



June 16, 2016

Dear Campus Community:

It is with profound sadness that I inform you of the sudden, unexpected passing of Dr. Amy Elizabeth Hile, Associate Professor in the Department of Education, on Wednesday, June 15, 2016. She was 48 years old, and lived in Annapolis, Maryland. Amy was a much-loved teacher, advisor, mentor, and friend to generations of students at the K-12, undergraduate, and graduate levels during her 25-year career, and was deeply committed to promoting American Sign Language as the first language of deaf and hard of hearing children.

Amy Elizabeth Hile was born on April 29, 1968 in Edina, Minnesota, to Susan and Michael Hile. She attended Tilden, Jefferson, and Como Park elementary schools in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area; the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Faribault, Minnesota; and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf, from which she graduated in 1986. Amy received her B.A. in Communication Arts from Gallaudet University in 1991. She taught American Sign Language (ASL) at the University of Minnesota for two years, then earned her master's degree in deaf education, with a focus on elementary education, at McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland in 1994.

In 1993, Amy became one of the founding teachers of the newly-established Metro Deaf School in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the first bilingual charter school in the United States for deaf and hard of hearing children. She taught elementary students for four years, and was the school's American Sign Language specialist for three years. She also served as a team leader and technology liaison, and for a time as chair of the school's board.

In 2000, Amy began her doctoral studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, focusing on the areas of ASL development and acquisition, fingerspelling, and K-12 ASL/English bilingual education. While completing her dissertation, she worked at the New Mexico School for the Deaf in Santa Fe as an American Sign Language specialist under the auspices of the Center for ASL/English Bilingual Education and Research.

Amy joined the faculty of the Gallaudet University Department of Education in 2006, and was granted continuous tenure in 2012. She directed the department's master's degree programs from 2009 to 2012, and served as recruitment coordinator during academic year 2013-2014. She also was project director of a five-year U.S. Department of Education teacher preparation grant, *Widening the Bottleneck: Training Highly Qualified Teachers to Serve Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Deaf Students*. Amy served on numerous governance groups, including

departmental curriculum committees, the Council on Graduate Education, the faculty-student affairs and grievance committees, the Athletic Council, and several search committees.

Amy's *curriculum vitae* shows a number of presentations and publications, including an article on K-12 charter schools in the recently-published *Deaf Studies Encyclopedia*. She was especially active in language planning activities and with the annual ASL Roundtable conference, and consulted to several schools on ASL curriculum development and assessment. In the community, she served as president of the District of Columbia Association of the Deaf, and as a member of the National Organization of the Phi Kappa Zeta Sorority

Amy was fond of reading novels, quilting, traveling, and walking and hiking with friends and her dog, Elsa. Wherever she went, she brought a warm smile and affirming words. Amy's colleagues recall that she never walked through Fowler Hall without stopping by their offices for a quick check-in. Amy made people, especially her students, feel welcome with the attention she gave them.

Nicole Sutcliffe, Interim Vice President of the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, writes: "The MSSD community has lost a special alumna. Amy made her mark on our campus at a young age and is remembered by her classmates as a charismatic leader who made people feel loved and appreciated. Her life's work in ASL/English bilingual education for deaf students has impacted countless students across the country. The Clerc Center deeply grieves her passing. Her calm, optimistic leadership will be greatly missed, but her work will continue to impact deaf students for years to come."

Gallaudet University President Roberta J. Cordano, one of the founders of Metro Deaf School in the early 1990s, says: "As a pioneer in the bilingual education field and as a teacher deeply committed to teaching and research, Amy was an extraordinary leader in this field. She was a strong advocate for bilingual education all over the United States and the world. We will miss her passion, wisdom, insights, and deep commitment to the developing field of learning and language acquisition for all deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind children."

Amy is survived by her parents, Susan and Michael Hile, of Spring Lake Park, Minnesota; her brother, Timothy Hile, '95, and sister-in-law, Kerry Carter Hile, '95, and their three children, Brett, Ryan, and Drew, all of Riverside, California; her maternal grandmother, Vera Schwantz, of Plainview, Minnesota, and many aunts, uncles, and cousins. Information about services, and about where people may donate in Amy's memory, will be shared with the community as it becomes available.

Amy was a valued member of our academic community who enriched the lives of our students, faculty, and staff. I know that she was destined for greatness. I extend my heartfelt sympathies to Amy's family, friends, and colleagues. She will be missed dearly.

Sincerely,

Carol J. Erting
Provost