

To my friend Katarina,

I had the rare privilege of knowing Katarina as a private friend only. When I use the word rare, it is because she spent most of her time working – working hard – with a passion for what she believed in. She was a workaholic and there was only a little time left for private life.

Her professional achievements were so numerous that I cannot even begin to mention them all. Her mega CV is available at [tomasevski.net](http://tomasevski.net) and there you can see all 23 pages packed with achievements.

Others will know Katarina in her capacity as the human rights activist or the learned professor. I will tell you how I saw her.

I first met Katarina in the late 1980s through my husband Richard Rector. He was a person living with HIV and an AIDS activist. On numerous occasions Richard and Katarina would stand up for the rights of people living with HIV. In retrospect I remember Katarina as being a bit scary, often angry –very angry, even – about so many issues she perceived as being unjust.

In 1992 she was hired by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, but they never thought of providing reasonable accommodations. So for the first months Katarina stayed with me and Richard. This is when our friendship started. This is where I started seeing a very soft and warm side of Katarina.

If Katarina liked you, she *really* liked you. And if she did not like you, she was equally consistent about it. But Katarina liked most people around her, and she had “relationships” with all of them. And Katarina was a storyteller; she would tell me about her greengrocer – what his life was about and how good he was at finding just the perfectly ripe avocado. When she had a horrible time at her dentist – and some of the dental work even failed – she would still say about her dentist: “She is a very nice person”, and then Katarina would go on and tell me some story about the dentist. Another time she would be very concerned about her neighbour. Katarina thought that he might not have the boyfriend he so rightly deserved, and she would say that he deserved only the very best.

Katarina was about quality. She liked people who did their very best – and then it did not matter whether they were greengrocers, doctors or professors.

She was also passionate about small things. She did not believe in frozen food; she did not like cheapskates; she was against wearing makeup ... the list of what she liked, disliked and believed in is a long one. But the thing she enjoyed most of all was work, and lots of it! And she loved to teach. She was forever on the look-out for students with a certain potential. And when she found someone, Katarina would do everything within her powers to promote that person’s career. From Katarina’s trusted friend Haakan Wiberg, the former Director of COPRI (Copenhagen Peace Research Institute) who “adopted” me after her death, I learned that her own professor back in Zagreb had seen her in the same way, as being someone very unique – so he made sure that she ended up at Harvard. Unfortunately for the rest of us, Haakan passed away in July 2010.

I “inherited” two other friends from Katarina: Karsten Harder, who assisted Katarina with all computer-related work and who has been very instrumental in keeping Katarina’s work “alive” after her death, and Hashil Hashil, a refugee of conscience who Katarina assisted in making sure that his former torturer would not end up as a diplomat in Stockholm.

Among many other things I also adopted her big collection of turtles. Katarina loved turtles. Three days before Katarina died, her long time boyfriend and dear companion Nicki (Georg Göttinger), Katarina and I had dinner together in Christiania. Katarina was passionate about things also on this evening and I no longer remember about what, but what I do remember was that she

was full of fire also on this evening.

I am so grateful for Katarina's love and concern for me, and I am very grateful to have known, as a personal friend, a woman of her calibre.

Kirsten Madsen