



Royal Holloway, University of London
19 May 2016

Citation for Professor Jacky Bratton

Chairman of Council, it is my privilege to present to you Professor Jacky Bratton, Professor Emerita.

The reasons for this honour are her scholarly achievement in the field of drama, her contribution to the legacy of drama studies at Royal Holloway and her active support of the archives at the College.

Professor Jacky Bratton was born in Beeston, Nottingham and after receiving a scholarship place at Nottingham High School for Girls read English at St Anne's College, Oxford. Upon graduating she was employed as a Lecturer at Bedford College. She remembers the Regent's Park days with fondness, although the memories of the dahlia borders fertilised with exotic manure from the zoo are perhaps less fond! It was at Bedford that her innovation in research made its first mark. In the early 1980s while editing a version of *King Lear* Jacky decided she needed to use a computer. In the days before personal computers she was allocated a section of the mainframe, the first person in Arts to do so, and to this day her College user name still ends 001.

Jacky's next mission was, of course, here at Egham when the Colleges merged in 1985. She was dispatched to the Department of English but after hearing students outside her office discussing their preferred range of bridesmaid dresses, she decided that drama would suit her better! She thought that drama students would have different aspirations on their mind!

In the Department of Drama Jacky conducted her research into areas of 18th and 19th century theatre. Her interests encompassed melodrama and popular theatre, female producers, dramatists, 19th century players of Shakespeare and Charles Dickens' theatricality.

While this work has received international recognition, it is her 2003 book *New Readings in Theatre History* that altered the paradigm of theatre history beyond her own field. In this revisionist historiography she proposed less hierarchical models of stage history and suggested that anecdote should also form the evidence of histories, a concept that has been embraced by drama scholars throughout the world.

Jacky also held several large research council grants which enabled her to establish teams who worked on the first CD Rom versions of *King Lear* which incorporated performance extracts, and in conjunction with the British Library she created a database of the Lord Chamberlain's plays. In that capacity as project manager to postdoctoral students, Jacky has supported and fostered new generations of academic talent.

Jacky served for six years as Head of Drama. Her Headship has left a lasting legacy. Importantly at the turn of the millennium, and after a teaching quality inspection that received full marks save for one deducted for poor facilities, she gained the Boilerhouse Theatre for the Department. She notes that the vast space had previously been a maintenance store for 'superannuated radiators'. Under Jacky's leadership the Department rose to top place in the Research Assessment Exercise; she laid a foundation so strong that in the subsequent assessments Drama has ranked in the top three departments nationally. While Head Jacky oversaw the growth of Media Arts, which became so successful that it separated from Drama to form its own department under the leadership of Carol Lorac, who is with us here today.

Jacky had a reputation as a formidable Head of Department within College, something that she has never been able to understand. As a Junior Lecturer in the Department I had an insight into this. Her method went like this: she would ask the most obvious question that no one else dared to ask and then would just wait and wait for an answer. It certainly played off with College authorities for under her leadership Drama was given everything it ever asked for!

Jacky has also been instrumental to the success of the College archives theatrical collection. Her connections within the theatre world secured the Roy Waters collection of theatre ephemera, including original letters written by Oscar Wilde. The bequest has also enabled College to upgrade its archival database so that it is of museum standard.

In recognition, therefore, of her contribution to the field of drama, and the legacy with which she has left the College may I invite you, Chairman of Council, to induct as an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Professor Jacky Bratton.

Professor Katie Normington
Vice-Principal (Staffing)
and Dean of Arts and Social Sciences
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