



## Dr. Nancy Felice Gabin

June 21, 1954 - June 21, 2024

Dr. Nancy Felice Gabin, born June 21st, 1954, passed away after a brief illness on June 21st, 2024 at IU Health Hospice House in Bloomington, IN. It was her 70th birthday. Born in Brooklyn, NY to George Gabin and Ellen (Krames) Gabin and raised in Rockport, MA, Nancy is preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Michael A. Morrison, her sister, Joanna Debs Gabin, and her grandparents, Sol and Evelyn (Brandner) Krames and Pincus and Gertrude (Scharf) Gabin. She is survived by her children, Natty S. Morrison of Lafayette, IN and Katie M. Morrison of Bloomington, IN, her sister, Carol Gabin Papagiannis of Somerville, MA, and her niece, Paulena Cancino Gabin Papagiannis (husband: Julián Cancino Gabin and daughter: Eleni Lucía) of Somerville, MA. [SEP:SEP] Nancy served as a faculty member in the Department of History at Purdue University from 1983-2021, retiring after 38 years. She graduated from the Pingree School (South Hamilton, MA) in 1972 and went on to earn a B.A. from Wellesley College in 1977 and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1984. At Purdue, Nancy taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses in U.S. women's history, labor history, and social history. She held numerous administrative roles across campus and in professional organizations, but her central focus was to always advocate for students and ensure they weren't "lost in the tangle of bureaucracy" of higher education. Her numerous accolades included the Jon C. Teaford Award, being written into Purdue's Book of Great Teachers, and the university's highest honor for undergraduate teaching, the Charles B.

Murphy Award. Nancy also authored, co-authored, and edited many books, chapters, and articles on women, work, and the labor movement.

Throughout her nearly 40-year career, Nancy was a consummate source of guidance, inspiration, laughter, and kindness to her many colleagues and the countless undergraduate and graduate students for whom her office door was always open.

Nancy was a fervent reader with a brilliant mind. She was an expert at The New York Times crossword puzzle and a dedicated neighborhood walker. She loved art and music, Cape Ann, MA and the American Southwest, being near the ocean, fried clams, Michigan Football, and her many, many cats. Nancy held few things as close as her family. Her children, Natty and Katie, both hope to carry on her memory through her stoicism, humor, and compassion.

A private burial will take place in Rockport, MA. Details of a celebration of life in West Lafayette, IN will be provided at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Almost Home Humane Society (Lafayette, IN), Eugene V. Debs Foundation (Terre Haute, IN), or Boston Workers Circle (Boston, MA).

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory 4155 South Old State Road 37 has been entrusted with arrangements and online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com)

# Tribute Wall

MF

“ I only recently heard about Nancy's passing, but would nonetheless be remiss if I never acknowledged her contributions to my academic career. I was one of her first graduate students and was forever grateful for her keen insights into navigating the political process of earning a Ph.d. She was moreover one of the best teachers I ever had. Observing her instruction was pleasurable in itself, even aside from what you were learning, which was quite a lot. She was one of the best, and most of all, for her empathy, compassion, and determination to remain forever on the side of "the underdog." May her memory be eternal. Michael S. Fitzgerald, Ph.d.(1990)

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**Michael S. Fitzgerald** - May 07 at 10:28 AM

TC

“ I took every single class I could with Professor Gabin during my time at Purdue. To be half the woman she was would be an accomplishment

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**Taylor Cash** - November 15, 2025 at 05:15 PM

GG

“ Nancy was my women's history professor a long time ago. Without her guidance, I may not have received my Ph.D. She was a warm and wonderful person as well as a fantastic professor. She listened to my concerns and questions; when I doubted myself, she was there. I didn't know that she had passed away, but she will be missed. Dr. Grace Mary Gouveia

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**Grace Mary Gouveia** - September 04, 2025 at 08:26 AM

RD

“ I only recently learned of Professor Gabin's passing and I'm just heartsick over this news. Were it not for Nancy and her husband Mike, I would not have taken the leap of faith to attend Purdue as a grad student in the early 2000s, nor would I be in academia today, nor would I be a scholar of nineteenth century labor and working-class history, nor would I have nearly the sense of humor that (I think) I do. Nancy, in particular, along with Mike and John Larson, were absolutely instrumental in my development as a human being. Prior to my first conference presentation, prior to my first peer-reviewed journal article, I hunkered down in Nancy's office (at her request) because she knew that I need the type of encouragement and tough-love that only she could deliver. I could go on and on. I consider myself extremely lucky to be part of a very special group of young scholars who learned from her. I'll never forget her.

