

## IN MEMORIUM: VIRGINIA RENNER

With the passing of Virginia J. Renner on April 21, 2022, the authorship movement has lost one of its most beloved and dedicated scholars. Ginger, as she was affectionately known to her wide circle of friends, grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. She majored in Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, then got a master's degree in Library Science at UW in 1957.

Ginger began her tenure at the Huntington Library in 1967 and was promoted to Head of Reader Services in 1974, serving in that position until her retirement in 1999. In that role she dedicated herself to connecting scholars from all over the world with the resources they needed for their research – books and documents often available only at the Huntington. She knew most of the leading Shakespeare scholars of her time and received scores of notes and letters from readers thankful for her help navigating the library's collections. She and her husband, Tudor Renner, were long-time authorship skeptics, but she kept a low profile about it while at the Huntington.

Nevertheless, Ginger was close friends with, and helpful to, leading doubters such as Ruth Loyd Miller and Judge Minos Miller, John and Barbara Crowley, and Richard and Jane Roe. Early on, she saw the value and potential of Roe's research into Shakespeare's Italian plays, and she did all she could to help with his research and encourage him to finish his book. She kept in touch with Roger Stritmatter, Martin Hyatt, Bonner Miller Cutting, and others, encouraging their research. She was a long-time active member of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Los Angeles, chaired by Carole Sue Lipman. She shared her love of Shakespeare with everyone and urged greater exchange between history and literature scholars, hosting memorable dinner parties for Huntington staff and readers alike.

When John Shahan told her about his idea of issuing a Shakespeare authorship declaration, she was intrigued and soon became one of his strongest supporters, meeting him monthly for lunch. When he founded the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC) in 2006, she served as secretary, a position she held for thirteen years. Without her, the SAC probably would not have succeeded. She was one of the ten signers of Declaration poster No. 1 at the launch of the Declaration at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles in March of 2007, and she later recruited ten current or former Huntington Library staff members to sign her own copy of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt.

In addition to Shakespeare, Ginger had a wide range of cultural interests. She could be spotted frequently at the Los Angeles Opera with any number of friends. She partnered with her close friend Kazuko Sugisaki to found Kinu Collages, a collage technique that integrated Asian and Western visual motifs in extraordinary fabric designs and collages.

After retiring, she traveled extensively in Japan, India and Europe, enjoying opera along the way. To those who she encouraged and mentored, she was only a phone call away. She will be missed.

Ginger was predeceased by her husband Tudor Renner, also a librarian. She is survived by her son Marcus Renner of Pasadena.



Virginia J. Renner, with her copy of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt signed by her colleagues from the Huntington Library.  
*Photo by Gardner Monks*