

# Professor, Biographer, and Chef

**T**oni-Lee Capossela, 74, passed away on November 5 surrounded by her loving family. She was a professor, author, and chef, and lived in the South End, Boston. She was the eldest daughter of N. Francis Cerulli and Mary G. (Buck) Cerulli, and was born in Pittsburgh, PA on Sept. 19, 1943. She graduated from Mt. St. Dominic Academy in Caldwell, N.J. and earned a B.A. degree in English Literature from Boston University summa cum laude and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English Literature from Brandeis University. She taught rhetoric, writing, and composition at Boston University's College of Basic Studies, UMass-Boston, Cape Cod Community College, Southeastern Massachusetts University (now UMass-Dartmouth), and Northeastern University before joining the faculty at Stonehill College in 1991. At Stonehill she served as director of the Writing Program, coordinator of the Writing Center, and was promoted to full professor in 2001.

She retired in 2004 in order to write the biography of John U. Monroe, inspired by reading his obituary in The Boston Globe. Monroe had resigned as dean of the college at Harvard in order to direct programs for underprivileged students at Miles College in Alabama, reflecting the idealism of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. During World War II Monroe directed damage control on the USS Enterprise. Later,

he developed the system of need-based financial aid and created training programs for Peace Corps volunteers. John U. Monroe: Uncommon Educator was published by Louisiana State University Press in 2012.

Her other publications include The Critical Writing Workshop: Designing Writing Assignments to Foster Critical Thinking (1993), Language Matters: Readings for College Writers (1996), The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring (1998), and many articles in academic journals.

Her first marriage, to Domenic A. Capossela of Boston in 1963, ended in divorce. For 10 years, she was companion to Robert F. Hutton of Cambridge, who died in 2003. She is survived by her husband, Ronald A. Sudol, formerly of West Bloomfield, MI, her three sons, Domenic Capossela of Sharon, Mino Capossela of Brooklyn, and Christopher Capossela of Seattle; her brothers, Mark Cerulli of Mashpee, and Kurt A. Cerulli of Boston; her sisters, Francette Cerulli of Worcester, VT, and Lynn Phillips of New Orleans; five grandchildren; and her mother, Mary Hagedorn, of Lake Hiawatha, NJ.

In addition to her academic career, Professor Capossela joined her first husband in creating Dom's Restaurant, which operated from the North End waterfront before re-locating to Bartlett Place in the North End of Boston and expanding to a second location in Hyannis. She also opened her own



restaurant, Toni-Lee's, in Hyannis. She gave cooking lessons and enjoyed circulating recipes from her private cookbook.

She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a long-time lector at St. Paul's Church in Harvard Square. Her enthusiasms included cooking, travel, classical music, theater, movies, museums, and grandchildren. As a breast cancer patient she promoted the knitting and donation of prayer shawls and hats. In her article "Hats, Shawls, and the Kindness of Strangers" in Spirituality & Health she wrote: "My own participation in the ministry—first as a grateful recipient and then as a donor—has sharpened my awareness that the spiritual dimension of cancer treatment is at least as important as the medical dimension."

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to research on metastatic breast cancer through METAvivor (1783 Forest Dr. #184, Annapolis, MD 21401, [metavivor.org](http://metavivor.org)) or Boston Conservatory.

**Visiting Hours:** Private