

# Martha Savage: Esteemed Colleague and Mentor

It is with pleasure that we at WAESOL honor one of our esteemed colleagues, Martha Savage, Ph.D., as she leaves the WAESOL board and transitions into retirement. Dr. Savage (or Martha, as we know her) has been a steadfast presence at conferences and in various contexts throughout her career. She has twice served on the WAESOL board in many capacities from 2014 until 2021, including as president-elect, president, and past-president from 2015-2017 and again from 2019-2021. Maybe more importantly, she has been a mentor for so many of us over the years. We express our sincerest gratitude for her efforts to be a positive role model in these challenging times.

Martha began her career as a K-12 Speech Pathologist in California, working specifically with fourth and fifth grade special education students. While still in California, she transitioned to teaching immigrants and refugees from around the world in an adult education program. Her experience in California was instrumental in establishing a dedication to immigrant education that has helped define and guide her career.

When she moved to Spokane, Martha sought positions in immigrant and refugee education but found none; however, this seemingly closed door led her to Gonzaga University where she took on multiple leadership roles along with opportunities to teach academic ESL classes.

As an ESL teacher, she worked with students from around the world, including Mexico, Japan, Korea, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Colombia, and China. She also began teaching new teachers at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the MA/TESOL program. In fact, she has taught many of the wonderful teachers now serving in various capacities within the TESOL world, including numerous K-12 teachers achieving an ESL endorsement. Her work at Gonzaga, in the Spokane area, and in WAESOL is truly marked with a genuine sense of professionalism and dedication to both the profession and her students.

In addition to her work with Gonzaga and with the ESL profession in general, Martha has made time in her schedule to assist Whitworth University and the Barton School to help train current and future educators to enhance their teaching strategies and methods. Since Barton School, a faith-based community organization, thrives on the work of volunteer ELL teachers, Martha's efforts have been especially essential to their mission to provide English language skills and a true sense of connection to the immigrant and refugee communities in Spokane. She has also extended a helping hand to local families through World Relief, along with her lifelong partner Bob Savage, to help new arrivals resettle in the Spokane area, often becoming their advocate to help navigate housing, social services, and the complex healthcare system.



As WAESOL President in 2020, Martha was instrumental in rallying others to transition from face-to-face conference mode to the first-ever WAESOL virtual conference. Her support, along with WAESOL Executive Director Joan Nelson, in helping to resolve a variety of technological and logistical challenges in transitioning to an online conference as well as implementing the first WAESOL Online workshops, was inspiring for all of us. Martha's gentle leadership and endearing support was exactly what was needed in such trying times. In addition, her leadership continued into her

year as Past President where she maintained a dedication to passing on essential knowledge to those who took up the reins upon her retirement.

Martha's cheerful professionalism and commitment to engendering a positive learning and working environment will be missed on the board, but the legacy she has established will carry on through those whose lives she has touched and minds she has molded. It is with great gratitude that we honor Dr. Savage as she moves on and we welcome her to join us in future conferences and events.