

# ALUMNI UPDATE



*Dr. Aphrodite Alexandrakis* is Professor of Philosophy at Barry University. She received her PhD from the UM Philosophy Department in 1986.

Having a BA in Art History and Archaeology from Rutgers University-Douglas College – rather than a degree in Philosophy – was an obstacle to beginning graduate studies in Philosophy at the University of Miami. As a result, I completed all the relevant undergraduate Philosophy courses at UM as a prerequisite, because of my strong desire to combine my knowledge of ancient Greek art and archaeology with Plato and Aristotle’s notions of beauty. I was very lucky to have as my first Professor on Plato the gentle but strong Dr. Edith Schipper. The late Dr. Schipper’s deep knowledge of Greek philosophy, her positive approach to students, and her encouragement and affirmation of my love for learning philosophy established for me a strong and determined objective to continue my studies. Edith Schipper’s questions to my questions opened up my mind and made me think, research, and read at all times.

The late Professor Ramon Lemos, whose every seminar I took, and who served as my secondary dissertation mentor on Hegel, taught me how to conduct a class in which everyone is actively engaged in analysis and discussion.

Above all, it was a special privilege to have as my primary mentor, and later friend, the late Dr. John Knoblock. While still a graduate student, I worked with Dr. Knoblock on my first publication on Plato’s book III of the *Republic*. Dr. Knoblock was not just a smart man. He was a genius and a rare find. His broad knowledge of the areas of aesthetics in which I specialized, his keen mind, and his understanding of beauty both abstract and sensual were unique and inspired me with good ideas. Had he still been with us, he would have been delighted by my most recent publication in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* on Xunzi and Plato’s views of rituals and the notion of *form*. I will always miss John Knoblock.

I have been teaching full time at Barry University for sixteen years and have been a full Professor since 1998. I was fortunate to have been awarded three National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships by the Philosophy department of the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga, the Classics department of the University of Texas at Austin, and the Classics/Philosophy departments at the University of California at Berkeley. At Barry, I have been awarded the Outstanding Faculty Award and the Sister Jeanne O’Laughlin Scholar Award. Recently, I was selected as a Fulbright Senior Specialist Roster Candidate, and in the spring I will be giving a series of lectures at Trinity and All Hallows College in Dublin, Ireland.

Even though those were difficult days for a female philosophy graduate student, my determination and the encouragement and wisdom of my mentors, particularly of the late John Knoblock, inspired me to reach my goal of becoming a philosophy teacher and scholar.