



Lynn Margulis, at
BU in 1982.

her doctorate, she remained steadfast and appropriately defiant. Her theories on the importance of symbiosis—close partnerships between different life forms in nature—gradually gained acceptance and revolutionized our thinking about how life evolves and how the earth systems function.”

Margulis was born in Chicago and enrolled at the University of Chicago at age 14. She earned a master’s in genetics and zoology at the University of Wisconsin and a PhD in genetics at the University of California, Berkeley.

Elizabeth Godrick, who came to know Margulis as a BU graduate student, remembers her as a powerful advocate for women in science.

“Lynn was extremely generous with her time,” says Godrick (GRS’70), now a CAS professor of biology, “always welcoming a question and loving a debate.”

Gail Patt, a CAS associate professor of biology, and her late husband, Donald Patt, were good friends with Margulis. “She and her children frequently joined our family on weekends for outings, hikes, and so forth,” says Patt, who describes Margulis as a devoted parent. “Our specific fields within biology were quite different, so we did not share research interests, or teach any courses together. But we supported her evolutionary creative ideas, and she gave us one of the first copies of her book right off the presses. It included a personal letter that I have always treasured.”

Zook says that in the classroom, in the lab, and in conversation, Margulis demonstrated a wide breadth of knowledge not only in biology and geology, but in history, poetry, art, and philosophy.

“Brilliant at every turn, she could learn a new language quite thoroughly in months,” he says. “She could quickly

Leader in Evolutionary Biology Dies

Lynn Margulis, creator of
theory of symbiogenesis,
taught at BU for 22 years

By Cynthia K. Buccini

LYNN MARGULIS, AN internationally known evolutionary biologist whose theory of symbiogenesis changed the way scientists think about living earth systems, died on November 22, 2011. Margulis, who taught at BU for more than two decades before joining the faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1988, was 73.

Margulis was “one of the extraordinary thinkers and leaders in science,” says Douglas Zook, a School of Education associate professor of science education and global ecology.

“Her ideas, research, and energy have changed the way we see life on Earth and crossed a variety of disciplines. Much of the groundbreaking discoveries she made, taught, and promoted were during her 20 years at Boston University. Her legacy is profound.”

Margulis, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of biology, was known for her theory of symbiogenesis, in which a “long-term symbiosis can lead to new organs, new tissues, new behaviors,” she explained in a 2006 interview with *Astrobiology* magazine. “Symbiogenesis is an evolutionary relationship. It’s symbiosis over time, such that a new feature can be recognized as a product of that symbiosis.”

“Lynn’s contributions to science and simply to new ways of thinking about the Earth and ourselves were extraordinary,” says Zook. “She resurrected ideas expressed 100 years earlier and long forgotten, namely, that important parts of our cells and that of most large organisms were once free-living bacteria. Her concepts were ridiculed and rejected by numerous science journals, but as was her nature since well before receiving

SED Prof: “the Heart and Soul of Our Extended Family”

Daniel Davis, a retired high school principal

By Susan Seligson

Daniel Davis, a School of Education clinical assistant professor of education, was a native New Yorker and an unabashed Yankees fan. An insatiable reader and a world traveler, he loved jazz, movies, and his students, who threw him a surprise party for his 70th birthday and served his favorite drink—orange juice with lots of pulp.

“To say that everyone loved him is not hyperbole,” says Jane Ko (SED’12). “Dan was my advisor—he’s the reason I’m here. People gravitated toward him.”

Davis died on October 19, 2011, of a heart attack while visiting Udaipur, India, with his daughter, Jill. He had just completed a week of teaching in Mumbai.

Davis’ colleague Thomas Cottle, an SED professor of education, who had known Davis since he came to BU in 1999, describes their friendship as “love at first sight. He called me darling and I called him sweetie. His students adored him, and for good reason. They knew he was really smart, they knew he really knew about education, they knew that he had done and done well what he was teaching them to do, and they knew he really cared for them and their well-being, and it was genuine.”

Before joining the BU faculty, Davis worked in secondary education for 30 years at Stoughton High School, as a social studies teacher, department chair, and finally, principal. As coordinator for curriculum and teaching development at SED, he advised more than 70 students, from undergraduates to doctoral students, and taught courses in social studies methods. A specialist in critical thinking and the art of questioning as related to the teaching of history and social science, Davis coauthored the books *The United States Since 1945* and *A History of the World*. He also was codirector of the Harvard Project on East Asian Studies in Education.



Daniel Davis’ “limitless energy and enthusiasm, coupled with his deep passion for history and politics, transformed generations of SED students into exceptional teachers,” says former student Brooke Feldman (SED’08).

SED Dean Hardin Coleman recalls that at last May’s Commencement ceremony, students wore “I love Dan Davis” signs on their caps. “He was that professor who not only challenged you to do your best,” says Coleman, but “he swept you up in his enthusiasm for teaching and let you know that you counted as a person.”

Former student Brooke Feldman says Davis was far more than a professor and an advisor. “He was the heart and soul of our extended family,” says Feldman (SED’08). “It was Dan’s limitless energy and enthusiasm, coupled with his deep passion for history and politics, that transformed generations of SED students into exceptional teachers.”

Davis had traveled to China, Israel, and India to teach in various BU programs. In India, he was working with the BU cohort at the American School of Bombay, where he was teaching the last course in the master’s program before the students concluded their thesis.

Davis graduated from the State University of New York, Oswego, and earned a master’s in teaching at the City University of New York and a PhD at Ohio State University.

digest difficult science concepts and then be able to translate these for others.”

At UMass Amherst, Margulis was a Distinguished University Professor in Geosciences. She wrote hundreds of papers and many books on topics ranging from cell biology to microbial evolution.

Her most recent books include *Symbiotic Planet: A New Look at Evolution* (1998) and *Acquiring Genomes: A Theory of the Origins of Species* (2002). The latter, and several others, was coauthored by Dorion Sagan, her son

from her first marriage, to the late astronomer Carl Sagan.

Margulis was honored throughout her career. She was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1983 and received the National Medal of Science from President Bill Clinton in 1999. Among her other awards was the 2008 Darwin-Wallace Medal, awarded by the London-based Linnean Society for major advances in evolutionary biology. At UMass, she received the Chancellor’s Medal and the Award for Outstanding Accomplishments in Research and Creative Activity in 2009.

The Library of Congress announced in 1998 that it would permanently archive her papers.

She also lectured widely throughout the United States and abroad. She returned to BU many times to give special lectures.

Zook, who describes Margulis as a mentor, colleague, and friend, has been teaching her original graduate Symbiosis course at BU for more than 20 years.

“I feel so special to have known and been guided by her for more than three decades,” he says.