

What We Should Know About Rita Hartman

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Speaking with others¹ at the Robert S. Hartman Institute about Rita Hartman yields a sense of caring and dedication to her husband's impact on life and her passion for making sure Dr. Hartman's contributions to value theory, valuation, and other areas are understood, practiced, and advanced. A fine way to remember each of the contributors memory of Mrs. Hartman is best summed by Mark Moore:

"It was one of the great times of your life and you will always remember it."

In 1936 then Rita Emmanuel married Robert Hartman in Riga, Latvia and in 1938, after living in Copenhagen, they came to the US, next to Mexico while he worked for Disney, and then to New York City in 1941 while he was looking for a teaching job. After teaching and settling at Lake Forest, IL while Dr. Hartman pursued his PhD at Northwestern University, and later teaching at Ohio State University, the Hartman's moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico where they raised their son, Jan. Dr. Hartman proceeded to teach at The National University in Mexico City and, in 1968 began teaching at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville after which he and Rita split their time between Cuernavaca and Knoxville.

By all accounts Rita was devoted to helping Dr. Hartman disseminate his work. She served as the "secretary" of all his work by typing everything he wrote. There are uncounted numbers of typed pages of papers, correspondence, manuscripts, etc. in the Hartman Collection at the UTK library that were typed by Rita. It was widely agreed that though she was not a philosopher, she was very involved with his thinking.

Friendships develop naturally when those of like minds and purpose get together. This was no different in the developing friendships and relationships amongst those interviewed. All enjoyed Rita and Dr. Hartman, and, after Dr. Hartman passed away, those relationships with Rita only grew stronger. It's best to describe some of these as they illustrate her warmth, caring, and dedication to the memory of her husband.

Vera Mefford and Rita became personal friends and pen pals in early 1974 after Dr. Hartman died. In the summer of 1974, at Rita's request, David, Vera, and Dr. John Davis went to Mexico in order to go through Dr. Hartman's library in Cuernavaca to start a review of over 100,000 volumes and artwork from Dr. Hartman. According to Vera, Rita always had 2 or 3 typewriters typing up material for Dr. Hartman, so she, David, and John Davis received a lot of copy that they could take back to UTK to start up a special collection at the UTK Library at Rita's request, so that others would have access to Dr. Hartman's unpublished works as well. Vera helped to catalogue these volumes for Rita so that Rita could send packages to UTK over the following 4 years. Vera recounts that, in 1975 Rita called Vera and David while they were in Germany and spent every day with her in Germany to discuss how they could start the Institute. In 1976 the

¹ Interviewed for this article were Dr. Mark Moore, Dr. Arthur Ellis, Gary Acquaviva, Vera Mefford, Dr. Stephen Byrum.

Mefford's went back to UTK, and in discussion with Dr. John Davis and Rita, formed the Institute. After formation of the Institute, Rita then came to all the Institute meetings.

Mark Moore came to know Rita when he was a graduate assistant for Dr. Hartman, indicating that he and Rita maintained a close friendship for a long time. He recounts her as a warm, wonderful woman who, when you were around her, felt like you were the only person in the room. Mark described Rita as a citizen of the world, born in Germany, grew up in Sweden, and lived in Mexico and various states in the US. Mark described Rita as enthusiastic, brilliant about life, wise, with a motherly impact on people; always feeling as though you were her best friend, Mark related one funny story – Rita told him they were having a dinner party, and on Dr. Hartman's plate she put a book – telling him that he spent all his money on books – so he was going to eat a book that night!

Steve Byrum related a story from Dr. Hartman on how he had met Rita. Dr. Hartman told Steve that he had gone to a business meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, while on a business trip with the Disney Corporation, and described the setting at a large estate. Dr. Hartman indicated to Steve that he did not know many people and received several casual introductions but was not engaging much when his attention was attracted to a cabinet with a glass front and porcelain in it. Dr. Hartman told Steve that he was aware these were precious materials, and by looking through the glass at things in the case, Dr. Hartman could see reflections off the glass when he became aware of a large opening over his shoulder and in it the figure of a woman came into that opening – making an immediate impression over his brain. He told Steve that he thought: "I am going to marry that woman coming through the light." Steve found that enchanting as that is his most significant reflection of Dr. Hartman and Rita.

Steve Byrum talked about Rita being a very generous person, she was a striking woman, talked very little about herself, always wanted to know about you. She was someone who could break the ice and help you to become very comfortable. Steve was a graduate student at the time and was invited to the Hartman's home with his wife several times. Rita played a huge role in a social way for Dr. Hartman, as he was a bit inward and not the type of person who joined up and, in the middle, Rita was that person who would fill the room with her presence. Steve indicated that Rita knew Dr. Hartman's work and his philosophy like the back of her hand, she was very astute in knowing all of his work, was extremely strong in English, Spanish, German, and helped a lot in editorial work. When Dr. Hartman died, she made sure his work would be promulgated, and developed a strong relationship with Dr. John Davis, promoted his philosophy and its importance.

During some of the first Hartman institute sessions, which were very academic, Steve indicates that Rita would get right into the middle of the discussions, especially the presentations she could make.

Gary Acquaviva related how, in 1971, he went to visit Dr. Hartman and Rita in Cuernavaca, indicating that Rita was a gracious hostess. He remembers that they had fresh artichokes as an appetizer. When the Hartman's were at their house in Maryville, TN, Gary remembers Dr.

Hartman fussing over a suit that Rita had given him to wear, and she was handling him as a mother would a child.

Arthur and Charlotte Ellis became the Hartman's helpers every year in unpacking from the trip from Mexico to Knoxville, and then repacking for the return trip. In 1994, they visited Rita in Cuernavaca to obtain Rita's approval signature for the publishing of *Freedom to Live*. Travelling to Mexico and getting to the Hartman's residence was not easy, as others would attest, but, on arrival Arthur and Charlotte found that Rita was hospitalized. After effort, they were able to visit with her daily at the care facility, obtain her signature approval, and spend time with her. They said their tearful "Goodbyes," thinking they would not see her again, and rushed to catch the bus back to the airport in Mexico City for their flight home. Rita died later that year in August, so Arthur believes that he and Charlotte were the last Institute members to see her. What a delight she always was and still is in their memories.