

**Fall 2017 Interview—Dr. Jody SHIPKA**

**Interview Team—KA Kamila Albert, MB Mandy Brooks, LC Liana Clarke, KS Katelyn Stark**

**KA:** How did you get into rhetoric and composition studies?

**SHIPKA:** I took the lit route that I think a lot of folks prior to me have taken and I'm not sure for up-and-coming generations. But I did my undergrad work in literature at Loyola University in Chicago and I decided when I wanted to apply to the University of Illinois to work with a particular scholar in lit, I remember going to one of my—the woman who was going to write me a letter of recommendation for me and she said, "Why do you want to go to grad school?"

And I said, "Because I can't imagine living my life and not learning."

And she said, "Good answer because, ethically, I don't know that I could recommend you because there aren't jobs."

[laughter]

And, in the process of this conversation, she said something I did not understand but I didn't ask for clarification. She says, "Oh, University of Illinois—they've got a really good comp program." And I'm like, "Okay." It was interesting just because then, right, I go to U of I and a lot of my cohort—the incoming class—and I don't know if it was a 50/50 split—it probably wasn't a 50/50 split—there were these lit students and there were these other students who identified as writing studies. And, while I was friends with them, we didn't necessarily take courses together. My proseminar—my required teaching proseminar—was Paul Prior. And I remember thinking, I like who I am around this person and I like what I'm learning but, meanwhile, I'm on the lit track and I think I had all but one of my courses done. I finished my coursework in lit and Paul had really been supportive of me to take time to write what ended up being my first C's piece. He said, "Nobody's, you know, really doing this. Why don't you write up this work?" And I was busy with my lit stuff and I thought, you know, if I'm graduating with a degree and there are two tracks at this university, I should probably know better what writing studies [is]. They were all my friends and they were cool and they talked about teaching in nice ways and they went out and they were just friendly to each other and they listened.

So, I ended up taking one of the courses in order to write up this article and I was hooked even though it meant basically not starting over but having found—and I loved the work that I was doing in lit very much—but I think I liked better who I was in writing studies around those people. So, it was not necessarily accidental but I think it was funny that somebody tried telling me about the comp program but I didn't know what that meant. And I just remember so clearly sitting in one of these courses with Gail Hawisher. I remember the room that I was in and it was just an overwhelming sense of, "I found my home. This is it. I love this work. I love these people." And it allowed me, again, because I was always kind of—I mean, teaching was one of my hobbies because, in lit, you weren't encouraged to think about your teaching. If anything, it was don't get too caught up in this. Don't let this distract you, which I think is good advice for anybody, right, if you've got deadlines. So, it was really by way of lit and, actually, one of the

reasons that I took the job that I did at UMBC is that they have 2 undergrad tracks. I don't want anybody else to have to wait as long as I did to know there's an option—to choose wisely this or that or journalism or creative writing. You know, all the things in English studies.

**KA:** And just as a follow-up, what experiences or ideas prompted you to focus on your areas of interest? So, multimodality, materiality, assemblage?

**SHIPKA:** You know, that's hard. Pick a day. My answer's going to be different. And in thinking about these questions in particular, certainly, you know, Paul Prior has been responsible for a lot of the way that I think. And this gets to the question about people who have influenced me. And I can talk about that. Their work is certainly in here. I've always enjoyed *stuff*. I've always enjoyed process. That was always something as a kid that I enjoyed and I think part of what academia is about is trying to find a space for who you are and what you love. Right? I remember the first time Paul said, "Oh, your students are re-purposing."

And I'm like, "There's a name for it? Did people write about that? What's that term?" It was that moment of giving me language to be able to talk about certain things. The other thing that I think about as a potential connection to the way that I teach is I went to community college as a hobby. I wanted to learn stuff and I worked with a woman—I think it was a women and creativity course or women in art. I don't remember what the assignment was, but we could create whatever we wanted as a final product. And I remember I was going to do a series of short stories or something and she said, "Jody you know you do that well. Use this opportunity to do something you don't know if you can do."

So, I did collage. Another woman was doing mosaics and I wondered to what degree that impressed upon me that people can take the same assignment and have completely different forms that speak to their interests. And I think a lot of my risking came from her—from that moment where she said, "You know what you do well. Why waste this opportunity to—" And you could argue that I could hone it more, but she said try something different. So, I'm wondering how much of that and just lived experience practice within an academic framework had me thinking in this way and then, certainly, I can't not credit all the students who showed me what was possible. As a writer, you know, aside from that one community college experience, everything I did was writing and students would say, we can do this stuff but it looks different. I was like, wow. So I think that made me interested but also made me think, I need to theorize this. I need to think about this in ways.