- Ryan Dearinger (Portland, Oregon)

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Ryan Dearinger - December 04, 2024 at 02:49 AM

SM

“ Nancy inspired me with her love for history and her commitment to equality. She was an outstanding colleague and friend. My heartfelt sympathy to the many people who loved her.

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Sammie M - August 27, 2024 at 09:06 PM

MI

“ I am deeply saddened to hear of Dr. Gabin's passing. It's difficult to put into words the positive impact that she has on me as my graduate advisor. She taught me how to be a historian and I owe much if not all of my academic career to her. Dr. Gabin was such a bright light in the Department of History and her kindness, intelligence, and compassion for her students will be missed. Thank you for everything, Nancy.

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McKenzie I. - August 04, 2024 at 09:09 AM

EK

“ It is very difficult to memorialize Dr. Gabin because the thought of her death is still so gutting and because of the profound extent to which she influenced the lives of those who knew her. Not only did she open up the world of women’s history and labor history, how to write and think critically, what it meant to be a professional historian, but by her example we saw what it meant to be a scholar and teacher who cared deeply about ideas and people. Her radical kindness and quietude meant she noticed everything happening the classroom and, despite all the difficulties that teaching entails, she gave students careful attention and consideration every time. She showed us how to approach all things with dignity and humanity. Her legion of former students are bereft at losing her and deeply sorry for your family, Natty and Katie. It was impossible to know her and not know you, because she delighted in talking about you and sharing your stories. We grieve with you and for you.

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**Erin Kempker** - July 11, 2024 at 08:33 PM



“ Prof. Gabin was in my phd dissertation committee at Purdue in 2019. She is one of the nicest people I met at Purdue. Although she did not study my agricultural history, she still agreed to be in my committee and provided me great suggestion after reading my dissertation. I am very sad she left us at such a young age. I will remember her.

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**Ruisheng Zhang** - July 06, 2024 at 09:49 AM

MR

“ Nancy Gabin was a treasured colleague. May her memory comfort her children.

*Margaret Rowe*

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**Margaret Rowe** - June 30, 2024 at 10:33 AM

SC

“ *I'm so sad to hear this sad news. Dr. Gabin was a lovely human being and I found her an inspiring professor when I was doing my graduate work at Purdue. I remember her wry sense of humor and her caring attitude. My deepest condolences to her family and friends....she will be missed.*

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**Susanna Calkins** - June 29, 2024 at 08:52 PM

SS

“ Nancy was fiercely loved and admired by her students. My fellow history grad students and I in the late 1990’s at Purdue were fortunate enough to have in Nancy a powerful advocate as the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. She always told it to us straight, and we always knew that she had our back and would do whatever she could to make sure we were okay. I found that out right from the start. Having arrived in West Lafayette with no contacts other than Nancy (through admissions correspondence and a very kind phone call), an apartment that wouldn’t be available for several days yet, and every hotel within fifty miles booked solid, I had zero options and spent the first night in my car. I happened to come across Nancy the next day, and when she asked how I was getting along, where I was living, etc., I joked that I was learning just how versatile an ’85 Honda Civic could be. Nancy sprang into action, and before I knew it, she had connected me with several fellow grad students—now lifelong friends—who generously invited me to crash on their couch until my place was ready. That was Nancy all over, making sure we were all right. When she transitioned into a different role in May 1998, the grad students all threw her a party to express their appreciation, which Maggie and I were happy to host at our cozy little starter home on South Street in Lafayette. It wasn’t lost on me that the guest of honor that evening was the person who made damn sure that I didn’t spend my second night of grad school sleeping in my car. The attached photo is from that party, capturing the moment when we presented Nancy with a gift certificate to Maize (a nice downtown restaurant) hiding in a Hooter’s envelope. That was also the night that Natty and Katie regaled everyone with an impromptu performance of an R-rated rap song. It was awesome, and we all loved seeing Nancy and Mike laugh and laugh. I count myself very lucky indeed to have had Nancy for a mentor, teacher, and friend. She will be greatly missed.



