and then joined with others to plan out and do what was needed to make the world more just and good. But, it can be lonely to always be the outsider looking on, and I believe this is one reason why she occasionally lost herself completely – dancing, singing, laughing, and kicking back – she trusts. Thank you.

So one last thing I'm going to say is I want to thank a wonderful person, Dr. Sheridan, Dr. Jennifer Sheridan, who is the research director of WISELI. We are very fortunate that we had such a person, a sociologist and research director for WISELI, to help us as the organizing group to keep the picture in mind, and also to help us with all the details. I couldn't have imagined a better support person us for the whole day. So thank you again Jennifer. [*Applause*]

And if you'll bear with me, I will read at random five of these cards. Only legible ones. Here's one. "To celebrate Denice's memory, I will connect with girls about the fun of science and that must be done this year." Here's another one. "To celebrate Denice's memory I will check on colleagues starting immediately." Here's one. "Today, to celebrate Denice's memory, I will today say something especially supportive to every black female graduate student, and tomorrow I will outline a training program for NIH principal investigators and trainees on equity issues, and then next month I will persist in efforts to get NIH to adopt an equity training program." "To celebrate Denice's memory I will strengthen support systems for colleagues and for institutions," and the time on that is "always." And here's the fifth one I'll read. "To celebrate Denice's memory I will not let policies, procedures, or current practices dissuade me from fighting for what is the right thing to do – increase diversity in academic leadership for a decade at least."

[*Applause*]