**MB:** So, as you've already suggested, it's very related to scholars in the field but we'll ask just to see if we get a different answer. What scholars in the field have most influenced your thinking?

**SHIPKA:** Okay, and I've got a list here because I wanted to make sure. Certainly, Paul Prior gave me a way to theorize and think about what was hobby work, to some degree—the teaching, the passion—and also because he supported way more. There were times that I doubted so much what I was doing. And he kept saying, you know, "This is good. You're good." As did students. I mean, I would say to students, "I don't think people are going to like this." And they were like, "It means something. It means something. You have to keep doing this." Part of my book was, I just wanted to tell their stories and, you know, that was it. But Geoff Sirc, Anne Wysocki, Lillian

Bridwell-Bowles, Diana George, Kathy [Yancey], of course. Also, I think—I don't want to name or give credit in this way but—all of the scholars with whom I disagree very much influenced my thinking because they were the people and, to some degree, there are certain people who are going to support me and advocate what I'm doing but I think, also, in shaping my work—for good and for bad—would be the other scholars who don't get it, who advocate other approaches, who—from not getting what I do to not thinking I should do what I do—have impacted it.

You're asking the question about scholars as though I was a student and the scholars were up here, but I think also really that played a role in my thinking are all of my colleagues in grad school who have gone on to be scholars, but who would say, "Let me see what your students turned in or how are you thinking about this?" And there was times where I would just sit in my office with a bunch of student stuff going, "I got a mirror?" Someone would come in and go, "You know what I love about your work, Jody?"

And it was like, "Oh!" Because sometimes you can get so lost in your own work and somebody else would just come in and give you that sound bite—they'd sum up your work in ways that helped you make better sense of it. So, I think about, you know, Kevin Roozen and Joyce Walker and Patrick Berry and Karen Lunsford. A lot of people who have gone on to be scholars but, at the time, they were graduate students like myself.

**KS:** So, what about your life experiences? How have they shaped your thinking?

**SHIPKA:** How have they *not*, right? And I think what's interesting about this question is, again, when it's asked and how I think about it—I talked earlier about being a good girl. Being afraid of being in trouble. Not wanting to make waves, which I think is really interesting because I think a lot of people might see me that way--like – oh, she's disrupting stuff. So, I think that positioning –always wondering "Should I be doing this? Am I gonna get in trouble?"—has shaped—it's made me more cautious, but it's also made me doubt almost every day what I'm doing and if I should be doing it.

**SHIPKA:** And, um, but another thing that I think more broadly has helped me think about rhetoric and materiality and performance in a more expanded way was the 13 years I spent as a career waitress. Um, that was so much about rhetoric, it was so much about all of the canons, right, and thinking about delivery and thinking about changing that up. So, not just delivering the food, but assessing the situation: knowing who you had to take care of, who you needed to be. So, I think it made me really flexible in that way and kind of taught me more about audience awareness. So, I think that the waitressing for a number of reasons really impacted what I did and also thinking about years...you know, we'd be waitressing and doing the prep and spooning sauce into...it was a Mexican restaurant...so filling the chip baskets, and I would say...I would say to the other waitresses, "We do this again and again; we do this over and over. We bring it to people, they eat it, they shit it out [laughter] and it just all begins again." And they're like, "We don't want to work with you anymore!" [laughter]. I'm thinking about things a little bit differently maybe—talk about audience awareness, right. So, I think all of that experience where it was that sense...it was when I was waitressing when I knew I want to know more stuff, right. I've got all this, and this is interesting, and it's a good background, but I think that if not for everything that happened to me as a waitress, I would have never ever chosen to go...because

when I graduated from high school I knew two things about myself and one was that I would never, ever, ever set foot into an institution of higher learning ever again [laughter]. Wah, wah, wah, right? So, I think the waitressing was a huge part about getting me into college again.

**MB:** Actually, can I ask a follow up?

**SHIPKA:** Mhmm.

**MB:** So, you mention the self-doubt, right? So, how do you work through that? What advice would you give someone like us, who question our choices and what we're doing and whether it matters and any of that?