**Steve Stofferahn** - June 29, 2024 at 07:40 PM

EB

“ *Dr. Gabin was one of the reasons I attended Purdue University at all. She was a fantastic teacher and an absolute treasure to all of her students.*

**Erin B.** - June 27, 2024 at 09:29 PM

 Monica Casanova

“ *I can't tell you what a profound difference Dr. Gabin made in my life. I took her History of Labor class and it blew my mind at 22. Her insight and knowledge about women's work and feminism changed how I looked at my mother. It made me appreciate my mom so much more in a way that I had not internalized before. I loved her compassion and kindness. I'm sorry for your loss Katie.*

**Monica Casanova** - June 27, 2024 at 04:59 PM

 Monica Casanova

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



**Monica Casanova** - June 27, 2024 at 04:56 PM

WB

“ *Dr. Gabin was one of the best historians and people I met at Purdue. She taught me so much on how to be an academic, not just a researcher but also a good community member in a department. She will be sorely missed.*

**Wes Bishop** - June 27, 2024 at 03:14 PM

NS

“ I had Professor Gabin in one of my history classes as a non-traditional student. I learned so much from her. She was probably my favorite professor. I remembered seeing her walking our neighborhood nearly daily. She spread a lot of greatness in this world. I sincerely pray for peace and healing for all of you! Nancy K. Smigiel

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**Nancy Smigiel** - June 27, 2024 at 09:20 AM

JC

“ I am beyond sorry to hear this dreadful news. Nancy was the epitome of grace. Among other things, she was also a gifted academic administrator. It was an honor to know her and to work with her.

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**John Contreni** - June 26, 2024 at 04:42 PM

RV

“ To Natty and Katie and all of Nancy's Family. We are shocked to hear about Nancy passing. When Nancy and Michael lived next to us in West Lafayette Plaza Park; what great neighbors and loving parents. We send our sympathy and pray that Nancy is given peace and everlasting life in Gods Kingdom. Robert and Carolyn Vogel. The Villages, FL

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**Robert and Carolyn Vogel** - June 26, 2024 at 04:21 PM

DL

“ I am deeply sorry to hear of Nancy's passing. I was a student of hers during graduate school and I owe my research and academic trajectory to her. I still remember how she picked out one line from a book review of mine and we discussed it in a meeting and that led to my dissertation topic. Not only that, but her teaching and overall kindness has influenced how I teach and interact with students as well. She will forever be in my memories.

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**Devan Lindey** - June 26, 2024 at 02:02 PM

SH

“ I am deeply saddened by this news. Nancy is still missed in the history department. She took such care in mentoring history majors, young people excited to embark on their first big research project. Her office was down the hall from mine, and I model for my own engagement with undergraduates after the compassion and careful training she showed her students. In retirement, I imagined Nancy doting on her cats, doing puzzles, and taking long walks. Her reward for a career of doing such good was cut way too short. All my condolences to Natty and Katie and all her friends and family.

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**Stacy E Holden** - June 26, 2024 at 12:49 PM

JE

“ Our deepest condolences to Natty and Katie and Carol. You are to be commended for caring for your mother and sister dearly. May you be comforted by the memories you keep of Nancy, as you grieve her sad passing. Our special love to you, from John and Jenny English.

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**Jennifer English** - June 25, 2024 at 05:45 PM

CK

“ I will miss Nancy very much. I have fond memories of the many trips we made to WL, especially for the Michigan/Purdue games. We had so many laughs and it was just a delight to be around Nancy. My heart goes out to Natty, Katie and Carol. Rest peacefully Nancy, your time here was well spent.

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**Chris Kosdrosky** - June 25, 2024 at 07:11 AM

SM

“ I am so sorry to hear of Nancy's passing. I worked with her at her grandfather's shop in Rockport and we shared many laughs together. May you be strengthened by the love she had for you all.

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**Shelly Moran** - June 24, 2024 at 08:20 PM