**SHIPKA:** Um, I think it's important to always ask, "Does it matter? How does it matter?" And that, you know, is kind of my response to another question. I think some people listen to it and leave, right. So even that question becomes, "Maybe it is best to leave," right, so I hate to think about how do you push through this and decide...because some people push through with something and are miserable, right. But I would say, um, self-doubt, um...is there any other way? [laughter] I mean, I think it keeps me humble and it keeps me mindful. Where it becomes dangerous is when it becomes crippling. And, I think part of it too is to embrace...accepting that not everybody is going to love what you're doing, not everybody...and this is still...I say this, but part of me is like, "Except for me. I have to make this happen, right." So, it's almost seeing that exception that other people...and when other people make mistakes and mess up, I like that more. For me, it feels...and I think more in the past with the kind of teaching I was doing and the risk-taking, I felt like I can't mess up, my students can't mess up, because I'm afraid people are going to shut this down. See? See? And it would be that one bad example. Um, so I think if it's doubt because you're doing something that the field isn't maybe as accepting of it becomes a different issue than if it's more a matter of, "I don't know if this matters, I don't know if it makes sense." Talk to somebody else. And just simply...what is it...and this is what I said to folks at lunch today, "Tell me how your work is gonna change the field. Tell me how what you're doing is going to make a difference, is going to matter." And, I think being able to have that...to continue asking yourself that question so that you have the sound bite if somebody goes, "What do you do?" right, you have an...oftentimes I'm like, "I don't know, man, something to do with shoes, right?" [laughter]. But yeah, I think having a good support system, um, you know, I really feel like through grad school Paul really pulled my weight—kept giving me reasons to believe in the work I was doing. And, I think one moment I thought, "When is this man going to finally say, 'Jody you doubt yourself so much. I'm done. I can't.'" And part of it was I need to kind of step up and say this is what I've done and...and...one person had said it's better to...if you're gonna go down in flames, go down in flames as you as opposed to somebody that you think you need to be is disgusting. Every time that I've thought about, you know, okay if I get pushback what if I do this and I'd be like well, eh. I mean it's a tough question, and I think it's layered in terms of if it's just getting confused about your work, talk to many people: "What is it that you think I do?" Um, and people will go, "What the he--," but yeah, it's a tricky thing.

**MB:** Thank you.

**LC:** Our next question is, what classes do you teach and which are your favorite and why? Also on the other side of that, which do you find...like which classes do you see the most resistance in

**SHIPKA:** Um, and I think, again, that reference is not [...], that would be cool. I think, right, I always loved first-year comp. Um, and I don't wanna get nostalgic and say, "Oh, it was all so great then because it's selective memory. I like the energy, I like the enthusiasm, I like the... I mean, I think about the stuff I did as a grad student that I wouldn't do now, I would not do now. And I think, and...who knows why because I'm not researching my classroom? But I think for me, every class I teach I'm interested in the content, but I'm interested in how other people can make me understand that content, right. So, for me, the courses I enjoy teaching most, it all has to do with that student make up. And, as much as students will say, "Oh, we really like teachers who are passionate." You know what, back at ya, right. Um, so I can teach again the same class and, you know, one time it goes really great and people are talking. Other times it's not. Um, I enjoy teaching a class for the first time because I think I'm more...not humble, but you don't know, right, you don't know how it's gonna go, so you're kind of like on an adventure whereas repeating it time and time again is like I've got it all tightly mapped out. Okay, I know I'm gonna do this, you know, I don't have to look at notes, I know what I'm gonna do. Um, so, I think I enjoy that same thing when I try a new assignment even though its terrifying, um, because students will say, "Do you have an example?" and I'm like, "You're the pioneers, you're gonna make the examples for me."

**KA:** So, here's a fun question: What's on your nightstand?

**SHIPKA:** You know, I was just talking to one of my students about this question and he was like "what does that mean?" [laughter]. Um, so do you mean like what am I reading?

**MB:** Uh, so...

**SHIPKA:** Like what's on my nightstand?

**MB:** It's just kind of a way of getting to know you. So, if books are on your nightstand, then by all means—sure.

**SHIPKA:** My nightstand is like this big [uses hands to gesture a size] and the thing that's on it all the time is an insulated Bubba cup. Do you know what a Bubba cup is? It's kind of like a Yeti, but... but the low-end of a Yeti [laughter]. But, it keeps... and it's 60 ounces or something. I actually have it with me in my hotel room 'cause it's great to pack cosmetics in. Um, but ice water and then there is a lamp. Um, but that's it.

**MB:** Fair enough, yeah.

**SHIPKA:** Now if you asked about other things: what's on my refrigerator, or what's you know, whatever [laughter]

**KS:** What's on your refrigerator?

**SHIPKA:** [sighs] Oh my gosh, tons of stuff, right? [laughter] It's a collecting place. Calendar, well that... so the whole thing I have a calendar, umm... a calendar that I always get year after year, which is that cute cats—it's mini calendar. I had a cat who is now deceased that would walk up to people with the tail up like this [gestures], so it always became "sniff my butt, sniff my butt" right? So, I got a picture, and so what I've done for years when she was alive and now

that she's passed, I have a picture just of her back end and then every month we change and I put the picture so it's "Look who's sniffing [cat's name]'s butt this month" right? [laughter]. But I have to get the same calendar, so that's... but why I'm telling this is that is my... I don't know how you all keep track of your appointments, but it's my calendar, so I don't know if... if I don't check my refrigerator, I'm like I don't know what I'm doing every day, right? But students will go "Oh, yeah, Shipka, we want to meet with you for conference, can we like tell you now?" Oh, no. You need to email me because I need to check it when I'm at home by my refrigerator. Right? [laughter]. Um... so yeah without my refrigerator I would be lost. [laughter].

**LC:** Um, and what are you reading at the moment, whether it be for scholarly or non-scholarly purposes?

**SHIPKA:** Um... Not... not a whole lot and mostly I've been traveling a lot, so what I've been reading is what I'm writing in prep to deliver it. Um... but certainly in terms of on the... you know, before the semester started and what I'm looking forward to in winter is much more of Erin Manning and affect studies. But, the other thing with my new project is on collecting and reading through a lot of old cookbooks, a lot of old... Um, cooking pamphlets that would... you know maybe you would buy a new appliance and have that. So, I've been collecting those materials. Um, old encyclopedias of cooking and then trying to look at the scholarship surrounding cookbooks, recipes. There was... there was a new book that [name] could not wait to come out. Um... feminism and food rhetoric...? I'm so bad at titles. So, trying to... 'cause interestingly or not, um, when I started my lit degree, one of the things I wanted to look at were um, late 18th century, early 19th century cookbooks as a form of women's narrative. Um, but there wasn't a kind of theoretical structure to support that work at the time and the options that I was given were not that appealing to me. And so I switched my lit project and then, um, ironic— No, not ironically. Um, because that was 1997 and then my dad died suddenly, last Christmas, like two days before Christmas 2016 and I baked everything. Here, I've never baked before! Never decorated a freaking cookie! And I mean we're talking four kinds of doughnuts in a day. And then it was this and people were saying "Have you seen the mirror glaze?" And it was, you know, to a point where I'm like... because people on Facebook were like "What are you doing with all this food?" And it's like, "I'm throwing it out." *I just need to do this*. And I didn't understand it, there wasn't a connection of, you know, food with my dad. And one of my students had said... Um, because I said "I should be *doing* something else. Why am I doing this?" And she said "Trust it. You don't know why you're doing this," right? And then at a certain point, I was like, um... and started researching recipes and um, I went to the antique stores and started buying the old cookbooks. And then all of a sudden, I'm like... I said this stuff to Steph and I'm like Oh my God! I can turn this hobby into scholarship! I'm going to look at this cookbook project! But, differently now that I'm in rhet/comp, right? Steph went, "I thought this was what you were already doing?" I'm like, "No! I was just cooking!" [laughter]. So, it's a lot of, uh, that kind of stuff that... because I'm trying to think about what I'm going to do. I know my next book is going to be called "Edible Rhetoric," but I'm not sure... what that looks like. I just *know*. But that's serendipity, right, that I was talking about before. That's what I'm doing and I just have to figure out how to position myself, which means reading how it's been positioned by other people.

**LC:** That's great. I feel like a lot of people in rhetoric right now are bakers. Like everyone in here is a baker. It's incredible. [laughter].

**SHIPKA:** When you start, people have so many stories about it, where I think really... I'm looking at a textual analysis and what I want to do is... are you familiar with Judy Chicago's Dinner Party?

**MB:** Yes

**SHIPKA:** Okay. What I'm thinking about doing is... I decorated some cookies, and I'll *never* be the best cookie decorator, but what I can do is freaking collage cookies with old ephemera. So, I can make my cookies, decorate them, but then what I want to do is bring this together to subversively reinterpret passages from conduct cookbooks. So, it would kind of be each place setting...

**MB:** I love it.

**SHIPKA:** And each thing would be a kind of riff on Judy Chicago. But then it's like, "This is great!" And I'm like, okay, I did one plate, um... [laughter]. There is this horrific man in the 30s who was like "women bake dainty food" and so his whole book has titles like "Salads Men Can Actually Stand." So, that was an easy mark to... because he called one of his chapters "Food Crimes that Women Commit." So, I thought okay, great. One of these places is called "Food Crimes" and then the place setting is this guy's name. But, yes, to that point where I'm kind of like "Great idea!", and then I'm like [mumbling]. So, that's what I'm hoping to figure out-- how I'm gonna do it. So many people go, [gasp] are you going to do an edible rhetoric workshop?! And I'm like, "How would I find that *food*?" I'm still trying to think about doing a variation on the workshop I did, but having it be with food. But, how I would work that out, I don't know.

**MB:** Uh, so what do you think is the most important question that students in Rhetoric and Composition should be considering today?

**SHIPKA:** Hmm, and I think... this one's tough because I feel like, um... it's not my place to say? Or I don't feel like I'm qualified enough. I think, broadly, it's the question of how things matter. And I think in the world today, and we talked about this a little bit at lunch, right? I think a lot of the things, we've already had the pushback of... ahh, the equation of writing with something anybody can do, or writing with Lit. Um, so I think we need to think about ways to make our work... and this is tricky because "unpack our work," right? How are we defining that space of "our work?" But, how does it matter when humanities are under fire with the political climate. I mean, I think it's a really, really, scary time to be doing this work, but a really important time. You know, as I was coming up, I had to defend how is this work like writing in the field, right? But I think now it becomes... because people write stuff and they die as a result of it, right? I mean, this is important to think about argumentation, which nobody is doing now. I feel like it's just the combative—it's not that sense of understanding your position, and um... So, I think it's a matter of how does what *we* do matter *to* students who have to go out there and be under fire. And I found you know, like with... and somebody asked about the student population. Um, you know, but, talking... I had to teach the day after the election. Um... and students were just like "I'm scared shitless" about, you know "I'm queer" or "I'm brown" or "I'm..." and so I think that... we need to think about how the work we do in the classroom matters out there, how it matters personally to people. I think we need, in general, to find a way to convey to the public more generally, what writing is. Um, why it's important. Argumentation, all of those kinds of

things. But, I think also with that *is* the matter, right? It's not only "How is it important?" but "What is that nonhuman in the matter part of it?" Um, and so I think in that way, in asking, like the question I asked in lunch: How does your work matter? How is it contributing to the field? Or, um, or not. To have a sense of that, I'm not talking about classes where it's about justice or civic responsibility. I mean, I think we can do it in a lot of different ways. But to have more teaching moments about what we do and how our work can... be of value in different ways. But I don't... I feel like we've been saying we need to do this for a long time, you know, a long time.

**SHIPKA:** But I think even more and even now, I find myself, um, you know, going in after the Vegas massacre like why bother? Like and I'm going in like "let's all talk about the assignments and are you going to make a board game," right, and I don't want to bring the party down, because a part of that... I remember going to school one day, and I thought, *ah, for eight hours I didn't have to think about the news, the horrible news*, and it's like day after day after day. So on the one hand I keep thinking, *is the work that's going on in my class a nice diversion for students*, and to try and bracket off that sense of *what are we doing* and *what are we doing in the classroom*. But I tend to... and you know, talking to students, we tend to have a conversation where I was able to ask them point blank, "How are you feeling?" And they're like, "Hopeless and scared shitless." Right? And not that every class needs to be about that, but I think that gives us a point of saying... you know, one of the arguments was that it's "#weak," and so students are saying that you get on board and it's taken me, and you know that conversation ended, and now it's the "#metoo," and I said "Well, what's at risk if you bring it back to an older?" and they said, "We think it's like the kairotic moment has passed," so students were suggesting that maybe we need to slow down, and you know, slackdivism and what's going on, but I think, in that way... and again it's not and doesn't need to be about having people do community projects if it's not what you're about, but I remember, you know, years ago, I had team-taught a course, and I dealt a lot with gender issues and sexuality and the fluidity of identities, and I do that very briefly because the response just upset me, and I thought I'm going to focus on the histories of rhet comp, but one of the things that I would ask students to do is to imagine, and this becomes difficult now because I'm thinking about sexuality and gender as a binary, and so I wouldn't do this again for many reasons, but I would say, "Imagine that you were to wake up tomorrow morning with the opposite body." So if you were male, you would wake up female, and vis-versa. "What would you do? What is the first thing you would do? How would life be different?" And almost without fail, the men would say, "I would wake up and I would fondle my long legs and my nice breasts, and I would brush Cindy Crawford hair," and I'm going, "Wait, I know we're living in the same universe, where were you when all of this self-hatred with women and their bodies and their appearance?" Right? Now, women... so it was a foregone conclusion that they'd all wake up beautiful... and again, this is a fantasy, so... but women it was, "So I'd pee standing up, or..." but what upset me was "I wouldn't have to worry about being raped. I'd be taken seriously when I go into take my car in to a mechanic." Right? And again this is problematic because men get raped and men are not taken seriously. But then I would ask, "How many people would stay?" Because I would ask men, "Are you not jealous of not having the option—not that all women do—of giving birth?" "No! Hell no!" None of them felt that "I would like to at least have that choice." Right? Whose fault is that? Are their narratives of... whatever... And I would say, "How many people, if you woke up that way, would choose to stay that way?" Not one man that I encountered, and then very very few women would say that they would stay. So I stopped doing this, and then I don't know how many years later I got



an email from a student named David who had been an African American student who had been in that classroom and was writing to me and the person I taught with, and said, “I just wanted to let you know that I became a doctor...I graduated and became a doctor. Because you did [that activity], I listen to women differently, and thank you for doing that.” And I thought, *you know what, I’m ready to die*, because that—you know people are like what difference are you going to make—that was probably it. That’s the thing that I’m most proud of. Now who knows if David continued to do that but those are the ways I think we can use the classroom space. We don’t know what’s going to matter or how it’s going to matter, but I think, you know, my classes were playful, you can choose your own final form, but in that one thing, it changed the way women were treated in a healthcare situation.

**KS:** So where do you see the field of Rhetoric and Composition going?

**SHIPKA:** [whispers] I have no idea. [laughter]. Again, it seems that there has always kind of been trajectories where it’s out there and then it’s reigned in really tight, so there’s that pendulum effect, so I don’t know. I mean, you can look at job ads, and get a sense of what is desirable. At one time it was all multimodal. I feel like now, and whether it’s a lot of the cultural rhetorics... so where is it going? I don’t know, and I think that question about how do we sustain us to begin with if there are fewer jobs... so I think that’s where more of the concern is...short answer: I hope it keeps going. That would be my concern. I would hope that it stays a kind and supportive field to each other and to the grad students. And I think that’s what I was taught is “This field is not about *this*...” Right? “This field is about *this*...” And that was my mentors, right? Paul Prior has stuff...and you know, and I feel like if you have a lot, you look and you help the person behind you. It’s not a manner of, “Look at all this stuff I have!” and “I’m going to plow people down.” And so I think in that way, I would hope that there’s a strong mentoring support, you know, that kind of ethic where the people who have a lot are willing to give a lot.

**KS:** So is there anything else that you would like to share with us that we didn’t get to address?

**SHIPKA:** Not that I can think of. Although, I’m still back to your question of what to do if people wonder about their work mattering. Anything that you can think of that you didn’t ask me?

**KS:** What’s your token piece of advice for your grad students?

**SHIPKA:** I don’t really have grad students at my institution. We just started an MA program, and I’m overseeing one woman’s work who’s doing portfolio, but when I encounter, as I do during these talks, a lot of grad students at different places, it again depends on...I hate the statements, I like the questions. Right? And I think that’s what we had to offer...is to be able to...and I can’t remember...there was a question I had asked at a dinner table. I was on one visit, and I remember that, and “What are you most proud of that you do?” And the person was like, “I’m going to have to think about it.” So I think that it’s not necessarily the advice but being there to ask questions: *How does what you do matter? Where do you see the field going?*

**KS:** That’s great.

**SHIPKA:** Thank you.

**ALL:** Thank you.

**SHIPKA:** Except for this: wear more leopard print.

[Laughter all.]